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The

Rockwood

Review.



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Literature, Natural History and

Local News.



## The Rockwood Review.

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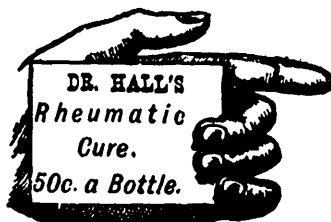
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# The Rockwood Review.

VOL. 4

KINGSTON, SEPTEMBER 1ST, 1897.

No. 7.

## LOCAL ITEMS.

There has been a great deal of sickness about Portsmouth of late. Mr. and Mrs. Dennison have been laid up. Mr. Thos. McCammon's little daughter was seriously ill. Mrs. Davidson and several others have been sick.

Mr. William Dehaney is still to the fore in athletics, and at the Sports in Ontario Park, on August 24th, carried everything before him, winning no less than four first prizes.

Canadians have frequent cause to wonder at the ignorance displayed by foreign visitors, English and Canadian, regarding this country. A capital example of this ignorance was shown a few days ago. One of the Asylum Physicians had returned from camping, (as all have been camping, it will be difficult, as in the Lady and the Tiger, to decide which), and was introduced to a British Superintendent. The Britisher showed some agitation at the time of the introduction, and quietly asked if the Doctor in question was an "aboriginie." Later on in the day he gravely asked how it was possible to escape the tomahawks of the Iroquois when duck shooting in the wilds of Frontenac. Red fire—quick curtain, &c.

It looks as if most of the old reliables will be missing from Queen's Football Team this year. In a sense this will not be harmful to the Club, as it has depended almost too long on a certain set of players without developing new material, plenty of which was at hand. The management should go to work to make the best showing possible, and next year call on the Granites for a lot of material, which by that time will have reached senior championship form. The inference is that the juvenile training school is not to be despised.

Miss Bessie Workman, of Merrickville, was a guest at Rockwood House during August.

Football, Football, Football, is in the air metaphorically, and really, and already the thousand and one boys who play the game are getting into shape, and dreaming of their chances of being on the teams.

Mrs. Clarke gave a successful Musicale about the middle of August.

Mr. Dean, of the WHIG staff, has written a comic song descriptive of last year's victory of the Granites over Tigers. It is very clever.

Mr. Allan McLean has been absent on several masonic excursions of late.

Mr. Davidson's yachting trip was a decided success.

Dr. Clarke will open the discussion on Insomnia at the meeting of the British Medical Association at Montreal.

Rockwood sent a large contingent to the Jones Falls excursion on August 26th. Jones must have been surprised. The great question is how they all managed to get aboard the little steamer Jubilee.

It is rumored that Geo. Kennedy will leave for Ottawa very soon, to take a position in the Militia Department. George will be greatly missed in Kingston, for in addition to being the best scrimmager in Canada, he is immensely popular for his many good qualities.

Several small waterspouts formed during a squall off Channel Grove recently. The Bateau Channel provides a cross current of air and water peculiarly favorable to the development of these water spouts.

Mr. C. Y. Ford and Mr. Knox Walkem are quietly training for fall sports. Mr. Walkem's abilities are well understood, and as Carl's record for a hundred yards at Harvard is something under eleven seconds, he is worth watching.

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Lawn Tennis is not in a flourishing condition in Kingston, but Rockwood has generally tried to keep the game alive. On Saturday, August 7th, Mr. Gage and Dr. Clarke played in the Napanee tournament, and it is whispered did not have everything their own way, although Napanee succumbed to their skill. A combination from Toronto and Picton won the doubles. Mr. Gage was defeated in his singles, although the defeat was compensated by Dr. Clarke's victory in his series. Napanee treated the visitors well, and a few such tournaments will help the game. If fault could be found with anything it would apply to the courts, which are not as level as they should be to insure accurate and fast tennis.

On Thursday, August 24th, Mr. Wm. Smith, one of the best known and most popular of Portsmouth's young men, was seriously injured while on a street car in Ontario Park. He leaned out to speak to some one passing, and was struck on the head by the projecting limb of a tree. Mr. Smith's condition was serious for several days, but we are glad to report that he is now improving and likely to recover.

Jubilee Stamps were forced to a ridiculous value by the remarkable action of the Postmaster General in withholding certain denominations from general circulation, and selling them, only when complete sets, costing over sixteen dollars, were asked for. Of course this was a paying speculation for the Government, as the stamps collecting faddists were forced to buy many stamps of higher denominations, which otherwise would never have been put in circulation. The whole thing savored too much of peanut politics to please the public, but at last even as high and mighty a personage as the Postmaster General had to give way to public indignation, and Jubilee Stamps were to be had at their proper value.

The Business Manager rode pluckily at the Bicycle Meet, and did a mile in 2.27. It was a matter of comment that he was not allowed to ride in the final heat, as he won his position and did the pacing for two laps.

Mr. James Gage represented Rockwood at the A. C. A. meet, and had the honor of paddling in the war canoe in the international race. It goes without saying that Canada won.

The game of Bowls is likely to become very popular at Rockwood, and the players are greatly encouraged by the results of the matches with Queen's College experts. In their first match they were defeated by a large number of shots, in their second venture they were but six behind, in their third but two in the minority, actually defeating Dr. Watson's crack rink by seven points. The Kingston papers declared that modesty alone prevented them from publishing the last score. We must claim equal modesty, although we are by no means ashamed of the score.

We have frequently heard of destructive conflagrations resulting from over heated axles on railway trains but never before of such a condition of affairs on a bicycle. Mr. W. Shea on his recent trip scorched a century between Toronto and Cobourg, and on the 99th mile it was found that the cotton waste in the rear hub had undergone spontaneous combustion. Mr. Shea finished the century at a warm pace, but the wheel was a total wreck.

It is evident that the Annual Sports are in the near future, and at present the Staff is divided in opinion in regard to the medal winner. It has resolved itself into a contest between married and single, and if condition is to count for anything each is certain of the prize. There is training by night, training in the early hours of morning, and enthusiasm all the time,



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American newspapers are funny reading in these days of the gold fever, and it is really difficult to get at the true American point of view. The U. S. first passes barbarous protective laws worthy of the Middle Ages, abuses everything having the word British or Canadian, and then calmly expects the whole world to offer her free trade, and quietly accept all the tall talk her rather crude "tail twisters" and jingo diplomats care to indulge in. Canadians have been very patient and forgiving, and have returned good for evil, and while even among Canadians there is a difference of opinion as to the wisdom of the Government in exacting a royalty at the Klondyke, still Americans should not object, as anything savoring of protection can not be odious to them. As far as the bluster about American miners taking possession of the Klondyke for the United States is concerned, they will find Major Walsh and his Mounted Police quite able and willing to manage the details of caring for Canadian interests. For the enthusiastic Americans who wish to run the whole world, a quiet study of the history of the war of 1812, will show them that the people who successfully resisted and defeated a heartless and bullying neighbor, who endeavored to steal our country by force, can repeat the lesson if necessary. In the meanwhile a perusal of the Golden Rule would not come amiss to some American statesmen and editors.

Miss Mary H. Smart, the well known cantatrice, visited Rockwood House in August. She has severed her connection with Moulton College, and has decided to give private lessons in Toronto, at her Studio in the Arcade. As Miss Smart is one of the most accomplished of our Canadian singers, we wish her success in her new venture.

The Granite Football Club will be an active organization this year. At present the boys are very busy getting up a Minstrel performance, in which the best local talent will take part. An Orchestra of sixteen pieces has been organized, and a clever little society play, called the "Revolving Wedge," will be put on the boards. This is a humorous skit on the popular craze for football, and is immensely funny, and at the same time devoid of roughness or objectionable features. The football teams will be strong, and should give a good account of themselves in the coming season. Practice will be commenced early in September, and already some of the boys are getting into condition.

Mr. W. Shakespeare Shea and Mr. A. Abernethy left in the middle of August for an extensive bicycle tour of the United States and Canada, during which the following cities will be visited if possible. Collinsby, Port Hope, Frenchman's Bay, Toronto, Hamilton, Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, Cape Vincent and Barrifield. We expect to hear glowing accounts of things in general on the return of the wanderers.

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick"—such was the motto on the flag flown by Dr. Websier when he attempted to take a yachting cruise in the Bay of Quinte recently. Better weather next time, Doctor.

Our Business Manager and the members of his crew on board the Viola, return thanks for many kindnesses shown by Mr. Clark Wright and his family, at Stella Point, while on their cruise up the Bay.

The Glencairn victories are more than popular this year, and are particularly gratifying to those who have watched the evolution of the small yacht in Canada.

## The Rockwood Review.

It is to be regretted that in some sports we are beginning to follow too closely the questionable methods of our American cousins, who have never looked up to the high English ideal in sporting matters. Still a change is coming even in American sports, and among the better class there is a desire to purify games, and adopt the only standard which can be accepted without reserve, that is, sport for sport's sake, rather than sport for the money to be made out of it, or the mere glory of triumphing over an opponent. Lacrosse has degenerated into a scramble for gate money, and professionalism under the thinnest kind of a veil permeates the whole lacrosse world, although many of the gentlemen who are taking part in the game would be extremely hurt if such an insinuation were made. Lacrosse is bad, but bicycling is probably worse. How many fast riders can lay claim to being amateurs in the true sense of the word? How many young fellows who like riding for "the fun of the thing" stay in the game? Scarcely one, all find out sooner or later what it means, viz. professionalism under a coat of amateur whitewash. Baseball is regarded as a game for professionals only. It is at least honest, and does not claim to be anything else—the players are generally artisans, and take what they can get, and do not pretend to do otherwise—they are ordinarily men who need the money they earn at the game, and accept the professional ear mark without a murmur. In bicycle racing, almost every kind of trick is encouraged, and deliberate attempts on the part of riders to injure each other are not suppressed by officials. As for the professional riders, a few such exhibitions as that given at the last meet here, will be quite enough to satisfy the public. Perhaps one of the severest criticisms of the dishonesty of the sport is to be found in the fact that the riders

cannot be trusted to do their level best in any race, and so anxious are officials to have records broken, that a pace-maker has to be supplied for each race. In what other sport is the artificial stimulus of a pace-maker required! Possibly time will root out the evils that are to-day spoiling a sport which would be most attractive under ordinary circumstances. It is more than probable that the makers of wheels, in their anxiety to keep before the public, have done much to bring the sport to its present state. No doubt the thing will cure itself in time, but strong hands are needed at the helm. It is a question if we have such, and the decreasing popularity of the C. W. A. is a pretty certain index that people are not satisfied. It is an unpleasant duty to find fault at any time, but wholesome truths are never amiss. It is with satisfaction we turn from the unpleasant features of the Bicycle meet, to review a really good part of the day's sport, viz. the Road race. Possibly fault might be found by some with the handicapping, but as a matter of fact it is almost impossible to make absolutely fair handicaps, and on the day in question it is probable that the handicaps were as well arranged as they could be. At all events the race was a great success, and the magnificent victory won by Webb Grass of Portsmouth was immensely popular. This boy is an ideal road rider, and those who knew his capabilities expected great things of him.

Dr. and Mrs. Forster returned from Lovesick Lake on the 8th August, greatly benefited by the outing. Dr. F. says that he got along "swimmingly" during the rainy week, and altogether had a grand time.

Dr. and Mrs. Millman renewed old friendship at Rockwood early in August, and spent a few days at Rockwood House.

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### BIRD ARTISTS.

That there is a consciousness of beauty on the part of birds is plainly shown by the manner in which many of them decorate their nests and surroundings, and, in some instances, themselves. Perhaps it may not be too much to claim that all birds are moved by an artistic sentiment, and that, while most of them are artistic in effect, many are artistic in both intention and effect. The appreciation of what is beautiful is a distinctly marked characteristic of most members of the feathered family, and it is only natural that the desire and ability to create beauty are found in various degrees of development among them. It is only a step from desire of beauty to an effort to produce it; but the effort and accomplishment occasionally bring about strange results, in birds as well as in man.

Striking examples of this bizarre form of decoration are found in the motmot, which disfigures its long tail-feathers in an effort at improvement, and in the hammer-head and gardener-bird, which delight in surrounding their homes with all sorts of bright-colored shells, pebbles, and feathers.

Sometimes the exhibition of artistic feeling is carried so far as to confound belief. Were it not for the corroborative testimony of scientific travellers, we might well doubt the tales that come to us of the baya of Farther India, of the gardener-bird, the collar-bird, and the half-dozen other birds whose strangely developed decorative instincts command our admiration and wonder.

The baya is one of the weaver-birds, whose peculiarity is that they build their nests by skilfully weaving into the desired shape long strips of grass or other material. The nest is a beautiful and ingenious piece of work, and is as compact as felt, with a long rope-like neck which is attached to the limb by a skilful knot, and with entrance

and exit by two holes in the bottom. The bird is very sociable, and in Burmah delights to build under the eaves of human habitations, where it is rarely disturbed. Often as many as thirty or forty of the curious, bottle-shaped nests may be seen hanging about one house and swaying gently to and fro in the breeze.

These nests are ingeniously planned, the upper portion being divided into two chambers, one for Mother Baya while she is sitting, and the other for Father Baya when he finds time for rest, while below is a large general living-room for the whole family as soon as the young Bayas grow strong enough to leave the upper chamber.

But the baya does not stop here. Now that creature comforts are provided, there is leisure to gratify his sense of the beautiful. Hardly has Mother Baya settled down when her husband, having put the finishing touches to the nest, hurries away in search of fresh lumps of clay, which he affixes to the inner walls of the nest. Then off again, before the clay has time to harden, to capture one of the fireflies of which there are myriads in the tropics. The living lamp is secured to the lump of clay, and lights up the little chamber with its phosphorescent glow. Then another and another are captured and fastened to the walls, until the patient little mother has light enough to cheer her during the long, dark night. After that more of the animated diamonds are fastened to the exterior, there to glitter and flash for the delectation of the outside world.

What a picture it is for the imagination, the quaint little hut with overhanging eaves nestling in the gloom of a tangled tropical forest, and with the gayly illuminated bird-nest lanterns shedding their soft phosphorescent light through the semi-darkness! However wretched and poor the little cottages may be, for the time being

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it loses its squalidness and is transformed into a fairy palace.

But even more wonderful are the miniature house and grounds of the gardener-bird, hidden away in the depths of some forest in far-away Papua. In this case the architectural and artistic genius of the bird is not expended upon the nest itself, which is a very commonplace affair, but finds scope elsewhere. One traveller, who had discredited the stories of the natives regarding the bird, gave the matter the most rigid and careful examination, and as a result declared the work of the gardener-bird to be one of the most extraordinary facts in natural history.

According to this naturalist, De Bessari, the bird-artist selects a level spot on which is growing a shrub with a stalk about the thickness of a walking-cane. This is made the central pillar of the edifice, and serves, at about two feet from the ground, to fasten the framework of the roof to. It is held firmly in place by an embankment of moss built up around the root. After the framework is formed, other stems are woven in and out until a water-proof roof is made. Then a gallery is constructed, running around the interior of the edifice. When completed the whole structure is three feet or more in diameter at the base, is tent-shaped, and has a large arched opening for a doorway.

Around the house are artistically arranged grounds, made green and lawn-like by being covered with patches of moss brought hither for the purpose. Bright-colored flowers and fruits and fungi are disposed about the premises; and even brilliant-hued insects are captured and placed here and there on the grounds to add to their attractiveness. The inner gallery of the house is also decorated with these bright objects, which are removed and replaced as they fade. Moreover, and with evident design, the material of which the house is

built is a species of orchid which retains its freshness for a very long time.

And all this elaborate work and skill is for the purpose of having a common meeting-place for social intercourse. The nest itself of the sober-colored little bird is placed at a distance from the highly-decorated public house and grounds, and, as already stated, is a very commonplace affair.

Almost incredible as these feats are, however, there are bower-birds in Australia which are but little behind the gardener-bird in architectural ability and decorative sentiment. The plan of work varies a little in different varieties, but all of them have one trait in common, the building of pleasure houses and grounds and the decorating of them with miscellaneous ornamental objects. All these birds are small, the gardener being scarcely as large as our robins, while his near relative the bower-bird is about the size of a pigeon.

The spotted collar-bird derives its name from a collar of long feathers about its neck, and is generally regarded as the most expert and æsthetic of the bower-builders.

As in the case of the gardener, the nest of the bower-bird is a very ordinary affair, all his skill and care being given to build and adorn the bower where he and his fellows may disport themselves. This edifice is made by building a platform of woven twigs about three feet long and two feet wide, along the sides of which are planted twigs held in place by being stuck into the earth and by stones laid against them. These twigs are brought together at the top, and other twigs are interwoven to give additional strength and imperviousness to rain. This completed, the interior of the bower is lined with a species of tall, soft grass so disposed that the heads almost meet at the roof. Stones of quite large size are so arranged as to keep the grass in

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position, and care is taken that no projecting spur of the twigs employed in building shall turn inward and thus make it possible for a careless reveller to injure his feathers.

The bower completed, the architects turn their attention to ornamentation, and the country for miles around is searched for such small objects as are pure white or brilliantly colored. Shells, feathers, pebbles, agates, seeds, bleached bones, and in fact anything decorative, even skulls, are brought and placed, not at hap-hazard, but in a systematic way which can indicate only intelligent forethought. Even pathways are marked out at each end of the bower by means of pebbles, while little ornamental hillocks are erected in front of each entrance. And then, after everything is completed, there is a grand festive gathering of the builders, during which the assembly rooms are thrown open to the public. The males are said to strut about and exhibit their fine feathers and graceful carriage, while the females look on in rapt admiration.

In some of the species, as the peacock, bird of paradise, and lyre-bird, this love for the beautiful shows itself in an exaggerated form of vanity, and is plainly founded on an appreciation of the beauty of their own plumage, for they not only take the utmost care to keep their feathers free from blemish, but evince a positive delight in their own beauty, now lifting their gorgeous feathers in a sort of silent ecstasy, and now strutting up and down with uncontrollable pride. But in the case of the gardener and bower-birds the motive in collecting the various decorative objects is plainly born of a desire to gratify a love of the beautiful, and not to minister to personal vanity; and the wholly festive nature of the structure is also a proof of the absence of any idea of utility in the impulse.

Another remarkable architect and

decorator is the hammer-head of Africa, which selects a sloping piece of ground as a foundation and on it erects a dome-shaped edifice of mud and twigs which sometimes covers an area of nearly fifty square feet. This is a very large dwelling for a bird only twenty inches in length, but the hammer-head has ideas of comfort and luxury that are far in advance of many of the native human denizens of Central Africa.

A level platform of wood is built at the higher end of the structure, and on this a carpet of some soft vegetable material is laid. A partition wall with a doorway is then raised to cut this portion off from the main room, for this is the mother's chamber and the nursery. Another part of the dwelling is then partitioned off for use as a store-room, and it is the male bird's duty to stock it with provisions against a bad season. The rest of the space in the house is retained by the male bird as a sort of guard-house and resting-place combined. The doorway to this dwelling is placed on the lower part of the slope, in order that rain may not cause an inundation of the habitation.

The hammer-head has peculiar ideas of decoration, and evidently prefers quantity to quality, for bits of bright-colored glass, buttons, bleached bones, knives, broken crockery seeds, and all such objects are sought for with equal eagerness. Anything which glitters and is portable is eligible to his art museum, and he has no qualms of conscience about appropriating whatever pleases his fancy. This freebooting is so well known that the natives upon losing any glittering object will at once make a visit to the nest of a hammer-head and overhaul its art treasures.

After everything has been done to the satisfaction of the female bird,—for among the hammer-heads the female is the architect and master-mechanic, while the

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male is only a journeyman builder, —the male bird divides his time between finding food and seeking objects wherewith to decorate the exterior of his mansion.

The motmot of South America is endowed with more than an ordinary degree of beauty, but in seeking to enhance its attractiveness succeeds in paralleling some of the most absurd of humanity's decorative freaks. The color of the bird is green, with a sable tuft edged with blue adorning its breast, and a blue-edged triangle surrounding the eye and extending to the ear. The tail is very long and graceful, and there is a crest upon its head which can be erected at will. But the motmot is not satisfied with this lavish endowment of nature, and essays an improvement. The two middle tail-feathers are very long and conspicuous, and, selecting these as the objects of its decorative design, the motmot cuts away with its serrated bill about an inch of the web on each side of the shafts, near the tips of the feathers. This gives them the appearance of miniature lawn-tennis bats. Nor is the work done in a mechanical or instinctive way, for often a too anxious fledging will begin the attempt at decoration too soon, before its tail has reached full growth, or will clip away on the wrong feather, thus disfiguring itself in motmot estimation.

Pewees, oven-birds, and many other species may be said to decorate their nests more as an effort at concealment than with an eye to beauty; but the humming-bird must be credited with some design for artistic effect when it so tastefully binds bits of moss or lichen to its tiny nest by means of spider-web silk. And the same plea may be urged for the pretty little Syrian nuthatch, which beautifies the outside of its clay nest with the iridescent gossamer wings of various insects; and perhaps for the dwarf swift of Africa, which gums her little ones to the palm-leaf on

which her nest is built, and there lets the living jewels flutter and chirp while the breeze tosses about the unsteady home. But in the last instance it is more the little one's safety than an attempt at decoration which actuates the mother-bird.

A more familiar instance of decorative design is found in our Baltimore oriole,—which, by the way, derives its name from wearing the colors of Lord Baltimore, black and yellow, and not because of its partiality for the vicinity of the city of Baltimore, as many suppose. Usually this oriole, or starling, as it should be called, finds the material for its nest in such bits of thread or fibre as can be found in the fields; but not infrequently it visits the human habitations in the vicinity and steals from them any material which may be exposed and which pleases its fancy. When the choice is given, it invariably selects the brightest and most gayly colored materials for its nest, passing by more serviceable stuff. This tendency of the bird has been experimented with by giving it the choice of a great variety of gayly-colored bits of string, and the resulting nests were as beautiful as human skill could possibly have made them. Indeed, the expertness and ingenuity of the bird in interweaving its materials are such that, according to the naturalist Wilson, one old lady, to whom he showed a nest, seriously proposed having the bird taught to darn stockings.

A similar tendency to use gayly colored materials is exhibited by the crimson-beaked weaver-birds of Africa, which in confinement are a source of interest to their captors from the beautiful nests they build, or weave, from bits of colored yarn and worsted combined with feathers in a most artistic manner. A bird of our own continent, the white-eyed flycatcher, shows a marked partiality for newspapers as building material. As it selects

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the smilax for a building-place, the combination of nest and site constitutes a very picturesque home.

These facts, which are only examples of many others, go to show that many acts of birds which have been ascribed to chance, or to some particular phase of instinct, as that of concealment, are really dictated, if by nothing more, at least by a self-conscious love of the beautiful. That there is more than chance in the selection of certain trees by certain birds is evidenced by the fact that there are usually plenty of other trees equally available for all practical purposes, but lacking in beauty, near at hand. The yellow-throated sericornis of Australia is an example of this studied selection of a spot for a nest. Whenever possible, it chooses a mass of moss pendent from a tree-branch in which to build, and, thus picturesquely hung, the nests swing about in the breeze, and the little ones are, as it were, born in mid-air. No less interesting are the curious shapes in which the nests are built. Here is a perfect wineglass, there a goblet; indeed, almost every conceivable form which can be bounded by a curve is constructed, the taste and skill alone of the individual builder seeming to govern the fashion. And, instinctive or not, as the case may be, harmony in color between the materials of the nest and its surroundings cannot be laid entirely to the effort at concealment, for often the nests will be most fearlessly exposed.

The builders are invariably those which, not resting contented with a mere shelter, however elaborately or ingeniously constructed, seek by various means to beautify their homes. Sometimes superfluous additions, purely decorative in their character, are made to the home; sometimes the effect of embellishment is produced by the selection of such materials as in themselves or in combination will please the eye, care being always taken not to sacrifice utility to

appearance, therein providing man with a valuable example; and then, again, sometimes—and this is the very acme of art among birds—purely ornamental and decorative structures are made, the sole purpose of which is to afford the builders and themselves pleasant meeting-places.

As a rule, it is only among the pretty-plumaged or sweet voiced birds that the most fully developed decorative sentiment is found. The outlaws and robbers of the bird-world, like the same classes among men, either build not at all or confine their efforts to the least that can safely be done, wasting no time on decoration. So, too, with those expatriated birds who, having been driven from their own kind, pass their lives upon the water, contenting themselves with a bare rock or a convenient sand-hole.

FRANK H. SWEET in Lippincotts.

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### AN AUGUST MIDNIGHT.

Against the heights and palisades of heaven  
Breaks like the sea a tide of throbbing stars:  
The lamps that light the Pleiades are seven,  
And in mid-sky burns the red planet Mars.

How sweet and silent are these summer nights,—  
How soft the breathing of the sleeping earth,  
While those far orbs go wheeling up the heights,  
Each in itself a world, whose golden girth.

Fixed in its place in the revolving chain,  
Moves to a spherul music heavenly clear,  
Which our dull ears, filled with earth's joy or pain,  
Heedless and unresponsive dimly hear.

And call it silence. Earth alas, is full  
Of discords, strifes, and cruelties and fears ;  
How should we note the harmonies that rule  
*The bright progression of the starry spheres.*

The vast and unknown country which is God's,  
The lovely islands of that heavenly sea,—  
Who knows but that released from earthly clods,  
And earthly masters, there the beast goes free.

The happy hunting grounds unshared of man,  
And rest and solace for the dumb despair,  
And the long tyranny of toil and pain,  
To these poor brothers of the earth and air.

K. S. McL.



## The Rockwood Review.

### NATURAL HISTORY NOTES.

BY W. YATES.

Dear Editors:—

Yours of the 2nd inst. was duly received, and frequently since, my thoughts have been directed toward the topic referred to in your note. Although I am not aware of having had extraordinary opportunities of gaining knowledge in that line of Natural History, I have preserved a few written memoranda of incidents occurring within range of one's own observation, or of that of one's associates and relatives, during the past three or four decades, but, as to give a full narration of the circumstances as they occurred, would perhaps take up a lot of epistolatory space; what I have here to offer may serve as contribution to stores already available, and some brief commentary.

As lately as during the past few days I was watching the antics of a chipmunk, who with a mate of his own species, was busy gathering beech nuts, and carrying them to an underground hoard or winter store house, one of the entrances to which I had not much trouble in finding. It is said to be one of the chipmunk traits, that they carry to a distance (in their cheek pouches) the earth or sand excavated in the process of making their underground burrow, or domicile. At any rate the entrance to the rendezvous of the rodent in this instance, was a hole in the forest floor, as if made with an inch and a half auger, and with not a particle of earth, sand or debris in the vicinity, and the neatness of the aperture contrasted noticeably, with the slovenly methods of some other earth burrowing animals. N. B.—The little artificer seemed much disturbed in mind by my lingering in his neighborhood, and vociferated vehemently a succession of 'chucks' that elicited responses of the same monotone from his or her coadjutor, which only ceased on my moving off to what the pair seemed to con-

sider a safe distance. As to whether the Chipmunk hibernates in the STRICT SENSE OF THE TERM is not positively known to the undersigned, that is, it is difficult to obtain information as to the reputed fact of their passing the winter in a state of sleep. Their habit of gathering large hoards of suitable food, and placing the same near to their wintry nest retreat, would seem to indicate activity and consciousness, during at least a portion of their underground existence. One cannot hear of an instance of the chipmunk being dug out in the winter time, although their hoards of nuts are sometimes found during that season and appropriated by boys; yet it is averred, that this squirrel never leaves its burrow after retreating underground at the beginning of winter, until the mild thawing days return, sometimes towards the last part of the month of March.

My son relates that when in the woods some years ago, in the Autumn some of his chums found a heap of sand, deposited on top of the dried fallen leaves, under a beech tree, around whose roots the fallen ripe beech nuts were strewn; and on closer observation the fact was obvious, that a chipmunk had been saving his steps, by carrying out earth in one direction, and beech nuts in the other.

N. B. The heap of sand was many yards from the doorway of the burrow.

You well know what capacious cheek pouches the striped squirrel is endowed with. Only a short time ago one was seen running along the bottom rail of the fence of our pea field, with such a monstrous looking head on him, that one thought he was diseased with cancer or tumour, or hydrocephalus. Our dog "Crockett," in a vicious moment nabbed sciurus; when after death the "swelled head" yielded up a heaped table spoonful of peas.

The rodents are much troubled with "ticks" as parasites, and also

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with the larve of a sort of gadfly, that buries itself beneath their skin about the throat or neck, and is difficult to expel.

The chipmunk chooses a spot in the edge of the forest near to a growing tree, or to a large log, for his winter domicile, and this strategy tends to secure him in undisturbed possession, in consequence of the difficulty of digging among tough and gnarled roots.

The chipmunk seems to be strictly sylvanas to its haunts, though visiting grain fields frequently and is accused of carrying off more grain than seems possible for it to consume; in this respect resembling the gopher of the Western Prairie. These interesting little quadrupeds seem about as numerous in this district, as they were when we first came to live in the bush, forty years ago.

All the squirrel tribe multiply rapidly when forest nuts and acorns abound, and one of my old neighbors used to remark of some of the bush settlers, who brought up large families of children: "Yes, they breed like chipmunks."

Some years since, a boy living near here, related to me that he had found a nest of chipmunks in a hollow log, one of which was beautifully marked with white spots on its sides, resembling the markings on the coat of a fawn, of the fallow deer.

There are two species of forest mice that are said to hibernate, one more persistently than the other. One that is known as the wood mouse, is of a lighter color than the house mouse; and with its hoard of food is frequently found occupying a small hollow high up in the heart of a tree, where they make a cosy nest of moss and other soft materials. In these instances the entrance hole is either underground or else is so small as to be impossible of ingress to robbers of larger size, than the proper owners of the vacancy. It is thought that these mice pass much of the severe cold

time of winter in sleep, but are usually quite lively and alert when accidentally evicted by the operations of the wood chopper.

The other species is called by some the American Dormouse. We have dug them out of their winter retreats in the month of February. These hibernaculums are in the midst of what are called by foresters "cradle knolls," little hammocks of earth in the midst of woods. The cosy nest is generally in the centre of the hillock, and has a crooked entrance tunnel, or passage, closed with leaves or other similar material, when the solitary winter resident is in occupancy. When broken in upon in winter time this species is in a state of torpor, and is as motionless as a dead quadruped, but can be soon revived by warmth. In those instances that came to our knowledge, the little fellows became moderately active after gentle warmth had been applied to them for an hour, and opened their eyes and ran about, and seemed to taste morsels of food that were offered to them.

In one instance that my brother tells of, the mouse when warmed into life, progressed by jumping rather than walking, and at one bound would clear the length of an ordinary table; in fact their agility was remarkable. After a while our little captive went again into the somnolent state, and was so unfortunate as to be made prey of by the house cat!! The curious circumstance about this species is their solitariness in retreat.

The common field mouse is believed to be active the whole winter, and the deep snows are a source of safety and protection to them. In our stubble fields, when the deep wintry snows disappear, great numbers of round soft matted balls of dried grass blades thickly bestrew the grounds; these are hollow and have afforded warmth and comfort to families of field mice, ever since the snowfall, for

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during dry frosty weather, the field mouse stays in its subterranean burrows, and lives on grass roots and seeds, but the snowfall is a bonanzato to them, and these large grassy nest conveniences, are always found in large numbers about the surface of stubble fields, where there is always considerable scattered or waste grain, or grass seed, and we know that not one of them, that is the nests, existed there previous to the snowfall. Thus these robust little rodents can move freely about beneath the snowy surface, and enjoy life, secure from the machinations of their great enemies, the owls, but still in danger of decimation from the mink and weasel.

A few days ago my son shot a large hawk, and I had the curiosity to examine the contents of its stomach. The bird was shot about sunrise, so perhaps had not broken its fast. The stomach was nearly empty, but contained fragments of the black cricket, heads and mandibles quite recognizable, also some sand and two teeth, which were evidently the incisors of a young mouse.

The most notable of our hibernating animals are probably the bear, racoon and woodchuck or marmot. The small plantigrade, that is, the racoon, is as near an approach to the bear type of existence as the adaptations here will not allow to survive, and they, as the immense cavernous hollow elm trees in the swamps disappear, must either change their habits or die out; indeed I am informed by a fur buyer who has gone into many counties of Ontario lately, that hunters assure him that in some instances lately, racoons have been captured, where they had taken refuge and found winter sleeping quarters, in the burrows of foxes!! This as regards racoons is a sign of the times. These animals are yet far from extinct hereabout, but primeval woods have been thought a necessity to them, and forests are

rapidly vanishing.

Perhaps I cannot do better than jot down a few traits anent our pet racoon of many years ago (1848). He was an interesting brute and lived in a large hollow log near to my cooper shop. Bull or other frogs were a favorite in his CUISINE, but he, like the ursines was omnivorous. New milk was his evident delight, and his grimaces each time of his getting a supply, were indescribably laughable. He was very fat when winter set in, and soon became dull and stupid acting, drowsed away the major part of December and January; if food was offered it was unnoticed, and night and day he lay rolled up nearly in the form of a ball, among the straw in his hollow log.

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