

The Rockwood Review.

NOTES BY W. YATES.

The diminution in the number of Hummingbirds, (compared with what was the case 20 or 30 years ago), that now visit Ontario in the summer season, is a frequent cause of curiosity and of comment; a greater number of this species of bird have been seen during the past month of August, than in any month of the summer of 1897. A near neighbor who cultivates a variety of garden flowers, observes that the Rubythroats alight on and devote more attention to the Convolvuli, to the Nasturtium and Honeysuckle, and Morning Glory, than to any other species growing in the parterre; the reason perhaps of this selective instinct may be, that the minute drops of liquid nectar are best preserved and kept unvolatilized in the narrow throat-like bases of these tubular flowers, and to whose confined spaces the elongated beak and tongue of the Hummingbird gives easy access.

The boldness and apparent fury of the Rubythroat is seen in its readiness to attack the Oriole or Robin, when the latter invades the Hummingbird sanctum or come "between the wind and its nobility." The needle-like beak and the dart-like onset strike terror into the souls of larger encroaching species, when fiercely challenged by their diminutive confrere, whose rapidity of motion and imperious "hum" in flight, have a more formidable impressiveness than actual conflict might carry out.

Some years ago an acquaintance reported the finding of a beautiful purselike nest of the Rubythroat, suspended from sprays of a raspberry bush, when engaged picking the ripe fruit in July.

Another reported finding a similar nest suspended from rank growing stems of clover in a hay field. In a third instance we were sent for to examine one in these neat little structures, that was found hanging to the lower branch of a locust tree,

that flourished near the veranah of a farm house in this locality; this occurred in the month of August—the nest contained three eggs, and surprise was expressed that incubation should be found going on so late in the summer!

The Rubythroats (a pair of them) visit the flower parterre regularly each morning, soon after sunrise, and thus "steal a march" on the hive bee. The Morning Glory appears to be their favorite flower, and this species being a free bloomer, freshly opened blossoms adorn the trellis each morn, the wee drop of nectar dries up sooner in the open flowers, such as the Asters and Calendulis, so these are little visited. Severe Autumnal frosts kill the vines of the Morning Glory, and about that time the Rubythroats discontinue their visits for the season.

The frequent rains of early August seemed to cause a more copious growth of mushrooms this year in some of our pasture lands, than is normally the case in many instances. These were gathered and cooked and eaten by the farmer folk, and are undoubtedly a nourishing and relishable article of diet, notwithstanding that some allied species of toadstools are to be regarded with suspicion, as being unwholesome and deleterious. For all that several respectable families of our acquaintance, are accustomed to gather and to use as enjoyable articles of diet, the large puff-balls that are occasionally rapidly evolved on the surface of our grass fields; some of these natural productions grow to the size of a human head, and when fresh, are filled with albuminous—more or less fibrous—substance, that in odour can scarcely be distinguished from that of the edible mushroom. At any rate, those individuals who dish these puff-balls and eat them as condiments at table, laugh at the scruples of those who refuse to partake, with the accompanying remark, you don't know what is good! and