

Vol 7 No 4

June

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V 15. no. 4
June 1900



Rockwood

Review

A Monthly Journal devoted to
Literature, Natural History and

Local News



The Rockwood Review.

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VOL. VI.

KINGSTON, JUNE 1ST, 1900.

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OUR Amateur Life Saving crews had a preliminary practice on May 18th. The conditions were eminently favorable, the lake calm as a mirror, the wind straight up and down. The cry went forth that two men in a sailing skiff had just been upset in a squall, a mile from the dock. The Messrs. Shea, Coxworthy and Beattie were promptly on the dock and two skiffs launched. With great foresight Mr. W. Shea took the tiller in skiff No. 1, while Mr. J. Shea assumed similar duties in skiff No. 2; while George and Albert did heroic duty at the oars, the Coxswains read aloud chapters from the Nurses text-books, on rules to be observed in the rescue of the drowning, at the same time keeping an eye on the upset sailors. From time to time Billy S shouted out encouraging words through a megaphone which he had borrowed from the Gerda. In reply one of the sailors was seen to wave his hand. Albert and George redoubled their exertions and the skiffs were nose and nose when fifty feet from the wreck. At this moment six large birds rose from a floating log, and the illusion was dispelled. We have asked for ornithological opinions upon the variety of bird with the following replies:

Albert B—Gulls.

George C—Langshans.

Bill S—Wild Geese.

Jack S—Loons.

Daniel McNair—simply Mrs. Ross' domestic geese out for an airing. Now the great puzzle is who rowed back from the scene of distress, and why did the gentlemen concerned land at Portsmouth dock instead of Rockwood?

PALM Warblers have been very common during the season of migration.

A RECENT order issued by the Ontario Government makes all employees who entertain friends at the different institutions, pay for the meals of visitors at hotel rates.

The following Nurses passed the final examinations in the Rock-Training School for Nurses, and will receive their Diplomas at the Public Closing Exercises on Thursday, 31st ult. In order of merit the names are:—

E. Courtice,

H. McLean,

E. Bamford,

A. O'Rourke.

In the Primary Class the list of those who passed the examination is

B. McIntosh, { EQUAL.

G. Shields, }

B. Hopkins,

M. Taylor,

E. Reilly,

L. Stuart.

The prize winners were—
Bandaging—E. Courtice; Massage
H. McLean; General Proficiency
in Primary Class, B. McIntosh and
G. Shields.

In the next issue a full account of the Closing Exercises will appear.

The average marks obtained were very high in the Senior Classes and the competition in the Junior Class was keen.

Dr. Clarke, Dr. Forster and Mr. C. Y. Ford contributed the prizes presented.

Mr. Robin H. Mullin of Hamilton has succeeded Mr. C. Y. Ford, as Clinical Assistant. Mr. Ford leaves a host of warm admirers at Rockwood.

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AT LAST Portsmouth has decided to make an advance along the line so long advocated by THE REVIEW, and Aberdeen Park, under the energetic direction of the Reeve, is to become a credit to the village. If the villagers will back up Mr. Fisher and follow his example, there is no reason why thousands of visitors who pass this park in the summer will not remember it as one of the prettiest spots about Kingston. It has been suggested, that as soon as feasible, the residents who desire to aid in the improvement scheme should be asked to plant trees and see that they are properly cared for and protected for a year or so. Before this can be done satisfactorily, a by-law should be passed, prohibiting cattle from wandering at large, otherwise it will be useless to expect the roaming bovines to refrain from luxuriating on tender maple and elm sprouts. We know by bitter experience that these animals will essay anything in the eating line from clam shells to wire nails. The day has passed it is said when an Alderman's success at the polls depends on his attitude towards the cow and goose by-law. In the meanwhile let us congratulate Rerve Fisher on the "h istle" he has developed.

THE KINGSTON NEWS thinks that all the available material in the matrimonial line in Portsmouth is being used up by the half dozen or so approaching marriages. The reporter who wrote the item should remember that Rockwood is within the limits of the village, and the Nurses at the Hospital occasionally extend invitations to their friends and admirers, when they give a dance. It is questionable, after the sweeping assertion made, whether that youth reporter will be able to qualify as either.

MR. HUGH ROSS has been reading up the literature of hydrophobia with a good deal of interest, and wonders how it was in the

days of old the plague of dogs was not thought of as a punishment in Egypt. There is a move on foot to have Rockwood annexed to Kingston, simply for the purpose of receiving the benefits of the new dog by-law. It would cause no bad feeling when put in force, simply because it would hit no one, for strange to say no matter how many dogs are to be seen about here, no one pleads ownership—especially when the assessor is on his rounds.

OTTERBURN PENRICE alias "Bill," Dr. Forster's well known shadow, took everything worth winning in the Pug Classe, at Montreal, while Mr. Ford's Candidate did the same thing among fox terriers. These winners are magnificent specimens. If there had been any prizes though, just for good ordinary yellow dogs we could have won everything in sight by sheer force of numbers.

LAST month a good deal of doubt was expressed as to the truth of the items detailing some of the clever sayings of well known patients. They were short of the truth, because not half as full of humor as the original remarks seemed, when Pat garnished them by his rich brogue and animated them by that merry eye twinkle so peculiarly his own. If we were to attempt to exhaust the subject of anecdotes connected with some of the well known characters we should undertake a severe task. The Old Duke of York, who died a few years ago was a prolific source of amusement to a church congregation, as well as the cause of embarrassment to the parson, when in a critical frame of mind. The Duke was well aware of the fact that it is considered very bad form to say what you think during a clergyman's discourse, but that did not deter him from following the line a sterner sense of duty dictated. Of course people have been heard to criticize sermons out of church, but it is

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rarely the clergyman has the benefit of the criticism. The Duke of York was at least honest, and the child-like simplicity of his well-known face added to the effect of his remarks. "All men are liars" announced the parson "so they are, so they are" murmured the Duke "but let us say just a little prayer for the women, for they are a great deal worse than the men." When we were exhorted to put not our trust in the flesh the Duke angrily said "tut, tut man, talk sense, we have roast beef seven times a week and couldn't get along without it, it's good healthy food even if we do get a little sick of it." When the hymn "What shall the Harvest Be" was solemnly announced on a cold winter's day, the Duke was greatly annoyed at the want of common sense displayed. "Any fool could guess that riddle at this time of the year" he cried, "the idea of sowing seed in the middle of winter—the man must be crazy." When the sermon had reached a length that strained the Duke's limits of endurance he gravely stood up on a chair and politely said "We've had quite enough thank you, quite enough"—and we generally had.

It is surprising how much may be seen in a short time if one will but observe closely. To illustrate the point we took mental notes of what we saw in the way of birds and flowers during a short stroll a few days ago. We were looking more particularly for birds, otherwise the list of flowers would be more complete. Birds seen—Crows, purple grackles, cow birds, migratory shrikes (five), robins, swallows, white bellied & barn sand, chimney swifts, shore larks, meadow larks, sparrows, song, vesper, English, & white throated, Orioles, woodpeckers, golden shafted hairy downy and red headed, blue jays, American bittern, red shouldered hawks (5), red starts, Blackburnian and summer warblers, red eyed vireos, oven birds, cat birds, Wilson's thrush, spotted sandpipers

chickadees, several undetermined varieties of warblers, King birds, crested flycatchers, T. boblinks, ruffed grouse, Kingfisher. Not only were these birds seen but many interesting things noted in regard to most of them, for example the drumming of the ruffed grouse—the determination of sand swallows to build in a knoll in a field, a most exposed and unsuitable location, in the preponderance of male orioles—the efforts of the bittern to escape detection by remaining absolutely still while under observation, and so on through the list. Six varieties of violets were noticed and collected among the commoner flowers the following observed: Wild Ginger (Asarus) Pepper root (Dentaria) Blood Root White and Red Trilliums, Hepaticas (Acutiloba), Squirrel Corn, Claytonia, Ranunculus (Abortiva), Caltha Palustris, Polygala paucifolia, Adder's tongue and so on. Black squirrels were also seen and it is quite certain that birds we have forgotten to mention were observed.

Baltimore Orioles, Oven Birds, Maryland Yellowthroats and Red-breasted Nuthatches arrived on May 9th.

Large numbers of Warblers, Kinglets, White-throated Sparrows, Summer Warblers and Brown Creepers appeared in Rockwood Grounds on May 3rd.

Seven weddings are scheduled to take place in Portsmouth at an early date.

Dr. Edgar, of Hamilton, visited Dr. Forster the latter end of May.

BIRTH.

Ross—At Hatwood, Portsmouth, on Sunday, April 29th, the wife of Hugh Ross, of a daughter.

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OLD VERSUS NEW VIOLINS.

I have been somewhat interested in the controversy going on in the columns of *THE GLOBE*, between Mr. Thomas C. Dawson and Mr. E. R. Parkhurst, on the subject of violins. Mr. Parkhurst whose well trained ear and artistic sense enable him to speak with authority, is quite right in his contention that good old violins are infinitely superior in tone to good modern instruments. The writer has had ample opportunity to verify this well established fact, and frankly admits that at one time he was as sceptical in regard to it, as Mr. Dawson is at present. In my collection are to be found typical examples of good makers, old and new. The best specimen of the modern violin is a faithful copy of the Dolphin Strad, made by a maker whose name stands among the highest, and whose skill is recognized by all. The workmanship is perfect—the varnish everything that could be desired, the tone about the best I have ever heard in a new violin, (1894) and yet it cannot stand the test of daily comparison with Cremonese instruments. What is more significant still, is the fact that the maker does not profess to be able to equal or surpass the qualities of the best Italian instruments, but feels confident that time will add the mellowness that no skill can impart. A test such as that proposed by Mr. Dickson is not required, in fact would not prove anything that has not already been well established. The great violinists almost invariably play on the masterpieces of the Cremonese luthiers, and they do so because their artistic instincts guide them in deciding what is best for themselves and most pleasing to their audience. An unerring instinct directs a public player to select an instrument possessed of sympathetic tone, and this indescribable sympathetic quality is the characteristic of the best Cremonese vio-

lins. I doubt if it exists in any of the modern instruments. Even the Lupot violins have not in every instance acquired it, although the best specimens will, it is said, eventually rank in the first flight. I was particularly struck by this fact a few years ago, when I thought seriously of purchasing a Lupot, said by Hill & Son of London to be one of the finest specimens of this maker to be found. It was a magnificent copy of a Joseph Guarnerius, as perfect almost as when it left the hands of its maker. In tone it was grand; brilliant, refined and full, and yet lacked the exquisite quality violinists insist on recognizing as the essential of a really great instrument. After all, violinists as well as audiences must be the judges of what is best, and it cannot be said that they are blind to the business side of their profession. If modern violins, which are comparatively cheap, would answer the artistic requirements of public performers, modern violins would be used, and empty sentiment would count for little. The dollars and cents value of the good Cremonese instruments is founded on something more substantial than sentiment—although a number of collectors, with whom collecting is merely a fad will occasionally store up a lot of trash—for after all there were thousands of bad fiddles turned out in the old days, as well as good ones. As far as workmanship is concerned, the conscientious luthiers of the present, are just as capable as those of the past—and while the great masters, left little room for further advances in the evolution of the violin, there is a possibility that some minor improvements may be effected. It is a certainty that time alone can impart that "something" to the tone which Cremonese instruments of the best class, alone possess.

C. K. CLARKE.

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SUNDOWN IN MID-MAY.

The smell of the warm wet earth after the April rain,
And the lispng pipe of frogs, broken off and renewed again
As the foot of the stroller advances, and passes the pool in the lane :—

The rosy clouds of sunset, with a rift of heavenly blue,
Pierced for the level sunbeams to bring a message through
Of the old days gone and over, and the coming of the new :—

The bees in the maple blossoms that tassel the leafless boughs,—
The crowing of cocks in the farmstead, the lowing of waiting cows,
The milkmaid's musical call, with her hand at her level brows,

Shading her eyes, and calling co-bos to Cherry and Spot,
Buttercup, Spot and Brownie, up from the pasture lot
Stepping in rhythmic measure of the summers unforgot ;—

These are the sounds I hear at the close of the quiet day,
Softened and sweet in the distance, broken and far away,
Looking from my high window at sundown in Mid-May.

Sweet is the shadowy landscape sinking to rest and sleep ;—
No sound of the far-off battle clanging o'er valley and steep,
No moan of the wounded and dying—no murmur of them that weep :—

But the earth lies still and silent under its solemn trees,
Nor hears the din of fighting men across the alien seas,
Nor heeds the roar of English guns for British victories.

The graves are green in churchyards here, and green the flowery plain—
Their graves are on the rocky veldt beyond the Indian main,
Our Soldiers of the Empire who will never come again.

—K. S. McL.

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[The following interesting extracts from a Soldiers' Diary were furnished by Mr. William Yates, of Hatchley, who copied them from manuscripts in the possession of his brother. There will be several instalments to publish, and Mr. Yates wishes "all rights reserved." The diary proves, in a very practical manner, that the life of a Soldier is not all glory, and the matter of fact way in which the hardships are detailed, shows that Private Fox had no illusions regarding the seriousness of the career of a Tommy Atkins.]

Extracts from a narrative of George Fox, Private in the Seventh Regiment Foot, who enlisted at Newcastle, under Lyme, Staffordshire, England, September, 1766; joined the regiment at Edinburgh, in March, 1767; moved to Perth same year; next moved with the Regiment to Aberdeen, 1768; thence to Fort George the same year; thence to Inverness, 1769, also to Fort William and Fort Augustus same year, 1769; was sent to Newcastle with a Recruiting Party in October, 1769, rejoined the Regiment at Berwick-on-Tweed, in 1770; thence marched to Chatham (300 miles) September to November, 1770; thence sent to Plymouth in September, 1772; from Plymouth was sent into Worcestershire with a Recruiting Party October, 1772; rejoined the Regiment at Plymouth, March, 1773; embarked at Plymouth for Quebec April 16th, 1775; landed at Quebec July 2nd; then went into Country Cantonments for ten days.

— "Quebec is situated near the mouth of the River St. Lawrence, consists of the higher and the Lower Town, the lower is almost as large as the upper, and is walled; the Port Louis Gate is at the west end of the town; Port St. John North West; Paris Gate North; Sally Port Gate east going down to the lower town. At Cape Diamond is a strongly fortified battery, southwest, the Grand Battery is Northeast; the

Governors with a Deputy Governors Barracks for two Regiments, occupies almost a square quarter of a mile. Quebec has three churches, two French and one English—besides other meeting houses, none in the lower castle east. Our Regiment soon moved to St. Johns, said to be twenty-five miles above Montreal, which is about 200 miles above Quebec and situated not far from the edge of lakes which feed the North River, fifty-two of our men were left at Quebec, soon went to Santaguæ in a detachment consisting of twenty men to watch the motions of some rebels in Nova Scotia, 70 miles south-east. We lived ten days upon fish, in October went to the relief of St. John's (Guy Carlton went to Montreal) Col. McInain of the Seventy-first took four field pieces 200 miles up to St. Denis; 1200 men, including Canadians, and there we heard that St. Johns was taken and G. Carlton defeated and we received orders to go to Quebec A challenge was received from the American General Montgomery. Carleton, there landed 500 men that were pressed in McLains, had also 52 of the Seventh and 70 of the Seventy-first Regiment. At St. Denis fired at the Army across the river, and that night lay under arms, received a despatch at 11 o'clock at night from Guy Carlton to retreat to Sorel twenty-five miles below. Retreated that night, but before we had raised a breast work, we perceived the enemy following us, which compelled us to take our sloop of war and a brig, an express soon came from Quebec that General Arnold was besieging Quebec with 1200 men, Col. Maclain went down the river with his seventy men and left us with the brig and the sloop and we RODE QUARRANTEEN for twelve days and the rebels opened a twelve pound battery upon us which made us cut our cables and make out for sea. On our passage we took Guy Carlton aboard and we were told 12000 Americans had passed on their way to Mon-

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treal. Arnold came from Boston to Quebec, 300 miles, through dense woods, with 1200 men and 300 Indian savages. Through the fatigues of the march the Indians deserted in numbers and fled, as there was great scarcity of provisions and the men were obliged to cut the sprouts and even the bark of trees to eat, and in navigating the streams in their bateaux they spoiled the greatest part of their ammunition so that it was said that they had but three rounds per man; when they arrived at Point Levi, opposite Quebec, they gave three cheers to alarm the Garrison, but soon after their arrival they crossed the river and went into country cantonments for country quarters and prepared for a regular siege to the town, and when MacLain arrived at Quebec he found but two guns mounted and in position, but when we came down he had mounted several others and while Arnold went to Montreal to join Montgomery we were employed mounting guns and fortifying expecting a battle about the middle of October, the enemy under Montgomery came and laid siege to Quebec. The first battery they erected against us was opposite St. John's Gate, that leads to the Plains of Abraham. Their battery consisted of one mortar and four twelve pounders—the next battery they erected was a "Festoon" Battery over the river at Point Levi, opposite the lower town, consisting of six twelve pounders, the third battery they erected at Abraham's Plains for Port Louis of four nine pounders. The fourth battery over St. Charles River. The enemy continued the siege until the 31st December, playing their batteries night and day, and we the same—balls by day and shells by night. On that day, by 5 o'clock in the morning, they attempted storming the Garrison—General Arnold, with 800 men attacked the north end of the Lower Town, and took a Battery of Six Twelve Pounder Guns:

Montgomery with 1200 men, intended storming the south end of the lower town, but he lost his life in the attempt being killed, along with an Orderly Sergeant and a Corporal of Artillery, by a canister shot: Gen. Arnold also being wounded in the leg in the beginning of the action, his whole detachment being either killed or taken prisoners.

AT YAIIDZU.

Under a bright sun the old fishing town of Yaidzu has a particular charm of neutral color. Lizard-like, it takes the gray tints of the rude gray coast on which it rests—curving along a little bay. It is sheltered from heavy seas by an extraordinary rampart of boulders. This rampart, on the water-side, is built in the form of terrace-steps, the rounded stones of which it is composed being kept in position by a sort of basket-work woven between rows of stakes driven deeply into the ground—a separate row of stakes sustaining each of the grades. Looking landward from the top of the structure, your gaze ranges over the whole town, a broad-space of gray-tiled roofs and weather-worn gray timbers, with here and there a pine grove marking the place of a temple court. Seaward, over leagues of water, there is a grand view, a jagged blue range of peaks crowding sharply into the horizon, like prodigious amethysts, and beyond them, to the left, the glorious spectre of Fuji, towering enormously above everything. Between sea wall and sea there is no sand, only a gray slope of stones, chiefly boulders, and these roll with the surf so that it is ugly work trying to pass the breakers on a rough day. If you once get struck by a stone wave—as I did several times—you will not soon forget the experience. * * *

At certain hours the greater part of this rough slope is occupied by ranks of strange looking craft,

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fishing boats of a form peculiar to the locality. They are very large—capable of carrying forty or fifty men each, and they have queer high prows, to which Buddhist or Shinto charms ("manori" or "shugo") is furnished for this purpose from the temple of the Goddess of Fuji. The text reads: "Fuji-san chojo Sengen-gu dai-gyo manzoku," meaning that the owner of the boat pledges himself, in case of good fortune at fishing, to perform great austerities in honor of the divinity whose shrine is upon the summit of Fuji.

In every coast province of Japan—and even at different fishing settlements of the same province—the form of boats and fishing implements are peculiar to the district or settlement. Indeed, it will sometimes be found that settlements, within a few miles of each other, respectively manufacture nets or boats as dissimilar in type as might be the inventions of races living thousands of miles apart. This amazing variety may be in some degree due to respect for local tradition, to the pious conservatism that preserves ancestral teaching and custom unchanged through hundreds of years; but it is better explained by the fact that different communities practice different kinds of fishing, and the shapes of the nets or the boats made at any one place are likely to prove on investigation the inventions of special experience. The big Yaidzu boats illustrate this fact. They were devised according to the particular requirements of the Yaidzu fishing industry, which supplies dried "katsuo" (bonito) to all parts of the Empire, and it was necessary that they should be able to ride a very rough sea. To get them in or out of the water is a heavy job, but the whole village helps. A kind of slipway is improvised in a moment by laying flat wooden frames on the slope in a line, and over these frames the flat-bottomed vessels are hauled up or down by means of long ropes. You will see a hun-

dred or more persons thus engaged in moving a single boat—men, women and children pulling together in time to a curious melancholy chant.

The big boats, with holy texts at their prows, are not the strangest objects on the beach. Even more remarkable are the bat-baskets of split bamboo—baskets six feet high and eighteen feet round, with one small hole in the dome-shaped top. Ranged along the sea wall to dry, they might at some distance be mistaken for habitations or huts of some sort. Then you see great wooden anchors, shaped like ploughshares, and shod with metal; iron anchors, with four flukes; prodigious wooden mallets, used for driving stakes and various other implements, still more unfamiliar, of which you cannot even imagine the purpose. The indiscribable antique queer-ness of everything gives you that weird sensation of remoteness—of the far away in time and place—which makes one doubt the reality of the visible. And the life of Yaidzu is certainly the life of many centuries ago. The people, too, are the people of Old Japan; frank and kindly as children—good children—honest to a fault, innocent of the further world, loyal to the ancient traditions and the ancient gods.

I happened to be at Yaidzu during the three days of the "Bon," or Festival of the Dead, and I hoped to see their beautiful farewell ceremony of the third and last day. In many parts of Japan the ghosts are furnished with miniature ships for their voyage—little models of junks or fishing craft, each containing offerings of food and water and kindled incense; also a tiny lantern or lamp, if the ghost-ship be dispatched at night. But at Yaidzu lanterns only are set afloat; and I was told that they would be launched after dark. Midnight being the customary hour elsewhere, I supposed that it was the hour of farewell at Yaidzu also; and I rashly indulged in a

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nap after supper, expecting to wake up in time for the spectacle. But by ten o'clock, when I went to the beach again, all was over, and everybody had gone home. Over the water I saw something like a long swarm of fireflies—the lanterns drifting out to sea in procession; but they were already too far to be distinguished except as points of colored light. I was much disappointed; I felt that I had lazily missed an opportunity which might never again return—for these old "Bon" customs are dying rapidly. But in another moment it occurred to me that I could very well venture to swim out to the lights. They were moving slowly. I dropped my robe on the beach, and plunged in. The sea was calm, and beautifully phosphorescent. Every stroke kindled a stream of yellow fire. I swam fast, and overtook the last of the lantern fleet much sooner than I had hoped. I felt that it would be unkind to interfere with the little embarcations, or to divert them from their silent course, so I contented myself with keeping close to one of them and studying its details.

The structure was very simple. The bottom was a piece of thick plank, perfectly square, and measured about ten inches across. Each one of its corners supported a slender stick about sixteen inches high and these four uprights, united above by crosspieces, sustained the paper sides. Upon the point of a long nail, driven up through the centre of the bottom, was fixed a lighted candle. The top was left open. The four sides presented five different colors—blue, yellow, red, white and black; these five colors respectively symbolizing ether, wind, fire, water and earth—the five Buddhist elements which are metaphysically identified with the five Buddhas. One of the paper-panes was red, one blue, one yellow; and the right half of the fourth pane was black, while the left half, uncolored, represented white. No "kai-

myo" was written upon any of the transparencies. Inside the lantern there was only the flickering candle.

I watched those frail glowing shapes drifting through the night, and even as they drifted scattering under impulse of wind and wave, more and more widely apart. Each, with its quiver of color, seemed a life afraid—trembling on the blind current that was bearing it into the outer blackness. * * * Are we not ourselves as lanterns launched upon a deeper and a dimmer sea, and ever separating further and further one from another as we drift to the inevitable dissolution? Soon the thought light in each burns itself out, then the poor frames, and all that is left of their once fair colors, must melt forever into the colorless Void. * * *

Even in the moment of this musing I began to doubt whether I was really alone—to ask myself whether there might not be something more than a mere shuddering of light in the thing that rocked beside me—some presence that haunted the dying flame, and was watching the watcher. A faint, cold thrill passed over me—perhaps some chill uprising from the depths—perhaps the creeping only of a ghostly fancy. Old superstitions of the coast recurred to me, old vague warnings of peril in the time of the passage of souls. I reflected that were any evil to befall me out there in the night—meddling, or seeming to meddle, with the lights of the dead—I should myself furnish the subject of some weird legend. * * * I whispered the Buddhist formula of farewell—to the lights—and made speed for the shore.

As I touched the stones again I was startled by seeing two white shadows before me, but a kindly voice, asking if the water was cold set me at ease. It was the voice of my old landlord Otokichi, the fishseller, who had come to look

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for me, accompanied by his wife.

"Only pleasantly cool," I made answer, as I threw on my robe to go home with them.

"Ah," said the wife, "it is not good to go out there on the night of the 'Bon'!"

"I did not go far," I replied. "I only wanted to look at the lanterns."

"Even a Kappa gets drowned sometime," protested Otokichi. "There was a man of this village who swam home a distance of seven 'ri,' in bad weather, after his foot had been broken. But he was drowned afterward."

"Seven 'ri' means a trifle less than eighteen miles. I asked if any of the young men now in the settlement could do as much.

"Probably some might," the old man replied. "There are many strong swimmers. All swim here—even the little children. But when fisherfolk swim like that it is only to save their lives."

"Or to make love," the wife added. "like the Hashima girl." "Who?" queried I.

"A fisherman's daughter," said Otokichi. "She had a lover in Ajiro, several 'ri' distant, and she used to swim to him at night, and swim back in the morning. He kept a light burning to guide her. But one dark night the light was neglected—or blown out—and she lost her way and was drowned * * * * 'The story is famous in Idzu.'"

A HAPPY ISSUE.—At a recent dinner given by a prominent club man who is unusually young for the prominence he has won in his chosen field rose to respond for the first time in this city to a toast. His beardless face was flushed and his manner embarrassed. In hesitating tones he began: "Gentlemen: Before I entered this room I had an excellent speech prepared. Only God and myself knew what I was going to say. Now God alone knows." And he sat down.

FOLLOWED INSTRUCTIONS

"I left my husband's death notice here this morning," said the widow. "Yes," said the bright clerk in the publication office of the Daily Squib. "Now," continued the widow. "I want you to add to the notice 'Gone to Rest' in an appropriate place." "Yes, madam," replied the bright clerk, and the next morning she read: "Gone to rest in an appropriate place."

A QUIET RETORT.—To a young man who stood on the street corner in Chicago, peaceably smoking a cigar, approached the elderly and impertinent reformer of immemorial legend. "How many cigars a day do you smoke?" inquired the meddler in other people's affairs. "Three," patiently replied the youth. "How much do you pay for them?" continued the inquisitor. "Ten cents each," confessed the youthful sinner. "Don't you know, sir," continued the sage, "that if you would stop smoking and save up that money, by the time you are as old as I am you might own that big building on the corner?" "Do you own it?" answered the smoker. "No, I don't," replied the old man. "Well, I do," said the young man.

AN IRISH OFFICER, addressing his men, who had just returned from a somewhat fruitless expedition said: "You were no doubt disappointed because this campaign gave you no opportunity to fight; but if there had been any fighting there would have been many absent faces here to-day."

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FOX FARMING IN ALASKA.

F. A. L'CAS.

From its isolation its hilly, rocky character, and from the vast numbers of birds which resort to it for a breeding place, the island of St. George, Alaska, is admirably suited for the abode of the fox, the great drawback being the lack of food during the winter. This lack of food not only acts directly on the foxes by starving them, but causes them to abandon the island and go out on the floe ice whenever this drifts down upon the island, as it often or usually does in early spring. In the summer the foxes feed upon birds and eggs and to some slight extent upon dead seal puppies and the placenta dropped from those recently born. The bodies of the seals of the killing grounds are eaten to some extent, but these bodies rapidly decay, and, besides during the killing season the supply of other food is most abundant.

Since the advent of pelagic sealing the foxes have had an abundant, though brief, supply of food in the fall of the shape of the seal puppies whose mothers have been taken at sea, and who have starved in consequence. In 1896 every starved puppy was devoured by the foxes, so that no actual count of them could be made, but, from an estimate made by comparison with the known facts of St. Paul Island, their number was probably considerably over 2,000, while in previous years it was much greater. The foxes have fed to some extent on the Pribilof lemming, "*Lemmis nigripes*," and seem to have nearly exterminated the little creature, since but one specimen was seen in 1896-97. In winter the foxes eat anything that comes to hand, extraordinary as it may seem, subsisting to a considerable extent on sea urchins, "*Strongylocentrotus drobachiensis*," which are gathered at low tide. Considerable grass is found in their

stomachs in winter and some worms, which they scratch up on the killing grounds, as well as with a few tunicated and an occasional fishbone; but it may be said that in winter the foxes lead a precarious existence. Some not very energetic attempts have been made to introduce the cottontail rabbit St. Paul Island, and the cottontail and jackrabbit elsewhere, but so far without success; the proposed introduction of the spermophile "*Spermophilus empetra*," which is found at Unalaska, would probably succeed better.

On the Aleutian Islands dried salmon has been used for feeding the foxes in winter, and on St. George the experiment was also tried of using cracklings and linseed meal. This latter was evidently not to the foxes' taste, but it was found that by mixing the meal with seal oil it was eagerly devoured. In 1897 Mr. J. H. Judge, of the Treasury Department, who was stationed for several years on the Island of St. George, and who has taken great interest in the question of the fur seal and the blue fox, decided to use the carcasses of the fur seals taken for skins, but, as the catch on the Island of St. George has of late years become so small that the bulk of the meat is eaten by the inhabitants, a number of bodies were salted and brought over from the neighboring Island of St. Paul. Mr. Judge tried the experiment of putting down fresh carcasses in silos, as well as of salting them, and this plan has, with one exception, been entirely successful. The exception was when some seventy foxes effected an entrance into one of the pits, where they feasted to such an extent before being discovered that a few died. The salted bodies were freshened by protracted soaking before being fed to the foxes. As the trapping season drew near these carcasses were placed at night in the vicinity of one of the sheds, near which it was proposed to set traps, and, starting with four bodies, the

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number was increased as found necessary, until no less than ten were consumed each night.

When all was ready trapping was begun, box traps being used, in order that the foxes taken might be examined to ascertain their sex the deadfalls formerly employed killing whatever entered, regardless of sex or condition. All females were turned loose after being marked by clipping a ring of fur from the tail, an exception being made when white foxes were caught, all of these being killed in the endeavor to produce a breed none of which should turn white in winter.

As the use of box traps proved to be somewhat slow, a small inclosure or corral was hastily constructed adjoining a large shed, and so arranged that the entrance could be readily closed by a man stationed within the building. This plan proved an immediate success, the foxes entering the inclosure without hesitation, so that from five to forty could be taken at one time. Having been shut in the corral, the animals were driven through a small door cut in the side of the shed into a room where they were caught by means of forked sticks pressed over their necks, these being superseded by boards with a shaped opening in one end. The foxes were then passed, one at a time, through a small door into a second room, where they were received by a band of men and examined as to sex. The females were all released, while the majority of the males were killed by breaking their necks, the intention being to leave one male to every three females. All foxes liberated were marked as previously noted, and this mark was repeated whenever an individual was captured more than once, with the result that by the end of the season some animals had lost most of the fur on their tails.

The possibility of rendering the foxes polygamous remains to be seen, and it will naturally take a

series of careful observations extending over a number of years to definitely determine this point. At present it can only be said that the catch of the second season on St. George did not fall below that of the first, and some observations show that the male foxes will have intercourse with more than one female, while the bringing together of the animals that would under natural conditions be widely scattered is a most important factor in rendering them polygamous. The curious fact presents itself that in every instance save one the number of males taken exceeded that of females, even toward the close of the trapping season, but it is, of course, possible that this may be due to the attraction of the females for the males and not to any excess in the birthright of the latter.

Mr. Judge's observations have made it clear that the foxes have no predilection for any particular locality, the question of food being the main factor in determining their distribution. This was proved by trapping at various parts of the island, the result being that comparatively few animals were taken save at the village, while those caught at one locality would subsequently be taken at another. Consequently by judicious baiting they can be readily enticed from all parts of the island to the vicinity of the village, where they can be taken by wholesale, in such manner that the total number of foxes on the island can be pretty nearly ascertained, as well as the proportions of the sexes. The blue foxes seem to lack the proverbial craft of the other species, for not only did they readily enter the pen but, as shown by the marks, they entered again and again, some individuals being captured no less than five times, while a few were taken twice in succession at intervals of about ten minutes. That the scent of man about the corral should not deter the foxes from entering is not surprising, since, except during the trapping

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trapping season, they have no cause to fear him. Such preparations as that of taking the animals out in a boat so that they may be killed over water seem rather absurd, the more so when pressed by hunger they will even devour the skinned bodies of their own species. One piece of information desired, as to whether or not the foxes would wander off on the ice floes when they were being fed, has not yet been obtained, because curiously enough, during the two years that the experiment has been made the ice has not happened to touch St. George.

Incidentally, Mr. Judge has made observations on the food, size and condition of foxes and has shown that the pelt does not improve with age, as has commonly been stated, but that the yearlings and two-year-olds have the best

fur. As for weight, the smallest fox weighed a little over eight pounds, the largest over a trifle more than fourteen, the great majority weighing in the vicinity of ten pounds. The outcome of these experiments will be awaited with much interest and if by a little little artificial selection and environment a naturally monogamous animal can be rendered polygamous, the supply of blue fox furs will be materially increased. The table appended gives the results of the catch for the season of 1898-99 and the total number of animals must seem rather surprising to one familiar with the island. It only remains to add that the greatest number taken in any one evening was 245, of which 61 were killed; the second best night's work was 211, and of these 57 were killed.

Foxes taken on St. George during the season of 1898-99:

Male blue foxes trapped and killed.....	334
Male blue foxes otherwise killed.....	34
White foxes killed, male and female.....	18
Male blue foxes trapped and released.....	110
Female blue foxes trapped and released....	389
<hr/>	
Total.....	885



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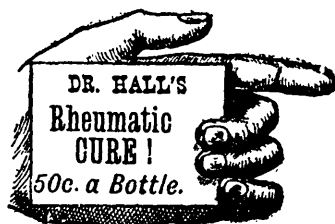
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