

The evening grosbeak is even more noteworthy than the owl, as it has only been seen once before in the recollection of the present race of ornithologists. It also is reported as quite common near Guelph, flocks containing over forty having been seen. General reports are not in concerning this species, but a few have been seen near Ridgway in the Welland peninsula, and three have been seen at London. Doubtless they will be reported from many other stations, particularly those in the north.

W. E. SAUNDERS.

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#### SOIRÉE.

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The fifth soirée was held in the Assembly Hall of the Normal School, February 25, when Prof. E. W. MacBride lectured on "The present position of Evolution."

The lecturer commenced by pointing out that the century which had just passed away had witnessed a great revolution in our ideas on many things, and notably on our conception of our relation to the universe. This had been largely brought about by the acceptance of the doctrine of evolution as laid down by Darwin. This doctrine had profoundly influenced not only biology but sociology and historical science, as was candidly admitted by one of the latest writers on the New Testament. It was of importance, therefore, to define first what exactly is asserted by the doctrine, second on what evidence it rests, and thirdly what light it has thrown on the history of the human race. The root idea of evolution as expounded by Darwin was to explain the present state of the world of animals and plants as the outcome of its past condition under the operation of orderly laws. The idea that various types of animals might have descended from a common ancestor was as old as the Greeks; so long, however, as the transformation could not be shown to be a possible out-