

ART. IX.—THE ICE STORM OF JANUARY, 1881, BY H. S. POOLE,
F. G. S.

THE ice storm of January 24th, 1881, was so unusual for Nova Scotia, that it is, perhaps, worthy of note.

On Friday, three days before, an ordinary silver thaw covered the bushes with the well-known casing of ice that so attractively glistens in the morning sun, and where cracked refracts the bright rays into all the colours of the rainbow. On the following day a mist with occasional showers of rain, freezing as it fell, added to the icy coating and bent the tops of trees with its weight. The accumulation of ice on buildings, fences, telegraph posts and wires was then sufficiently heavy to cause remark, but the atmospheric conditions necessary for such an ice growth continuing, the coating grew thicker, and increased with telling force on all slender trees and wide spread branches.

On Monday the showers returned, and they seemed to sweep across the country with alternate bodies of colder air, at least it seemed so, for when driving along the country roads one was met at one moment by gusts of hail, and the next by rain. Roads that were traversed without difficulty in early morning became within a few hours so obstructed with bowed and broken trees as to be almost impassable.

Having read of similar storms in Russia, the phenomena produced were watched with more than ordinary interest, and especially, were the curious forms taken by the ice coating the telegraph wires. At first the wires appeared merely increased in size—the ice forming on the top of the wire and on the side exposed to the storm, which came from the north-east. The showers next formed icicles, which in their turn offered further surface for accretion. But the icicles did not long hang vertically from the wires, for the accumulations on the top overcoming the adhesion to the wire slowly turned round until they were underneath, and the icicles made to take various angles, some rows being even reversed and vertical. On some sections other rows

of icicles formed pendent from the wires, or from the points of the first, but at fresh angles.

The weight of the ice coating was so great that it broke the wires in many places; its surface was uneven, averaging in its greater diameter over an inch in thickness, and in the lesser diameter about three quarters of an inch; the icicles first formed stood about an inch and a half apart, and were about two inches long, and up to three quarters in thickness; the second formation of icicles were longer and slighter. This ice remained on the wires for days, and when it became detached, as it did in places, it was interesting to note that it slowly sagged or beat down as its crystalline structure reformed under the pressure of its own weight.

One phenomenon in connection with this storm has yet to be told. The bending of the trees beneath the weight of ice that formed upon them has been mentioned. It might be added that whole groves of young birch bent over until their tops became attached to the snow beneath, even trees of fifteen and twenty inches in girth succumbed to the weight and bent to the ground. On Monday, about noon, the wind had ceased, and no other sound was to be heard than that of the steadily falling rain, except when the weight of fast forming ice overcame the strength of some tree top or branch, and with clashing ice-laden twigs it slowly bent over or more rudely snapped with loud report. So frequently did this occur that one stood in open spaces eagerly watching to catch the first rustle that foretold the destruction of some sturdy tree that broke rather than yield to the overpowering weight. Simultaneously over a large tract of country was this noticed, and lumberers from Middle Musquodoboit reported that there at the same hour the woods resounded with the sounds of crushing trees and falling branches.

NOTE TO MR. POOLE'S PAPER ON THE ICE STORM OF JANUARY
24, 1881.

In the latter part of May I was passing up the Valley of the East River of Pictou, and on the road beyond Hopewell Station,

from which I started, met with the first signs of the result of the described ice storm, many trees being denuded of their tops and branches, and numerous small trees being still in a bent position; but as higher ground was reached the trees were not broken or torn, showing that snow, and not rain, had fallen upon them, nor was there anything in the trees on the cross road between the upper part of the East River and the west branch of the St. Mary's, nor upon the head waters of the Liscomb River, which showed that the ice storm had there prevailed. My driver from Caledonia Settlement to St. Mary's informed me that he had been in the woods on the Lower Liscomb during this storm, lumbering, and he, as well as other men, were afraid to leave their camp in consequence of falling limbs rendering it dangerous to do so.

Returning up the east branch of the St. Mary's river the effects of the storm were strongly visible, a great number of trees having suffered from the weight of their unusual burden, large limbs of birches and other trees, some fully six inches in diameter, being broken off close to the stems. In this district small trees were bent to the earth by the weight of the ice, and the roads were for a day or two, or until the trees were cut off, impassable. On this branch of the St. Mary's after the storm, the scene when the sun shone on the ice-laden trees must have been exceedingly beautiful, particularly on the borders of the long lake through which St. Mary's River flows.

R. MORROW.

ART. X.—LICHENS OF NOVA SCOTIA. BY A. W. MACKAY, B.A.
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(Read, May 9, 1881.)

LICHENOLOGY is the botanical field of romance, in it tales are told of beautiful blue and green algals under the tyrannous grasp and mastery of fungi which live upon them and cannot live without them. From the researches of DeBary, Famintzin, Baranetzky, Schmendener especially, Barnet and Reese, a lichen