

THE ROCKWOOD REVIEW

harm, or that they should be permitted to do all the harm they wish without restraint. It is not probable that the grain eater by blackbirds under ordinary circumstances occasions much loss to the farmer, because so much of it consists of scattered or waste kernels. When, however, they descend upon a corn or wheat field in flocks of hundreds or thousands they inflict a real damage; and this simply shows that the species is too abundant and ought to be reduced, or that the birds have assembled from all the surrounding country and have become too crowded in one restricted locality. In either case the farmer should protect himself by any practical means and should not submit quietly to being robbed merely from a sentimental idea of the bird's past or probable future usefulness. If the crop and the birds' lives can both be saved, well and good; but if not let the extreme penalty be paid.

Upon the whole, crow blackbirds are so useful that no general war of extermination should be waged against them. While it must be admitted that at times they injure crops, such depredations can usually be prevented. On the other hand, by destroying insects they do incalculable good.

"CURLING AT ROCKWOOD."

The institution of Curling at Rockwood dates from the winter of 1887-88. In that year Mr. Allan McLean, the Steward, and Dr. C. K. Clarke, the Medical Superintendent, founded the Rockwood Curling Club. At first an attempt was made to play on the River and in the slip at the foot of the Hospital Grounds, but the constant upheaving of the ice caused them to try and make a Rink in what was then known as the women's airing court, but this was also a

failure owing to the water breaking through the made ground.

In 1889 the various officers of the Asylum formed a Syndicate, and under the direction of Mr. James Dennison, a single-sheet covered Rink was built on the dock, having for one side the stone wall which ran along the water front. This Rink continued in use till the present gymnasium was erected in 1894.

During the season of 1888-89 the young curlers of Rockwood were frequently initiated into the mysteries of the "roaring game" by several delegations from the Kingston Club, who in that year were without a Rink; among whom might be numbered Clark Hamilton, Majors Drury and Wilson, Col. Cotton, A. Strachan, James Stewart and others. At this time the Rockwoods were modest, and in the presence of such past masters of the game were naturally meek and of a very retiring though of an observant turn of mind, but they were fully determined to accomplish the feat which they afterwards attained, viz., teaching their teachers a few new wrinkles in the slippery game. It was in this year that a very amusing incident occurred which I think will bear telling: A rink of curlers consisted of Clark Hamilton, Col. Cotton, and I think the gallant and lamented Major Short came out for a game late in March. The ice was sticky, and it was hard work getting the stones up, when Col. Fox, of Cape Vincent, N. Y., arrived. His mission was to purchase two "shoats" from the Steward, and when that official generously told him to go and take his pick from the pens, he produced a corked and sealed bottle of Cuttus old reserve Rye, which he naively remarked was for the delectation of the curlers, and which he stated there was no harm in smuggling over for such a worthy object. Imagine his