

The Rockwood Review.

encountered a mature racoon, seemingly following his vocation as the "washer" (*Procyon lotor*). The quadruped was evidently feeling in the muddy edge of a ditch, for batrachian or reptile prey, and to use the man's own words: "I tried a foot race with *Procyon*, but was soon so badly beaten as to be out of sight of the game."

Just after the heavy showers of the 2nd November (inst.,) a small pool of water was observed in a depression of the ground, on a knoll near the barn. The water was "let off" towards lower land, by digging a small trench with a spade; this caused a sudden rush of the water down the newly cut channel, and a flock of near thirty guinea fowl showed signs of alarm at the serpentine motion of the runlet, and with outstretched necks and noisy clamour, proclaimed their suspicion of danger. The crevasse could have been passed by a mere "goose step," and without wet feet, but "the Moses" of the speckled assemblage took a flight of a few feet, over the moving water streak, and was immediately imitated by his obsequious associates. Thus the unschooled creatures of the farm or wilderness sometimes overact their part, when puzzled by a new experience. This incident of the *Numida meleagris* brought to mind an analogous behaviour of a group of bovines when confronted by an unfamiliar phenomena in the cattle byre a year or two ago. The time was evening, and the bovines (nine or ten in number), were admitted at the open door of a roomy, but dim lighted stable, diagonally across which, at a distance of less than two feet above the floor, streamed in a square-angled beam of sunlight, from a small open window, at the western extremity of the byre; and on their way to the food manger, this "fake" barrier was as carefully stepped over by the entire herd in succession, as though it had been a solid sharp angled beam of timber, with dangerous "shin abrading"

capabilities!

The little Juncos have been frequently of late on visits to our gardens, and hopping about the rose and berry bushes during the past month. None of that species had been previously noticed since last May, and it seems plain that the Junco likes best regions with a moderate climate or temperature. Many birds seem aware of approaching atmospheric changes, before there are external indications; jays, woodpeckers and crows become noisy at such junctures. Last month as we happened to be passing near an extensive timbered swamp, in the late afternoon, several large hoot owls seemed to break out all at once, as if holding a tuneful matinee. The refrains broke out so suddenly, and were so nearly continuous, that the suggestion arose that boys in a sporting mood were hidden near by, and treating the sylvan silences to a gratuitous *Strix*-concert! But the phenomenon was no sham, and one of the performers gave the replies at some distance, in a shriller or minor key, but in true telephone style, the vague and mysterious owl enunciations. The weather at the time, on or about the 14th October last, was dry and serene, yet a refreshing series of showers fell here, in about thirty-six hours after the owlish colloquy!

An acquaintance near here a few days ago captured a pair of Blue-jays, which he now keeps in a roomy cage. The birds are in great beauty of plumage, and their possessor is trying to teach them parrot like tricks, and tuneful whistlings; but it is surmised that he has not begun the training early enough to accomplish the most satisfactory results; for the Jay, if taken as a fledgling, has a great capacity for culture, and this is believed to be a trait shared to a greater or lesser extent by the whole corvine family. Cranes and a Kingfisher or two have been noticed near Burford mill ponds, during Indian summer.