

The Rockwood Review.

BRIEF JANUARY NOTES.

As a very appropriate adjunct to the January cold spell came to our field and vicinity numerous small flocks of snow buntings from about the 3rd of the month to the 14th or later. The visits of these birds seem likely to be a permanent feature of the winter season and are not likely to be affected by the process of deforestation which has for a number of past decades being prosecuted with such vigor in Southern Ontario. The cold winters and snow covered areas are an assured permanency in historic time, and the white plumaged hosts seem equally permanent attendants of the frigid months of the year as are the Orioles Tanagers and Bobolinks of our fervid and luxuriant summer period. The Bunting flocks are the the most restless of bird assemblages—by daylight (and frequently in dim dim moonlight), almost continually "moving on" in loose straggling order; hardly ever two together, but regaling on the dried seed masses of some branching weed that the snow carpet has not succeeded in enfolding and submerging, they are seen to avoid woods and thickets by keeping in sight and hearing of each other as they progress across the wintry leas, and nip off the seed of the wild millet grass—the chenopodium—or tall panicles of golden rod and St. John's Wort—or wild verbenas, etc. Their visits to these parts usually cease before the beginning of March and the recently expired month of December was signalized it is said by the advent of a few pioneer snow buntings ere the last lingering belated Robins had departed!..... A few weeks ago a farmer resident a short distance from here trapped an extraordinarily large

mink that during its life seemed to have possessed an appetite and ferocity proportioned to its unusual size, for in the rendezvous of putorius, its captor states that he found the partly eaten bodies of two FAIR SIZED CATS, the mink having seemingly despised the small game such as mice and batrachians that are known to be the ordinary food of the mink tribe..... Most of the small animals that winter in our forests have sound notions of cosiness in preparing and choosing winter harbourment. A small tree or leaning sapling was lately struck by a Wood man's ax in the woods near here—the tree happened to have a decayed hollow under the side roomy enough to hold a pair of Nut-hatches which flew out in great trepidation on their domicile being rudely jarred by the Ax man's blow the site seemed well chosen—the entrance on the lower side of the bent sapling was well sheltered from rain, sleet and wind..... A family group of chickadees who come daily to a store of flesh food hung on a tree where their comings and goings can be observed give evidence by their somewhat tattered plumage that they do not pass the wintry nights perched on exposed tree branches; but in 'NONE TOO ROOMY' "en famille"—where their tail feathers are bent and distorted in their crowded dormitory—their will be no remedy for this temporary disfigurement until either a partial or entire moulting time..... The quadrupeds too such a Mephitis Mephitis show love for a cosy, dry winter retreat. One of these was lately unearthed by a local trapper from a deep and roomy burrow that seemed to have had a ground hog for a previous occupant. The trapper said he was surprised at the capaciousness of the excavation in a sheltered piece of forest and at the large quantity of dried grass and soft vegetable fibre that Mephitis had stored up, and which it was judged must have been brought from a considerable distance.