

The Rockwood Review.

NATURAL HISTORY NOTES.

BY W. YATES.

The Autumn of the year 1897 has been a fine one in these districts, perhaps somewhat drier winds or disagreeable storms, although more than the usual number of foggy days were experienced, the average temperature both of September and October was slightly above normal conditions, and a majority of the varieties of fruits and berries ripened genially both in the uncultivated areas and in orchards and gardens. Yet notwithstanding the abundance of that kind of food in the wilds and commons, some opportunist crows took frequent liberties with our most luscious apple products, on the orchard trees, in the early Indian summer-like days in October; and in these trespasses were accompanied at times by a bevy of their near relatives in predatory instincts—the noisy Blue-jays; and also when the supplies of elderberries growing near fences had been consumed, by some individuals of the Woodpecker genus, mostly the golden-quilled variety, *colaptes auratus*, as well as the red-headed *P. Erythrocephalus*, whose presence has been noted of in greater numbers than during an interim period about twenty years ago.

These ornithic depredators had repeatedly to be driven or warned away, but not before their thefts had been so persistent as to use up the finest and best flavored apples on one of the largest and well laden trees in a rather secluded corner of our orchard.

When the major part of the summer birds have left us, the depredatory doings of Hawks, to the domestic poultry flocks, are more frequent, and this fall have been loudly complained of by many of our farmers' wives in these localities. In some instances the barn yards have been approached, and half grown turkeys have been killed and partly eaten by those sanguinary mauraders, such as *Falco Nilvus*

and *F. Perigrinus*; and although the wild gray Rabbits seem to have bred with more than average fecundity this genial year, and furnish the raptorial tribe with variety in their menu, the poultry decimations from the same quarter have been a cause of frequent comment of late.

The Law that the carnivores must keep in check the herbivores, appears in unabated vigour, and which if an evil that "can't be cured, must be endured," in all climates and at all epochs.

As we were passing along a country road two weeks ago, the distressed cries of some small quadruped, or bird, were heard at no great distance, the sounds somewhat resembled those of a kitten when in difficulties. Upon increasing our pace the spot among the rank grass, near the road fence, whence the moans proceeded, a hawk suddenly mounted skyward on powerful pinions, taking in its claws some object which an examination of the place of capture gave indications of being a young rabbit, victimized in an early period of its career.

Although the powers of multiplication of the leporine tribe are enormous, the enemies that it has to encounter are legion, and of these the climate, with its three or more months of vigour, seems not the least formidable.

An afternoon walk in the woods a few days ago, enabled one to discover the Witch Hazel bushes now adorned with their curious but not very conspicuous flowers just opening at this late season of the year. This shrub has very little botanical relationship to its near namesake, the common hazel-nut, the yellow ribbon like petals attract the eye when most other wild flowers have disappeared.

But another interesting shrub that claimed attention was the Moonseed Vine, climbing and twining about the stem and branches of a small beech tree. The clusters of