

THE ROCKWOOD REVIEW.

LETTERS.

HATCHLEY.

April 1st. 1895.

The winter now nearly ended, seems to have afforded fewer opportunities for observation and comment, to those having naturalistic proclivities, than have several former winters, which were characterized by less severity of cold, and a greater number of more genial intercalated days.

Contrary to the generally received opinion, that the chipmunk undergoes a continuous winter sleep, (like the dormouse), the past season has afforded proof that these little rodents feel the impulse to emerge from their dark and cosy retreats, on the occasional mild sunny days that even the month of January is enlivened with in the Ontario latitudes. For it has been noted by reliable bush workers, and wood choppers, that chipmunks came out and disported themselves for an hour or so in the mild daysunshine, even when the inclement winds were fiercely blowing outside the sheltered wooded precincts; and the same facts were also recorded by other painstaking onlookers, during the extremely cold but sunshiny days at the end of the 1895 of March.

The Shore Larks, (which had been absent from these parts all the first half of winter), appeared rather suddenly after one of the brief February thaws, and from the observed fact of the Shore Larks mixing and associating, on apparently the most friendly terms, with the snow Buntings, the former species have often been spoken of this winter as the black or dusky snow bird.

An occasional large Hawk has been seen about us in the woods this winter, and near the locality indicated a portion of the mangled body of a meadow Lark was found,

on the crusted snowy surface, the bones freshly picked clean, and no doubt had been entertained that the Lark had been the (observed) Hawk's victim.

The only indications of Spring, on the 19th March last, were bright skies and increasing solar altitude, with temperature only a few degrees above zero,—yet "Mr. Groundhog" thought he had had enough sleep, and emerged and tramped a few rods across the snow covered ground, to the entrance burrow of a neighbour of his own species, but "the morning call" did not seem to have been regarded as strictly opportune, as "back-tracks" to the original "hybernaculum" were plain to be seen, the "visitee" Artomax, perhaps proving of a rather more drowsy temperament than the restless and "too enterprising" turn of the rodent coadjutor.

The maple syrup making season seems several weeks in arrears of the past three seasons, and there is only faint beginnings as yet, (26th March). But a south wind on Sunday morning last, brought a thunder shower and a warmer temperature, and yet the Song Sparrow, and the shrill loud cries of bevys of the "Killdeer Plover," were the first sounds that greeted the ear on going out of doors that morning; and a pair of large Hawks, "circling" and loudly screaming in the upper air, announced effectually that "the marble sleep was broken" at last. There was a temperature of 52° in the shade, soon followed by lightning and rain, at night. The snow rapidly vanishing flooded streams; and next day a Robin appeared, and a High-holder, and small flocks of Red Wings, and also boat-tailed Grackles enliven the groves here, by their presence and musical voicings.

Yours truly,
W. YATES.