

## The Rockwood Review.

north to a point beyond that reached by any explorer. Maj. Fielden saw it in Grinnell Land at latitude  $82^{\circ} 40'$  and Lieut; (now Gen.) A. W. Greely states that it bred abundantly in the vicinity of Fort Conger, latitude  $81^{\circ} 44'$ . It is resident through the northern part of Alaska, both on the islands and mainland. McFarlane did not find its nest at Fort Anderson, but it probably breeds in suitable localities in the interior south of that place, for it is reported as breeding in Northern Labrador and Newfoundland. In exceptional cases, where it has been found breeding as far south as the latter places, the elevation of the locality compensates for the low latitude.

The eggs are deposited from the middle of May to the latter part of June, according to whether the locality is in the southern or northern part of the range, though Gen. Greely found eggs by May 25, and young as early as July 8th. The number of eggs in a set varies from five to ten, and are deposited at intervals, so that when the last bird breaks the shell the oldest one is often nearly ready to fly.

The situation of the nest, if the few feathers, lichens, or moss composing it may be called a nest, is on some knoll slightly elevated above the surrounding country and usually occupies a slight depression in the ground. During the time the female is setting the male keeps guard and drives off any intruder, at times attacking even human beings. It is the duty of the male to procure the food for the young, and the female apportions it among the family.

The bird is naturally very gentle in disposition and soon becomes tame in confinement. It has been taught to remain in the vicinity of its home and return to its master

at the sound of a whistle. In the open country it is shy and very difficult to approach, though it is said to be less so in the wooded districts. The natives frequently decoy the bird near enough to shoot by attaching a bit of fur to the end of a string and allowing it to trail behind them as they walk; the Owl, thinking it a mouse, flies down to seize it, when the hunter turns around and shoots the bird.

The Snowy Owl is diurnal in its habits, but like most birds is more active in search of prey during the early morning and again towards dusk. Like many of the Hawks; it occupies a commanding perch for hours, watching what is going on about it, occasionally varying the monotony by dropping on a mouse or launching out over the broad country, soon to return to its perch. During its southern wanderings it is very partial to localities in the vicinity of water, especially the barren sand wastes along the seashore or extensive marshy flats bordering the bays and rivers.

Dr. William Wood states that he once knew one of these Owls to hide in a hollow apple tree stub to escape the annoyance caused by a mob of crows following him, which ruse accomplished the desired result.

The flesh is light colored, somewhat resembling that of the chicken in appearance, and is very much relished by the Eskimo hunters. Thus this bird, unlike its congeners, has some value to humanity as food.

The flight is firm, smooth, and noiseless, and may be long protracted. It is capable of rapid flight, and according to Audubon, is able to capture ducks, pigeons, and even grouse on the wing, striking them down after the manner of the duck hawk.