



March



The  
Rockwood  
Review.



A Monthly Journal devoted to  
Literature, Natural History and  
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# The Rockwood Review.

VOL. 5.

KINGSTON, MARCH 6TH, 1899.

No. 2.

## LOCAL ITEMS.

Well done Frontenacs—Hockey champions of Ontario for '99.

Kingston should be proud of getting two out of three hockey championships, with strictly amateur teams.

The famous Nationals, of Guelph, are fast and rough, but have the weakness so characteristic of western teams—viz. absence of the best kind of combination.

Mr. Anglin is now able to assume the upright position for a few minutes each day.

Mr. Hugh Walkem is spending his "summer holidays" in Kingston. Hugh looks as flourishing as usual.

The Plunkett Greene concert was a great success, and as usual Kingston turned out well to a good entertainment. Mr. Greene was a revelation to our local amateurs, and if many of them will take the hint, they will not strain after effect as in the past.

The city reporter who discovered a striking likeness between Plunkett Greene and Dr. Forster must have looked through a magic camera. Dr. F. is not certain whether he should pay a premium for the criticism, or enter an action for libel.

Reorganization of the Curling Club is talked of, and it is said a new outfit of skips and third players will be provided. It is time for a change—give the young blood a chance.

A stupid mistake on the official map of Ontario has for years caused fishing licenses to be issued for waters it was intended to have protected. Salmon Island is placed on the official map about a mile to the west of the Brothers, instead of to the east. No such mistake will occur in future, and there is reason to believe that the spawning grounds will be protected. It is bad enough to have the lake depleted of fish for Canadians, but ten times worse when the depletion is effected in the interests of Americans, who have long ago ruined their own fisheries.

Mr. John Graham reported the Newcourt Robin as arriving in the latter part of February. This particular bird is always an early arrival.

Dr. Sippi, of London Asylum, has succeeded in training a magnificent band of musicians. Lately several saxophones have been added and the band plays a high class of music, in first-class style.

The Rev. Mr. Crisp gave a most attractive lecture on Switzerland at Rockwood lately. The pictures thrown upon the sciopticon screen were very beautiful.

Mr. J. Shea is steadily improving as a tenor.

Our Business Manager has had his salary raised since he played on the winning Frontenacs.

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Although in the early part of the winter it looked as if Rockwood would secure the Rockwood Curling Trophy, it was not to be, and Kingston pulled out a victory by the narrow margin of seven shots. This result is largely owing to the magnificent game played by Mr. Archie Strachan and his rink. Mr. Strachan's playing has rarely been equalled in Kingston, certainly never excelled. It seemed strange that Rockwood should win both matches played on the city Rink, and lose both on their own. Curling was ever a slippery game, and this year has been played with less enthusiasm by our local experts than ever before—possibly with less success.

Mr. W. R. Dick has been appointed Bursar in place of Mr. Wm. Anglin, resigned. Mr. Dick comes highly recommended as a genial and amiable man, likely to make a success of his position. We offer him our congratulations on his appointment.

Dr. C. K. Clarke attended the funeral of Dr. J. A. Mullin in Hamilton. Dr. Mullin was not only one of the leading practitioners in Canada, but a man beloved by all who knew him. His death is a great loss to Ontario.

The Frontenacs played good hockey against Collingwood in Toronto, under trying circumstances. The Caledonian Rink is almost too wide for the best kind of hockey, and it took some time to get the combination going. When it did commence the northern boys were never dangerous for a moment, and nothing but an accident could have given them the game. It was a desperate struggle though, in which team play had decidedly the best of it. The Frontenacs have now an excellent chance for the championship.

Queens are to be congratulated on winning the senior Hockey Championship. They were so superior to anything else in the series, that the victory carried little real glory. There is a strong suspicion that outside of Queens the senior teams are outclassed by the intermediate, and there is an impression that at least two of the intermediates could make it decidedly interesting for Queens. It is hardly likely that Queens would risk a match of the kind, for there is something in a name. A meeting between the Frontenacs and Queens would be of great interest, and there is a prevalent idea that the youngsters would prove a surprise party to the senior champions. They are at least quite willing to try their chances, and to endure defeat if necessary.

Collingwood supporters numbered three hundred at the match, Frontenacs had four or five. Toronto people were generous in their applause, and wondered that the Kingston boys were kept from making a large score.

The collection of pheasants at London Asylum is very fine, containing English, Mongolian, Silver, Golden Reeves and Lady Amherst pheasants. The birds are carefully tended and kept in beautiful condition.

The Garden at London Asylum is probably the most successful in Canada.

Mr. Jas. Dennison has been ill.

Prairie Horned Larks are very numerous, and no doubt will commence nesting at once, taking advantage of the open weather.

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The Beechgroves defeated the Bicycle Club hockey team twice, and punctured the hopes of the city boys, who were too tired to make a spurt on the home stretch. The combination of the Bicycle forwards was chainless and their rear sprockets occasionally failed to connect with the proper part of the machinery, to say nothing of the puck. As a result the Beechgroves are saddled with victory—it is unnecessary to say they played with a Vim.

Miss Ahearn lost her watch on February 17th, but fortunately it was found by a patient, who insisted on an accurate description being furnished before restoring the lost property to its owner.

The 14th Battalion Band gave their annual Concert at Rockwood in February, and certainly went to a great deal of trouble to amuse the patients. The programme was unusually good, "the Festival," Overture and a Minuet being particularly admired. The reeds have been improved, and the saxophones are a pleasing addition. The band is a credit to Messrs. Caray, Abernethy and their confreres. By the way, Rockwood figures rather largely in the Band, and of course includes Billy Shea, to say nothing of his trombone.

Mr. W. Shea is having a complete Highland costume prepared, and will appear as McStinger at the Clancarty Ball at an early date.

The new Lighthouse in process of erection at the Snake Island shore will prevent many accidents. If the Government would buoy the north channel with gas buoys, or erect range lights on Baker's Point, the approaches to Kingston harbor would be complete.

Now that the Ontario Government has taken over the fisheries, it is to be hoped the waters in this locality will be thoroughly protected. It is time something was done.

Very few snow buntings have been seen in this locality this winter. The English sparrows are already making preparations for nesting.

Mr. Hugh Ross wore a very contented smile when the Estimates came down. An increase of salary is always a comforting thing—congratulations Hugh.



MISS M. E. DE PENCIER.

Mr. Wm. Anglin, for twenty seven years Bursar of Rockwood Hospital, has sent in his resignation, and everyone about the Institution feels sorry to say good bye to one who has filled a responsible position with so much credit to himself and the Government under which he was employed. Mr. Anglin is respected by all who know him, and those who are acquainted with his kindly nature and warm heart are well aware how much he will be missed. He has merited a well earned rest for the remainder of his days. It seemed the irony of fate that a day or so after having sent in his resignation, he should fall and sustain a fracture in the hip joint. For a few days his condition was very serious, but now we are happy to say the outlook is favorable, and we hope that our good friend will enjoy many years of quiet and happiness.

Cherry birds and Pine Siskins arrived on February 21st.



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The second dance given by the Employees, occurred on February 8th, and was largely attended. It was a most enjoyable event.

The crop of prospective Bursars has been unusually large, and the "area of depression" correspondingly great, as two or more men cannot occupy the same place at the same time, that is without friction.

Dr. E. Stafford of Toronto Asylum, visited Rockwood early in February.

Miss de Pencier, who for more than two years was in charge of the Beechgrove Hospital, Rockwood, has been appointed Lady Superintendent of the Belleville General Hospital. Belleville is extremely fortunate in securing the services of such an excellent and accomplished Nurse as Miss de Pencier, who has won golden opinions during her residence at Rockwood. She has been succeeded by Miss F. Wilson, a graduate of the Kingston Hospital Training School.

The Rink Managers Benefit Carnival, on the evening of February 9th, was largely attended and a most brilliant affair in every respect. Some of the costumes were unique.

Miss Maggie Macdonald of the Rockwood Staff, had a very unpleasant experience on February 10th. While she and a companion were returning from Howe Island, they were overtaken by a severe snowstorm, and as a result were lost on the ice for several hours.

On February 17th the first robin took advantage of the mild spell to record an early arrival. Downy woodpeckers and nuthatches were much in evidence on the same day.

The Beechgrove Hockey Club has taken a step upwards. As a "midget" club it has had a record of nearly fifty matches, with but one defeat, and that but by one goal. This year some of the former

small boys had become too large for the remaining midgets, so two teams have been organized. The Seniors have added several victories to their credit, and the Juniors are playing the "same old combination" with the dash of the original Beechgroves.

The Peterboro Examiner criticized in a good natured way, some of our remarks in regard to hockey rules and their interpretation. We have followed the game since its development with a good deal of interest, and have seen nearly all of the important matches played here, and have acted as referee at many of them. The practice of raising the stick to stop lifts has always been recognized here as legitimate, except by one Toronto referee who misinterpreted a rule made to prevent "slashing," viz. the rule applying to a stick raised above the shoulder. It is a mere quibble to distort this rule and apply it to the suppression of a most excellent play on narrow rinks, such as that at Peterboro. It cannot be called a dangerous play, and likely to lead to accidents, but tends to minimize the effect of the most dangerous part of hockey—the stopping of a heavy puck hurled through the air at a high rate of speed. No, we cannot sympathize with the distortion of a rule framed merely to prevent slashing and shinny playing.

Master Harold Clarke was rather seriously indisposed for ten days in the early part of February.

If good wishes could secure a capable and deserving officer, the position of Bursar, Mr. W. Cochran would have been promptly installed.

We sometimes wonder if politicians ever have lucid intervals during which they realize that the game is scarcely worth the candle.

Miss de Pencier received a handsome present from the officials of Rockwood just before her departure for Belleville.

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### A MEMORIAL TO CERTAIN DUMB FRIENDS.

My heart is heavy and sad for the helpless and the weak,  
Feudal retainers of man, of whom he is master and lord,  
Whose piteous eyes speak for them, whose dumb lips cannot speak :  
For whom to die is the only goal, and refuge and reward.

The only refuge, the last,—for merciful death is kind  
To the poor worn bodies and limbs, stiffened with toil and sore,  
Bringing the soft anaesthetic of sleep, for the weary to find  
Rest and peace in the grave, where the wicked trouble no mc.e.

Do they not think and feel?—do they not certainly know?  
These thralls of the field, these swift-limbed steeds of the stall,  
Who start and cower and shrink from the cruel word like a blow,  
Whom a child may lead with a tether, who come at a gentle call.

Fear, and desire and shame, and the keen sense of disgrace,  
And love, and a wistful constancy, words could not make more plain:  
Speak in the eloquent limbs, and the sensitive mobile face,—  
Like, and so unlike our own in heart and nerve and brain.

So unlike in devotion, which triumphs and survives  
Evil and wrong and cruelty—unquestioning and mute :  
Ah, were the balance straitly laid between these alien lives,  
Before high heaven, which were the nobler, arrogant Man or the Brute?

Swift and sure are the steady feet when our's in the darkness grope,  
Quick are the listening ears that flinch from the lash's stinging hiss :  
Spirit of slumbering justice, speak!—is there no "larger hope,"  
No hint of the life immortal to right the wrongs of this.

For I would that far off somewhere, beyond the bounds of time,  
There were balm for the speechless anguish that has never yet been told,  
Some sweet and blessed country—some unimagined clime,  
And room for all God's creatures within its sheltering fold.

K. S. McL.

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### CHRISTMAS WITH THE DARKIES IN NORTH CAROLINA.

Nestling among the long leafed pines down in North Carolina, lies a curious little town, which has grown up suddenly within the last five years, and is composed of Hotel, Departmental Store, Casino, cottages and boarding houses, which have shot up like mushrooms in sand, so rapidly have they appeared.

The whole place is owned by one man—a northerner, who having lots of money to spend, conceived the original idea of building a town of New England style, down in the south, so as its visitors surrounded by every comfort, might obtain benefit from the mild atmosphere during the winter months.

The pine—this variety of the long leaf, is supposed to have great healing powers, and all through Virginia, North Carolina, indeed in most of the surrounding States, are forests composed of the tall stately trees. Attracted by descriptions of the village referred to, three of us, all Canadians, came in November to join the little colony already emigrated from the north, to escape the severity of the winter. We took up our residence in the Inn, and here with about thirty or forty others we remained. Now the place is crowded, but until Xmas time there were only occasional arrivals. While our Canadian friends were gathering together in families for the holiday festivities, we were doing our best to be cheerful under the somewhat trying circumstances, and as the truest happiness lies in helping others, all joined heartily in carrying out the scheme proposed.

Outside the village which is surrounded by a fence, lie the negro quarters, and also the houses of poor whites. Meetings were held, plans discussed, and the idea of giving these people an Xmas treat, such as they had last year but even better was decided upon. A large tree was to be procured, and

dressed up on Xmas Eve for the villagers, and again on Monday afternoon, December 26th, for the colored people. Work began in earnest, and although we could not be much beyond contributing money, we joyfully gave any aid we could.

Holly and mistletoe, of which large quantities grow in the woods around, were brought in, procured for extensive decorations of the Village Hall. Parties were made for stringing popcorn and making colored candy bags, even the gentleman guests in the hotel were given darning needles to thread the corn. A dear old lady, 81 years of age, made a special bag for each guest, decorated with embroidery of red holly and green leaves. Of course these were much prized. But we must not linger to tell of all the preparations, suffice it to say that by Saturday evening all was in readiness, and the Village Hall was transformed into a Bower of Beauty. Native holly with its rich dark leaves and bright berries glistened everywhere, while on the platform stood the largest, most symmetrically shaped, Xmas tree I ever saw, laden with gifts.

Space will not permit to tell of the programme, the delight of the children, nor of the many comical surprises prepared for the officials and villagers in general.

Above the tree was fastened a white star, and at the proper moment, during a recitation by a young girl, this was suddenly illuminated with thrilling effect. We would fain describe the whole scene, but must pass on to the event of the following Monday afternoon. A lovely day with the thermometer so high that numbers of people wandered round the village, without hats, just to try the novelty of Xmas time, minus wraps and furs. About twelve o'clock the air seemed to be indescribable. There was additional ozone in it apparently, and every one was exhilarated and excited in an unwonted way. Dinner was

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rushed through with, and soon we found ourselves hurrying to the Hall to get good seats. Where did all the people spring from? The street was an animated scene—men, women and children, both white and black, many of the latter with baskets, were going in the same direction. We hastened our steps, for we wished to secure good positions. Seating ourselves where we could see all going on, our zeal was rewarded with many novel sights. In the first place, the tree was the most heavily laden I ever saw in all my life, and bore strange fruit. But where did all these dark skinned people spring from? In they came, families of eight, or nine, or ten, and we had barely time to take note of them. The villagers occupied one side of the building, and the guests of the day the other. One immense woman clad in a variety of garments, wore on top of all a striped dressing jacket, a couple or more sizes too small, buttoned only at the neck and the waist. By her side sat her piekaninnies, and one drew our special attention. Her appearance was so ludicrous, that it was almost pathetic. Aged about four years, yet dressed like an old woman, in blouse and skirt. The latter was of some dark material, and was covered with a large pattern of flowers. The blouse, light colored, was finished at the neck with tie, collar and brooch. Her hair was a work of art, arranged in tiny tight plaits, all over the head, and each one tied with a rose colored ribbon, while on the forehead lay plastered several little corkscrew curls. Poor wee tot! she presented quite a spectacle. On her head was a hat meant for a grown person, as far as shape and size were concerned. It was trimmed with black and yellow, lined under the brim with white, and fastened up at one side with coquettish maroon rose. There was something very touching about the incongruity of the costume, but the eyes of the child were bright as they ought to be at her

age, and ignorant of her appearance she was alive to the occasion.

It would take a skillful pen indeed, to give any adequate idea of the picture made by the motley crew. There were sunbonnets of all shapes and styles, and queer hats perched on the head at most dangerous angles. Upon one crown was tied a gay plant bandanna, which added brightness to the scene. Pretty little children, with their naturally bright eyes gleaming, burlesquing in strangest attire—rags and tatters, signs of want and thriftlessness everywhere. Little babies sat on their mothers knees, with their black faces surrounded with tight curls or plaits. "Groins" of about a year old were exhibited to the audience with pride by the mother, but the youngsters didn't enjoy it a bit, and yelled with great indignation.

A programme of songs and recitations had been prepared by the guests of the day, out of gratitude for the kindness of their white friends. First number was given by small boy, black as a coal. Next came a recitation by a young married woman, resplendent in white hat and black veil. She was evidently of great importance in the Hamlet, and appeared in various scenes during the afternoon. The third number was an ordinary recitation, but the fourth deservedly brought down the house. The piece was only four lines in length, but during its recitation much occurred. The speaker, a girl about twelve, stood before the audience, with her hat placed at such a dangerous angle, that while giving a graceful bow, she let it fall off into the middle of the floor. This stopped proceedings for a moment, for the mother (lady in hat and veil before referred to), rushed forward to place the head-gear in position, and retired. Then she hurried to platform once more, and deftly removed a toothpick from her daughter's mouth, wiping her lips so as to give better freedom of speech. Vociferous applause

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greeted the operation, and the verse came to a happy end.

A small girl with her hair done up in a "chignon" or "knob" of huge dimensions, next took the floor. Her selection was uninteresting, but when she was followed by a tall young woman, a mulatto, we became quite saddened. In dull, heavy, monotonous tones, she repeated:

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John,  
Bless this bed that I lie on,  
Angels stand around my bed,  
Two at foot and two at head.

To think of any full grown girl getting up and repeating a rhyme like that, before a large audience, was too much for us. Variety now presented itself, for a bright faced lad jumped up, and with a quick word lisped out:

I can shoot a gun  
I can smoke a pipe,  
I can kiss a pretty girl,  
At ten o'clock at night.

Another selection by a girl with chignon, and then followed a middle aged man with The dream of Santa Claus. It was tragical in the extreme, so far as gestures went, but the crescendoes and decrescendoes were so great, that we failed to catch the sense.

Hymns and songs were given, by members of Jackson Hamlet, but our ideas of negro melody were somewhat rudely shaken by much discord and want of harmony. Uncle somebody or other "complimented" (to use his own expression) them so well on the banjo, that we felt glad to listen to him. A stylish Miss rendered a description of the old homestead in first-rate style, and was loudly applauded. But the gem of the afternoon was given by "Prof." Robert McCoy, a small black boy, clad in white pinafore and cook's cap, who gave "The gingerbread man," accompanied by realistic representations of the crowing of a rooster and the mewing of a cat. More singing this time without "compliment" by the Uncle, but led by thumping of a

stick on the floor.

After one or two other addresses, a sound of sleigh bells was heard, and a voice calling to reindeer. On to the platform hurried Santa Claus, with black face and white whiskers. He wore a long white gown, trimmed with ermine, and on his head was perched a red cap. He talked "down Souf" style, and cracking his whip, he invited the best looking darkey to step forward and receive the gifts in his hand. No answer. Will the "mistest" one come up, he shouted. No answer. Is there not a good, bad, or indifferent one in this room? At this, a mother pushed out her tiny daughter, and the little thing walked boldly up to the platform. Santa held out his hand to shake hers, when she suddenly uttered a piercing shriek, turned to flee, and fell full length on the floor. The mother took hold of her, and led her firmly up to face the genial Santa Claus, and the gift was won.

There were Jessabels, Cora Lila Lees, Florences, Pocahontases, and one girl was happy in the name of Willie Whiskers Richardson. Santa procured help in dispensing the gifts, and soon the tree was robbed of its fruit—such gifts there were! Mirrors, braces, handkerchiefs, ties, etc., an endless variety, and as each family was large, and each received two or three articles, a long time was needed to dispense. The lids of the baskets which most of the people had brought, were raised and shut many times, and the piekaninnies were wild with delight. It was a sight never to be forgotten,—strings of popcorn were hung round arms and necks, even of some of the men, and hilarity appeared on all sides. Coffee and chestnuts handed around added fresh zest, and the whole thing was wound up by a double shuffle or a break down by one (Sir) Walter Scott, and another colored boy.

It was now time to go home, and the street once more became

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alive with happy people both white and black. As we went back to the Inn, and exchanged words with this one and that one—now a black and now a white—we determined in our minds that although far away from home, and in a different clime, that it was the same all the world over, both north and south—“More blessed to give than to receive.”

### THE ONTARIO BIRTH RATE.

In the ROCKWOOD REVIEW for January, notice was taken of remarks made in the Anglican Synod at Montreal, on this subject. The remarks seem to have been scarcely worthy of notice, unless one were to characterize them as offensive. I was myself brought up in an atmosphere thick with professional Anglicanism, and have been in numberless churches, vestries, and meetings of clergy. One who has been behind the scenes so much, becomes intimately acquainted with the artificial manner in which ecclesiastical thunder is produced, and is apt to remember the machinery when he hears the noise. On this occasion in Montreal, the noise was made by a small section of the members, and those not leaders of the Synod. It has called forth some sharp replies in various quarters, and one ladies' paper advised the Synod to procure an incubator or wooden mother of some description, which could be easily managed by a man, without feminine aid.

Many years ago, I was in a Physiology class at King's College, London, and at the examination came out first. Next below me were, a young man who had given up all his other work to win the prize in this class, and an older man, a distinguished associate of King's College, who, no doubt, made sure he would have it. When the result was announced, the A. K. C. gave me a look of hostility

and disgust, and marched off in high dudgeon. The younger man came to me and asked me how I had managed to get first. I invited him home to supper with me, and he came, and I showed him my books and how I worked, and told him that I was really sorry for his disappointment. We parted good friends, and I never saw him again, and it is possible that he may have died from overwork, for I was ill myself after it. Mr. Gladstone gave me the class prize, and I have also a certificate of Honour, signed by him. Whether the play was worth the candle I do not know, but at any rate I learned some Physiology, and have found it extremely useful—in fact indispensable, in considering this question of the birth rate. Had these gentlemen in the Montreal Synod gone through the same experience, or studied Physiology as closely, I feel sure they would not have used the provocative and impolite language with which the newspapers have credited them.

Since my college days, I have always kept an eye on Physiology, and it seems to me that to-day the birth rate is a matter of science and not of Synods. It would scarcely be suitable to treat this subject scientifically in this REVIEW. But we may safely assert that science has done more than the church to alleviate the actual physical sufferings of woman. Clergymen rush in where ordinary persons fear to tread, and we have to allow them the privilege of indefinite insinuations—at least it seems so in this case. But we need not be browbeaten by them, and I have reason to know that there are numbers of the most intelligent and respectable people who have un-Anglican opinions on this subject, and would not disavow or disclaim them.

There is one part of this subject which we hazily speak of as the birth rate, which may be spoken of more clearly, and taken out of the mist in which we envelop it. That is, the suffering caused by the

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separation of the sexes. Oliver Wendell Holmes has touched on this in the "Autocrat." He writes as follows: "In the long catalogue of scientific cruelties, there is hardly anything quite so painful to think of, as that experiment of putting an animal under the bell of the air-pump, and exhausting the air from it. There comes a time when the souls of human beings, women, perhaps, more even than men, begin to faint for the atmosphere of the affections they were made to breathe. Then it is that Society places its transparent bell-glass over the young woman who is to be the subject of one of its fatal experiments. The element by which only the heart lives, is sucked out of her crystalline prison. Watch her through its transparent walls—her bosom is heaving, but it is in a vacuum. Death is no riddle compared to this. I remember a poor girl's story in the Book of Martyrs. "The dry pan and the gradual fire" were the images that frightened her most. How many have withered and wasted under as slow a torment, in the walls of that larger Inquisition which we call civilization." There is no exaggeration in this,—in fact it is handling the matter very lightly, taking the psychical side of it only, and leaving out the physiological. But as Holmes implies, the man suffers as well as the woman. How stern and cruel then must be the necessity that checks marriage as we see it checked. My own observations and reasonings both, have led me to the conclusion that marriage has diminished rapidly in Canada during the past 60 years, and is still diminishing. The size of families has also diminished, so far as my own experience extends, except among the very poor. But is that any justification for the language used at the Anglican Synod? The unqualified censure of those who spoke, was calculated to fall on the careful and economical members of society, who are

endeavoring to pay their way and be honest. And whilst the Synod was professedly regulating the affairs of the Anglican Church, its censure was directed indiscriminately at adherents of other churches, who owe no obedience to its dictates. Is it not a fact that those who contract improvident marriages, throw burdens on the community, and that we now have no good outlet in the U. S. for superfluous children? Does not everyone know that within the Dominion of Canada men are continually committing suicide because they cannot get work? And for one who kills himself, there are ten dying by inches, and hundreds suffering. It is stated that during the year 1898, there were 5,920 persons who committed suicide in the U. S. without speaking of Canada. Of these 3,023 killed themselves from despondency, and 1,500 from causes unknown, making up 4,523 out of 5,920. Despondency and causes unknown represent to me want of work and starvation of all kinds. There are times when all working and struggling people think, "shall we come to this perhaps?" And they look at their children and think "some of them may come to this," and the fear of poverty, and of privation, and of debt, bears on all except the rich and privileged. And except for these, life is getting to be a tighter fit in Canada for everybody, every year that passes. The problem of life is becoming more difficult in this country, and the gentlemen in the Synod are contributing nothing to its solution. What they have said only shows that they have no insight into these matters, and would lead me to think that they were unable to distinguish effects from causes of that diminution in the increase of their flocks which they deem so undesirable.

R. S. KNIGHT,  
Lancaster, Ont.

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### WINTER HAPPENINGS IN BURFORD TOWNSHIP.

1st of March, an inch of snow, air bright and calm, frosty.

It would seem that if the snow buntings move from arctic latitudes on the advent the rigours of winter. They travel in very large flocks, and soon after their arrival in temperate latitudes, they divide off into a great number of small flocks, and scatter over a large surface of country, to re-assemble in multitudes as they begin to return to their semi-arctic breeding grounds on the approach of spring. About three weeks ago, near the 8th of February, a vast flock of these interesting visitors was seen traversing the country three or four miles to the westward of this part. The people who gave the report, described the birds as being several thousands in number. Whereas when the assemblages were first seen in the month of December last, rarely as many as fifty to one hundred were seen together. The birds seem to travel over a large extent of country in the course of a day, and a large flock that was much noticed one morning, was believed to have moved on westward ten or twelve miles, and had entered the township of Dereham in the evening of the same day,—or at least this was the conclusion arrived at, judging from the size of the flock, and the direction of the line of flight in the earlier part of the day. By the end of the first week of March all seem to have departed, and in fact only in severe and protracted winters are they observed to have prolonged their stay to so late a date.

During the present month of February the snow buntings and the shore larks visited these districts simultaneously.

Some youth who spent a part of their time in this neighborhood at the beginning of the present winter, reported that in a number of instances the big-eared eagle owls were seen in the vicinity of the traps which were baited for musk-

rats, and in one instance Strix Virginiana had blundered too near the fatal snare, and was victimized instead of the expected rodent. And on the line or channel of a brooklet, several of these big raptors were noticed about dawn one morning, a quarter to half a mile apart. This was before much ice had formed on the running stream, and the trappers were undecided whether mink or muskrat had been the temptation to the owls visits. As a fraternal coterie, or perhaps family group, they have nocturnally prowled among the orchard trees and garden groves in quest of unhousted poultry. The feathered felines seem to possess the instinct of sheep killing canines, and do their exploiting in organized coteries, one of the number assailing the roosting fowl amid the tree branches, whilst others chase the fugitive on its forced sally from the sheltering branches, and the depredators signal calls and telephoning during the progress of the midnight battue, are a never omitted part of the tactics.

A last summer's brood of guinea fowl, whose semiwild instincts to roost in trees could not without much trouble be overcome, have this winter had their number much reduced by the thievish visits of feathered carnivores to our garden grove of conifers, and on two or three occasions of the poultry guardians prompt interference, gun in hand, the detested raiders successfully carried off booty.

It is probable that the rendezvous and breeding home of these troublesome visitants is in some secluded forest miles away from here, and the harpies can be occasionally observed in dim moonlight, winging their undulatory course among the close growing orchard trees, to spy out their gallinaceous victims, among the interwoven branches. Open cattlesheds and windowless outhouses are frequently invaded in quest of food supplies, afforded by the unresisting barn door fowl, either web-footed or otherwise.



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In the instance where the "biter got bitten" by stepping into the trap, the owls must have been laying in wait either for muskrat or mink, probably the first named quadruped, although the season has been prolific of both, and great numbers of mink and muskrat skins have been bought by the local fur dealers. The muskrats came forth in numbers during the thaws of mid January, and were seen sporting themselves in the swollen rivulets and flooded land drains.

In one of the trapper's December experiences, a too curious red squirrel, in tasting or examining the mink bait, sprung the trap with deadly result, and was in turn regaled on by a subsequent stoat visitor, as shown by the tracks left on the snow in the vicinity, and a day or two afterwards (the trap having been re-set), Mr. Stoat was found "held and firmly bound" in the same trap's relentless embrace.

The mink seems to be a semi-amphibious or aquatic feline, his native prey is frogs or fishes, and has a number of other traits. Its ability as a swimmer and diver enables it to escape enemies, and it has been noticed that when minks are numerous the plague of field mice, and also woodland mice, is much mitigated.

The wild creatures of the forests evince far more alarm and excitement at the presence of a dog than at the human intruder about their haunts.

Quite a numerous party of blue jays were enjoying themselves the other morning in an orchard near here, the few apples that had been ungathered last fall were the objects of the jays attention. Although withered by the effects of frost, the apple seeds were eagerly probed for, yet all at once on noticing the gambols of a terrier that accompanied us, they set up a violent concerted screaming, and by elevating their plumed crests and other fidgety movements, gave evidence that the foxlike interloper's room would be more acceptable than his company.

The ruffed grouse have perceptibly increased in numbers in this district since the effective law prolonging the close season came into operation. Just lately one of the trappers reports disturbing, on their feeding grounds, a covey of fifteen grouse. It seems evident that the family tea remains in force in this species until mating time of the say nine months old birds, then their custom is to seek more complete seclusion in the sylvan solitudes.

The eagle owls' call notes is a hideous nocturn, the term satyrlike does not fully express the shivery feeling of repugnance created in the human ear or consciousness, when those hyena like utterances vibrate on the midnight air. They seem only in keeping or in consonance with one's imaginings of the Eocene or Saurian epochs. They seem a hideous intrusion and discord, whenever the rule of reason holds sway, and only appropriate to sepulchral caves and realms of chaos!

There are dawning indications that spring is not far off, frequent violent changes of temperature, snowflakes, then April like showers on the 26th. An Aurora Borealis display occurred on the evening of February 27th, next day rain and sleet showers.

Five or six gulls were seen in this vicinity on that date, they seem to come up the valley of the Grand River from Lake Erie.

Mr. Frank Bolles in his Bookland of the Lingering Snow, Houghton & Co., Boston, 1890, compares the big owl voicings to the sough of the night wind, whirling in a big open chimney or big hollow tree trunk. We sometimes hear the calls at a distance of two to two and a half miles, the doleful ghostly tone seems to be the effect of distance. Heard close at hand, when three or more owls are in communication, though perhaps a quarter mile or more apart, and carrying on a sort of seance, the notes if less exciting to one's imagination, are suggestive of much.

W. YATES.

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