

May 1, 1900



Rockwood

Review

A Monthly Journal devoted to
Literature, Natural History and
Local News.



The Rockwood Review.

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VOL 6.

KINGSTON, MAY 1ST, 1900.

No. 3.

ONE of our patients, whose rotund figure and rubicund face are well known to most residents of Portsmouth and vicinity, and whose trenchant criticisms of persons and things in general are always worth listening to, even if delivered in decidedly vigorous Anglo-Saxon, gets off an unusually good thing occasionally. A few days ago a jaunty youth stepped off the street car and meeting our friend at the gate, said rather airily, "Hello Pat which is the way to Rockwood." "Begorra, who told ye me name was Pat" said our rotund friend. "Oh, all I had to do to know that was to look at you." "Well then if ye are as clever as all that ye'll aisily know the road to the Lunatic Asylum when ye see it."

PAT has very limited faith in the honesty of many of the residents of Portsmouth and is not slow to point out what he supposes to be the weak points of those he suspects. He was in the habit of attending one of the churches in the neighborhood and conducted himself with propriety until one celebrated occasion, although time and again it was more than apparent that he was having great difficulty in repressing his feelings. On this occasion, a collection was being taken up and Pat watched the progress of the plate with great interest until it reached a member of the congregation, upon whom he had cast the eye of suspicion for some time. He

thought be detected fraud and without a moment's hesitation, arose in the pew and in tones fully in keeping with his two hundred and eighty pound frame, accused the poor village of putting twenty-five cents on the plate, and taking out five dollars in change. It is needless to say that a lively sensation resulted, and Pat has had to carry on his devotions in private ever since.

PAT is not the only humorist in our midst, as a prominent lawyer of Kingston can testify. Jimmy B. — a patient was recently busy drilling some rock which was to be blasted, when the legal gentlemen accosted him in rather facetious style and asked him what he was doing. Jimmy looked over his man earnestly and quietly replied, "I am drilling through to Hades to consult with your clients." The conversation ended abruptly.

BLUEBIRDS arrived on April 1st.

IN O'REILLY HALL, on April 16, the best entertainment of the year was given. The programme consisted of music and a clever sketch entitled, 'An Old Maid's Wooing.' The orchestra was strong, having in all 17 pieces, which were: 3 first violins, 2 second violins, 1 viola, 2 cellos, double bass, flute, clarionette, bass, clarionette, French horn, trombone, cornet, piano and drums. It played several selections among which was the Overture

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to Martha, with great success. Mr John Shea sang, "Calm as the Night," which was followed by two violin duets. Field's Nocturne and Bach's Loure, by M. Andrieux and Dr. Clarke. Miss Edith Gibson, of Toronto, then played Simple Aveu on her 'cello with great effect. The caste of characters of the "Old Maid's Wooing" was as follows: Sally Ann, Miss McIntosh, Mrs. Jones, Miss O'Rourke, Mrs. Perkins, Miss Bamford, John Hopkins, T. McCammon, Steve Muchmore, Wm. Woods, Dan Jeffers, E. Gilmour, Mrs. Jeffers, Miss J. Porter, Lawyer Dunne, J. Lawless, Parson Brown, J. Shea. Miss McIntosh in her part showed evidence of great histrionic ability while Mr. McCammon was quite as clever in the role of the bashful young man as he is in that of the old man. All of the others were worthy of the highest praise and it was generally stated that each character received a clever impersonation. Between Acts Mr. Wm Shea sang one of his unique comic songs.

DR. FORSTER while bicycling on the evening of April 24th, received a nasty fall and suffered a painful wound of the face. The Doctor's many friends will be pleased to learn that he is rapidly recovering from the effects of the injury.

MR. JOSEPH K. WORKMAN left for Calgary, April 23rd.

THE Mail and Empire made some very unpleasant remarks regarding the Granite Football Club in its issue of April 24. The faults of the Granites are many, at the same time the statements made in the Mail are not only untrue, but a deliberate misrepresentation of facts. The truth of the matter is that as long as Ontario Rugby Football matters are controlled by men who have never had anything but selfish interests to serve, its games will remain full of dishonesty, semi-professionalism, and when the betting is particularly

keen, blackguardism. Put a John Ross Robertson or some other capable and fearless man at the head of affairs and we shall have clean sport in all of the cities. If the Mail and other newspapers would combine to elevate everything in the sporting line, there might be some hope of better things, but when so few seem to be able to rise above the dead level of local interest, the outlook is not promising.

Kingston musical taste is steadily improving and a genuine appreciation of good music is growing. Programmes that would have been regarded as tedious a few years ago are now enjoyed.

Flickers, House Wrens and many other spring birds arrived on April 20th.

BIRTH.

CLARKE.—On Monday, April 23rd, 1900, at 108 Cowan Avenue, Toronto, the wife of T. Bowcher Clarke, of a son.

MESSRS. GILLESPIE and McLeod have commenced the erection of the new stone stairs in the hickory grove. When finished, these steps will present a beautiful appearance.

MRS. CLARKE gave a very pleasant At Home at Rockwood House to forty-five of the patients on April 25th.

MRS. ALEX. MACKIE spent a week in Oshawa during April.

A LARGE hawk made a bold effort to carry off a puppy from the stables a few days since.

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DR. WEBSTER who was absent in New York for several weeks, studying Modern Surgical Developments, returned to Rockwood on April 18th.

EARLY in April, Leo the Royal Cadet was put in the stage at Rockwood by Mr. Telgmann and sixty performers. Every one was delighted with it, and the patients were particularly interested in the performances of the Zulus.

IN A RECENT edition of the WHIG it was stated that two men dressed in the uniform of one of the local institutions, in company with three boys, were seen carrying off lumber from the Athletic grounds. It may be said that these remarks did not apply to Rockwood officials, although the statement in regard to uniformed men was true. There is an old saying that it is sometimes necessary to set a thief to catch a thief, and on this principle no doubt these men were appointed to their present positions. It is a sad commentary on the morals of the community to discover that some public property such as that of the Athletic Association is regarded as fair plunder by men who would be deeply insulted if they were called dishonest.

MASTER OMAR WOOD GILMOUR is recovering from a serious illness.

MR. W. CARR is preparing for an active campaign against the Portsmouth cows, and woe betide any wandering bovines. Unless the owners of these animals are more careful than in the past the Pound Keeper will have a busy and remunerative reason.

THE possibility of getting up a good orchestra was demonstrated at the recent entertainment. Add to the instrumentalists of that evening, the others in the City who are competent to play good music and the result would be most satisfactory. The experiment is likely to be tried at an early date.

THE VIOLA is rapidly being put in commission for the season of 1900 and challenges to the Iris are already in order.

THE going out of the ice lacked all sensational elements and proved a tame affair.

WE are assured that the New Golf Links will be established in our vicinity. Mr. W. S. Shea is already anticipating the golf fever and is overhauling the property room in anticipation of a steady demand for red coats. Your true West Ender is well aware of the possibilities of this room and when anything from a Fancy Carnival to a Church Bun Fight is one never hesitates to make a visit to 'Billy'—sometimes a demand on the same gentleman insisting that as a taxpayer he has a right to the use of Government property. Mr. Shea is a stern defender of the rights of the Government though, and has now arrived at the stage when he can refuse even a Ladies' Aid Society—so, perhaps, golf coats will be at a premium.

A SEEKER after truth asked our compositor if among other accomplishments he had that of being able to speak French. He replied that he could not, but one of the family was able to perform on the German flute. We have known the possessor of such ability to be regarded in anything but an enthusiastic light by his neighbors.

THE EMPLOYEES gave their last dance on the evening of April 18. The downpour of rain prevented a large attendance, but the hundred who were able to accept the invitation had a pleasant evening.

The Pierrepont made her first trip to the Island with difficulty on April 9th.

Mrs. Terrill, of D. and D. Institute, Belleville, spent Easter with Mrs. Forster.

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A good deal of newspaper discussion is going on over the abuse of the franking privilege in Parliament. No doubt there is a tendency to use the mails for purposes never intended by law, and no one can defend the forwarding of political campaign literature by either party. That the abuse is not as great as it was some years ago is very evident. At that time nearly the whole city of Ottawa seemed to be able to use the mails without the necessity of paying postage. Nearly every letter received at the Rockwood Hospital was franked and in many instances written on official paper. It is to be hoped that the present discussion will put an end to the abuse.

THE open declaration of party warfare in the City Council will probably bear good fruit. Party politics have scarcely a reason for existence in Provincial affairs—in things Municipal they are a menace to the best interests of the City. It is scarcely credible that the citizens will not wake to the fact that as long as party politics are permitted to exist the City cannot be cared for as it should. Neither side can lay claim to virtue. The remedy is to elect Aldermen who can rise to greater heights than mere partyism.

MR. McCAMMON is regretting the fact that Minstrel Shows are somewhat out of date at Rockwood. The experiences of the managers of the local incubator seem to afford unbounded opportunities for a first-class end man. If Dr.— and Mr. P— with one incubator and seventy-five eggs can hatch out one chicken in twenty-four days, how long would it take them to supply the Annual Portsmouth flock of geese, might make a good question. There is no end to the possibilities of the situation.

THE music at the Easter Service in O'Reilly Hall was unusually good, the full orchestra taking part.

SWALLOWS came on April 11th.

THE ice left the harbor on the 14th of April.

CADET V. J. KENT spent his Easter Holidays at Rockwood House.

MR. WILLIAM WORKMAN is acting as Clinical at Rockwood. He made a brilliant second at the recent examinations.

MR. C. W. WORKMAN will pass the summer at the Mikado Mine, Rat Portage, assaying, etc.

MR. JOE WORKMAN has joined a Government Surveying party south of Calgary, N.W.T.

MISS EDITH GIBSON, Toronto, spent her Easter Holidays at Rockwood House.

MR. C. Y. FORD carried off many prizes at Toronto with his dogs Athol and Candidate.

MASTER WILLIAM McCAMMON has had an attack of pleurisy. He is making a good recovery.

MANY of the Portsmouth children have been suffering from mumps.

LOVERS of good music were greatly disappointed at the programme offered by the Boston Symphony Club. The young ladies composing this Club are good musicians capable of rendering high-class music in an artistic manner. That they should have offered us nothing better than a programme, consisting largely of Cake Walks and clap trap was not a higher compliment to the musical taste of Kingston.

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EVEN-SONG.

O toil-worn hands, and tired eyes
Which saw the faint grey dawn arise,
And watch the slow-descending sun,
Their daily task-work still undone,—
Take heart,—to weariest days and long,
Cometh at last the Even-Song.

And ye who wake to feel again
The burden of the same dull pain,
The loss renewed—the hopeless grief,
To which kind sleep brought short relief
When visions of the lost ones throng,—
Faith comes, and hope with Even-Song.

And ye whose desolate souls retain
The empty shrine, the ruined fane
From whom life's young ideals are fled,—
Why seek the living 'mid the dead?
Come to this altar and be strong:
It shall be light at Even-Song.

Forgive us, Lord!—for Thy dear Son,
The evils of our lives foredone,
And bring us at life's Eventide
Close, and still closer to Thy side,
With all life's mystery and wrong
Merged in the peace of Even-Song.

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THE STAMFORD BULL-RUNNING.

In the eastern part of England, on the border where Lincolnshire meets Northamptonshire, stands the quaint old town of Stamford. It stands on some rising ground, overlooking low flat meadows, and boasts two or three steeples which are admired by church architects. It is, indeed, an old town, for it was in existence in the reign of King John, who came to the English throne in the year 1199, and who much against his will gave to the English nation the famous document known as Magna Charta. Of his own free will King John signed and gave to the citizens of Stamford, another charter of an entirely different nature, which, without a doubt, the world has heard little about.

King John was staying at Stamford, and one day, being presumably much bored by the want of excitement in that quiet town, he was looking out of the window to see what was to be seen. Luckily, he caught sight of something, for, in the language of the old chroniclers, "He was myghtlie dyverted bye watchynge ye antics offe certayne menne and boyes chasyng a bulle inne ye lowe meadows bye ye rivere." The chase lasted so long, and was attended by such moving incidents by flood and field, that it gave the English monarch the liveliest satisfaction, and he decided that nothing was so calculated to make people happy as a good bull-chase. Wishing therefore, to confer this happiness on his loyal subjects of the town of Stamford, he had a charter drawn up and signed, by which the mayor and aldermen or town-councilmen of the town of Stamford were bound to furnish annually a bull, which should be chased all up and down the streets of Stamford, on a certain day in the year, by all those who were anxious to engage in the sport. It is unnecessary to say that the diversion became very popular, being calculated to satisfy the aspirations of all the street cor-

ner men and noisy boys, whilst, being under royal patronage, the more respectable people of the town could join in it without any loss of dignity. The occasion furnished an annual holiday to everybody, and those who were active enough to chase the bull, could look on from some safe coign of vantage. The shops, of course, were closed, and the streets cleared of children and females, as an infuriated bull was not a safe animal to meet in a somewhat narrow street. People who had any errands to call them out, would listen to hear in what part of the town the uproar was, and then run from one house to the other through such streets as were safe. Sometimes, however, the bull would come charging unexpectedly round a corner, and many were the narrow escapes by running into houses and up narrow entries. Sometimes there were bold rescues and as may be supposed, there were sometimes opportunities for brave champions to protect or save those of the fair sex who ventured to make sorties, and got cornered.

On one occasion, a lady was being carried along a street in a Sedan-chair, when the bull made his appearance. The bearers promptly set down the Sedan-chair and saved themselves as the French say. The bull coming up to the Sedan chair knocked it over and tumbled it about with his horns, but as the lady inside very wisely staid in, and did not attempt to get out, she escaped with a shaking up and a fright. She was something like the kernel inside of a nut, and the bull could not crack the shell to get at her. On another occasion a man was chased by the bull, and ran straight in front of him. The bull was close behind, and almost touching him, but could not quite catch him, their pace being so even. The man could feel the bull's horns just behind him, and the street was a blind one closed at the end by a pair of large wooden doors. As they neared the doors, the bull

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showed no sign of turning, but seemed to be going to pin him on the doors with those terrible horns. The man put his hands back and got one hand on each horn of the bull, and at the moment when they came up against the doors, he threw his weight on the bull's horns, threw up his own feet and scrambled up the doors, and partly sprung, partly was flung, over the doors and safe into the yard beyond the doors.

Such narrow escapes were much relished by the pursuing crowd of onlookers, and furnished much material for talk when the day was over, and for a week or two afterwards. I am sorry I cannot remember more of what I was told about these things, but it is now a long time since I saw Stamford. When I was a young man I lived for some time near Stamford, and was well enough acquainted with the town and its vicinity. But I was only a youth, and life then stretched out before me, very misty and uncertain. In fact, it was so misty that I could see my path but a very little way in front, and did not know whether it reached far ahead or terminated a very short distance away. Since then it has led me to embark on ships that sailed over rolling seas, and across the equator and I have lived in sun-burned lands, and among peoples who spake strange languages, and when I look back the path stretches far away behind me. But the mists have begun to gather behind me too, and when I look back on Stamford it is wrapped in those mists. The reader must, therefore, forgive me, if I cannot tell more of the old Stamford bull-running stories. The river Welland flows by Stamford, and there is a bridge over it, which I cannot describe very well, as I do not remember it clearly. But there was an understanding or provision of some kind that if the bull proved to be so tame that the crowd could lay hold of him and heave him bodily over the bridge parapet into the

river, before 12 o'clock at noon, then the town council was bound to furnish another bull to finish the day with. On one occasion when a bull was thrown over from the bridge into the river, an expert who had been running behind the bull, holding on by the tail, was so excited that he forgot to let go, and so he went over into the river with the bull. The man, not being able to swim, then held on to the tail tighter than ever, and the bull swam bravely ashore and towed the man after him to dry land. No doubt, the crowd on the bridge took more fun out of the man than they did out of the bull; their appreciation of the incident may be imagined, but not described.

It is strange to think how the bull ran his yearly race through the streets of Stamford, all through the centuries, from the thirteenth to the nineteenth. During the wars of the Roses, mail-clad men stood to gaze at him, and perhaps, occasionally he tried his horns upon their armour. And when Drake and the other jolly sea-dogs of good Queen Bess, were sailing round the world or singeing the Spanish King's beard, the Stamford bull was still continuing his mad career. Cromwell, with his buff-coated and steel-capped Puritans, probably put a stop to the Stamford bull-running, along with other uproarious and ungodly games, for the time. But when the Restoration came, no doubt the bull came in again with a rush, and clattered over the stones of Stamford streets faster than ever. Later on, in the time of Queen Anne and the early Georgian era, the bull, bursting into the old time-worn streets, saw gentlemen in fine laced coats, and silk stockings, with three cornered hats, and rapiers dangling by their sides, and did his best to toss them. Sometimes, as I have mentioned, he got a chance to have a bang at a Sedan-chair, and so rushed on till sometime about the beginning of the reign of Queen Victoria, when his career

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came to an end. I regret that I cannot give the exact date of the abolition of the bull-running, but it happened on this wise. Certain of the reforming and philanthropic tribe of people decided that the bull-running was barbarous and disgraceful, and began an agitation to have it stopped. However, it proved that magistrates and police were not sufficient to put down a practice of such old standing, as the citizens would not submit to their authority. Probably the charter had to be abrogated in some way. At all events, it was necessary to appeal to the British Government, and a regiment of dragons had to be sent to Stamford before the bull-running could be stopped; and in this way I believe this curious old animal festival came to an end.

R. S. KNIGHT,
Lancaster, Ont.

A BURFORD PANTOMIME OF OLD TIMES.

A number of years ago, our next neighbor built a new frame house at the remote end of his 100-acre farm, and the pioneer log house was used as a hay barn; and the sashes of the windows were taken out. The neighbor owned a big yoke of oxen, one of which was an ILL THRIVER team and was gaunt, jeeringly spoken of as "old poverty," by the neighbors as the ox was "breachy," and a trespassing poacher. One day, "old poverty" found the door of the old log house "on the swing," and went in to have a blow out of the hay store; it so happened that a heifer had found an entrance to the hay store antecedent to the ox DEBUT. The immediate result was that the heifer got a violent eviction through the window, which gave merriment to an outside human spectator—who saw an illustration of the proverb, "that when POVERTY gets in at the door Cupid is fired out at the window!"

MARCH AND FEBRUARY HAPPENINGS AND OLDER DATED OBSERVATIONS

A curious enlargement on one of the lower large branches of a beech tree in full foliage was carefully probed and looked into on one occasion on a summer ramble in the woods, the excrescence seemed mainly made up of fibrous substances resembling dried moss, and contained great numbers of minute moving animate objects having a whitish downy covering. These were supposed to be the larvæ of some small species of moth, as they seemed to have eroded the bark of the beech branch deeply enough to cause exudation of the liquid sap of the tree, a portion of which exuded sap seemed to be hardening into woody excrescences. Upon making enquiries of an observant backwoodsman we were told that the bird-nest-like growth were the niduses whence emerged myriads of the dark coloured insects known as Snow Fleas!

Upon examining one of these curious growths the following summer, signs of active life were no longer visible, only a mass of dingy moss-like debris remained resting on the somewhat denuded branch of the tree, and black lumpy excrescences that seemed like hardened fungous growths. Whether in this way the Snow Fleas originates is a matter of uncertainty, as the first sign of the black jumping Snow Fleas is usually found in or about the moss growing about the base of forest trees on the outbreak of a wintry thaw, when their name is legion.

The annexed comments have just been penned in elucidation of incidents occurring near here during the past 12 or 14 days.

A rather moderate atmospheric cyclone was heralded by the almost infallible indications afforded by the rising or falling of the water level in natural springs. These seem as reliable annunciations of the varying pressure of the air as is

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he mercurial column in the barometer.

On the 4th inst., my son on breaking the ice in the spring, (which is about 7 feet deep), where our cattle herd obtain their daily supply of water, noticed that the water immediately arose $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 inches above the ice surface! The previous night and morning of the 5th, brought a frigid experience of 2 below zero with a calm clear sky.

On Monday, the 5th, the thermometer indicated ten to thirteen above zero, with Northeasterly breeze and snow falling briskly but about dawn of day on the sixth a rain storm came on and the temperature immediately arose to 43 degrees, with a violent South East wind, changing at 6 p m. to North-west gales and a drop of the thermometer to 17 above zero while today (seventh) the thermometer stands at 23, with clouds and fresh Westerly winds.

This rise of the water level must have an analagous cause to the oceanic tides and the "uplifting sea" and the aneroid barometer would probably show identical subtle changes in meteorological conditions before the advent of indications in the sky or in direction of the wind.

This water rising in springs, so easily noticed in the winter when there is an ice covering, has firmly established traditions among farming folk that "coming events cast their shadows before" but the first turning points of the changed moods are masked and veiled and mostly undiscernible.

In the shallow pools that are sometimes situated between 2 ridges the pressure of distant underground bodies of water might presumably force upward the level of the swale water, when the ice pressure was taken off by the chopping of an escape hole, and the unconfined liquid is soon seen to rise and overflow the whole surface ice of the small pool should the oncoming storm centre be somewhat delayed. The cause of the phenomenon is undoubtedly more meteorological than hydrographical.

These portents and AVANT COUR-

RIERS of weather disturbance are sometimes of use in farm work and in prudential suggestions in under taking long journeys, etc. As somewhat illustrative that the instincts of wild creatures give cognizance of approaching weather changes, a few jottings may be here set down. About the 20th of last month, a rambler in the woods a mile or two from here noticed quadrupedal tracks on the snow which he supposed were those of "Essence Puddler" (Mephitis) He informed a trapper, (a very dark Mink pelt is worth about \$2 now), who went with pickaxe and spade and laboriously disinterred the ground hog who it seems had waked up and begun "cavorting" about the snowy forest—chipmunks, were seen out the same day and rather strange to relate a pair of red headed woodpeckers were out about the big pine stubs in vivacious activity: (the latter were positively watched by my son on the 20th or 21st of February. Yet 26th and 27th February gave us one of the severest blizzards of the winter with the thermometer 9 below zero.

The last days of February and 3 or 4 days of March also brought us a return of a detachment of Snow buntings—a few of these mixed in with 8 or 10 Shore larks, and came daily with the latter to eat grain, (wheat, oats, Millet seed) that had been scattered on the snow surface in our barn yard as food for our poultry. The two species were tame and approachable, and the hoar frost effects were seen on the backs and wings of the Shore larks as if they had bivouaced "out of doors." After partaking a while of the wheat grains, the Snow buntings would visit a big stone heap near by, whose top was bare of snow, to procure a supply of crumbling grit for the digestive processes: these visits continued during about a week of inclement weather. These incidents may show sometimes the uprise of the water level, invariably precedes an approaching area of low barometrical pressure and that the Shore larks probably associate with the Snow buntings in their Northern breeding grounds.

W. YATES.

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SNOWY OWL.

(NYCTEA NYCTEA.)

This large and handsome Owl is circumpolar in its distribution, inhabiting the arctic portions of the northern hemisphere in summer and migrating south in winter. In North America it is rare west of the Rocky Mountains and south of our northern border, but in the East it is sometimes common as far south as the fortieth parallel, and as an accidental visitor nearly reaches the southern border of the United States. In Europe and Asia it extends south either regularly or accidentally to the British Isles, Holland, Belgium, Germany, southern Siberia, Turkestan, and Afghanistan.

It must not be understood that all or even any considerable portion of these Owls migrate very far south of their arctic home, for the birds which reach the United States or Southern Canada are but a small fraction of those which pass the winter near the northern line of trees. Although from some unknown cause, presumably the lack of food, there are sometimes quite extensive migrations along the eastern seaboard. For instance in the winter of 1876-77, in New England alone, Mr. Ruthven Deane knew of some 500 being seen, the majority of which were shot. (Bull Nuttall Ornith. Club, vol. 11, 1877, p. 10.)

It appears in the United States sometimes as early as October and a few occasionally remain until May. At Point de Monts on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River it has been taken as late as

May 31, though the specimen was probably a pensioner. During migration flights of these Owls are observed sometimes far out at sea.

In the far north, lemmings and arvicoline mice furnish almost the exclusive food of this Owl in summer, but during the winter wanderings, when these mamma's are not always obtainable, it takes what food it can get, such as fish, hares, muskrats, squirrels, rats, ptarmigans, ducks, or even offal.

From the following quotations it will be seen how universally this Owl depends on the lemmings for food;

Lieut. (now Gen.) A. W. Greely says: "Our observations agree with that officer (Maj. Feilden) to the effect that the food of this bird seems to consist entirely of the lemming." (Three years of Arctic Service, vol. 11, 1886, p. 381.)

Mr. Henry Seebohm says: "The lemming forms the Snowy Owl's chief food in the Far North, the range of both mammal and bird being generally the same; but other small rodents are taken, and it will sometimes attack Ptarmigan and Willow Grouse, or even the Arctic hare. It is said occasionally to feed on fish." (Hist. British Birds, vol. 1, 1883, p. 181.)

Mr. John Murdoch says: "Its abundance in the spring and summer near the coast appears to depend on the presence or absence of its favorite food, the lemming, as has been noted elsewhere by Mr. Nelson. During the season of 1882 we saw no lemmings, though signs of their presence in the

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sh pe of droppings, and their skulls and skeletons in the owls' castings, were numerous all over the tundra. During that season we saw but few fowls. On the other hand, in 1882 lemmings were exceedingly plenty all around the station and owls were proportionately abundant; scarcely a day passed without one or more being seen sitting on the tundra, generally on the top of a bank or small knoll, on the lookout for lemmings." (Expedition to Point Barrow, Alaska, 1885, p. 107.)

Of the ten or twelve specimens which Dr. Leonhard Stejneger secured on Bering Island, all except one contained the remains of arvicoline mice. The largest number found in the stomach of one individual was six, but in another the stomach was spoken of as "crammed with arvicolæ." so that probably it contained at least ten or fifteen mice. The extent of the dependence of this Owl upon mice is shown by a very interesting fact relative to the recent increase of the Owl on Bering Island, which the latter author records. Prior to 1870 there were no mice, and very few Owls ever visited the island. About this date the house mouse (*Mus musculus*) was introduced from ships and the Redbacked Mouse (*Evotomys rutilus*) in some unknown way. Twelve years afterwards he found the island swarming with mice and an abundance of resident Owls, affording a striking demonstration of the perfect workings of nature, for with the undue increase of any one species there occurs a corresponding increase of its natural enemies.

Dr. Stejner says: "From * * * the contents of the stomachs, it would seem as if *Arvicola* was almost their only food. But it is only fair to state that I have seen this Owl chase sea ducks, especially *Histrionicus histrionicus* out at the reef, very much in the same manner as does the falcon. (Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., No. 29, 1885, p. 223)

Mr. Thomas McIlraith, in "The Birds of Ontario," mentions one which made several attempts to capture a wounded duck, in which effort it probably would have succeeded had it not been killed. On the Mackenzie River, Richardson relates that one of the Owls was seen to fly over a cliff and carry off a full-fledged Duck Hawk in its claws, with which it alighted on the opposite bank of the river. The parent Hawk followed, uttering loud screams, and darting down struck the Owl, killing it instantly. Wilson and Audubon, who knew the bird only during its short winter visits, speak of its food as follows:

Wilson says: "The usual food of of this species is said to be hares, grouse, rabbits, ducks, mice, and even carrion. * * * I met with this bird on the Oswego River, New York State, a little below the Falls, vigilantly watching for fish." While according to Audubon, "Its usual food, while it remains with us, consists of hares, squirrels, rats, and fishes, portions of all of which I have found in its stomach. * * * In one of them I found the whole of a large brown rat, in pieces of considerable size, the head and tail almost entire."

Although most of the Owls will

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occasionally eat fish, this species seems to be especially fond of them, and when kept in confinement will eat them in preference to anything else except mice. Audubon describes the manner in which it catches fish, being an eye witness to the occurrence several times, and the following is what he says: "At the break of day one morning, when I lay hidden in a pile of floated logs at the Falls of the Ohio, waiting for a shot at some wild geese, I had an opportunity of seeing this Owl secure fish in the following manner: While watching for their prey on the borders of the pots, they invariably lay flat on the rock, with the body placed lengthwise along the border of the hole, the head also laid down, but turned towards the water. One might have supposed the bird sound asleep, as it would remain in the same position until a good opportunity of securing a fish occurred, which I believe was never missed; for as the latter unwittingly rose to the surface near the edge, that instant the Owl thrust out the foot next the water, and, with the quickness of lightning, seized it and drew it out. The Owl then removed to the distance of a few yards, devoured its prey and returned to the same hole; or, if it had not perceived any more fish, flew only a few yards over the many pots there, marked a likely one, and alighted at a distance from it. It then squatted, moved slowly towards the edge, and lay as before, watching for an opportunity. Whenever a fish of any size was hooked, as I may say, the Owl

struck the other foot also into it, and flew off with it to a considerable distance." (Ornith. Biography, vol. 11, p. 136.)

The three specimens examined by Dr. B. H. Warren contained respectively the remains of a rabbit, of a rat, and of a fall.

The economic value of the Snowy Owl is limited, owing to the fact that it chiefly inhabits inhospitable regions where agriculture is impossible. Nevertheless, large numbers occasionally visit Canada and the United States, and it can not be doubted that during these visits its service to the agriculturist is beneficial. Mice and lemmings appear to be its chief dependence, and it takes them to the exclusion of all other food whenever it can get them. The number of useful birds it destroys is quite disproportionate to the number of injurious rodents to be credited to its account, and it is to be regretted that the snowy plumage of the bird and its snowy appearance render it an object of pursuit for ornamental purposes.

The following species of mammals and birds were positively identified among the stomach contents:

MAMMALS.

Arvicola riparius.
Mus decumanus.
Sitomys samericanus.
Lepus sylvaticus.

BIRDS.

Colymbus auritus.
Colymbus holbællii.
Simorhynchus pusielus.
Larus philadelphia.
Merganser.
Tympanuchus americanus.

The breeding range of this Owl extends from the limit of the trees

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north to a point beyond that reached by any explorer. Maj. Fielden saw it in Grinnell Land at latitude $82^{\circ} 40'$ and Lieut; (now Gen.) A. W. Greely states that it bred abundantly in the vicinity of Fort Conger, latitude $81^{\circ} 44'$. It is resident through the northern part of Alaska, both on the islands and mainland. McFarlane did not find its nest at Fort Anderson, but it probably breeds in suitable localities in the interior south of that place, for it is reported as breeding in Northern Labrador and Newfoundland. In exceptional cases, where it has been found breeding as far south as the latter places, the elevation of the locality compensates for the low latitude.

The eggs are deposited from the middle of May to the latter part of June, according to whether the locality is in the southern or northern part of the range, though Gen. Greely found eggs by May 25, and young as early as July 8th. The number of eggs in a set varies from five to ten, and are deposited at intervals, so that when the last bird breaks the shell the oldest one is often nearly ready to fly.

The situation of the nest, if the few feathers, lichens, or moss composing it may be called a nest, is on some knoll slightly elevated above the surrounding country and usually occupies a slight depression in the ground. During the time the female is setting the male keeps guard and drives off any intruder, at times attacking even human beings. It is the duty of the male to procure the food for the young, and the female apportions it among the family.

The bird is naturally very gentle in disposition and soon becomes tame in confinement. It has been taught to remain in the vicinity of its home and return to its master

at the sound of a whistle. In the open country it is shy and very difficult to approach, though it is said to be less so in the wooded districts. The natives frequently decoy the bird near enough to shoot by attaching a bit of fur to the end of a string and allowing it to trail behind them as they walk; the Owl, thinking it a mouse, flies down to seize it, when the hunter turns around and shoots the bird.

The Snowy Owl is diurnal in its habits, but like most birds is more active in search of prey during the early morning and again towards dusk. Like many of the Hawks; it occupies a commanding perch for hours, watching what is going on about it, occasionally varying the monotony by dropping on a mouse or launching out over the broad country, soon to return to its perch. During its southern wanderings it is very partial to localities in the vicinity of water, especially the barren sand wastes along the seashore or extensive marshy flats bordering the bays and rivers.

Dr. William Wood states that he once knew one of these Owls to hide in a hollow apple tree stub to escape the annoyance caused by a mob of crows following him, which ruse accomplished the desired result.

The flesh is light colored, somewhat resembling that of the chicken in appearance, and is very much relished by the Eskimo hunters. Thus this bird, unlike its congeners, has some value to humanity as food.

The flight is firm, smooth, and noiseless, and may be long protracted. It is capable of rapid flight, and according to Audubon, is able to capture ducks, pigeons, and even grouse on the wing, striking them down after the manner of the duck hawk.

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