

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

Published weekly by
THE WILLIAM WELD COMPANY (Limited).

JOHN WELD, Manager.

Agents for "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal,"
Winnipeg, Man.

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But these prices have been restored to a level of \$45 per ton for bran, and \$55 per ton for shorts, and farmers now face both higher prices and an inferior product.

But another child of Government arises to protect the public and takes form as the Board of Commerce. This one is possessed of a lusty voice and rushes here and there boisterously, "that man O'Connor," in whose fertile brain the Board was first conceived, leading by a length his more respected colleague. The latter, in a vain effort to control the lesser ornament to the Board, has little time for looking ahead, with the result that the problem of milk prices suddenly confronts him and, in Toronto, an ineffective investigation was allowed to arouse much feeling in order to save O'Connor's face. Strong but ineffective efforts were made to lower the producer's price of milk, notwithstanding the action of the other Board in raising the price of millfeeds.

In connection with hog prices as well, the Board of Commerce has trod mercilessly upon the farmer. Here, of course, the packer was the ostensible sinner, but the farmer remembered instantly that he had to sell his hogs to the packer, and that the game of passing the buck would have to stop when it reached him. J. D. McGregor, Brandon, at the recent meeting of the Western Canada Live-Stock Union stated that W. F. O'Connor has unsettled the whole live-stock industry all over Canada. Judge Robson, again speaking for the Board and to save his colleague, says that "not a cent ever came off the farmer by any action of the Board of Commerce," and implies that the Board is making strenuous efforts to lower the price of millfeeds. So far, these efforts, whatever they amount to and tardy as they have been, have met with small success. The Wheat Board has refused to lower the price of millfeeds at the request of the Board of Commerce, and there the matter stands at the time of writing. No section of the country is being served while these two bodies fight each other. As far as the price of millfeeds is concerned, the Board of Commerce were made fully aware long ago of the necessity for lowered prices, and they were equally well informed as to the present danger to Canada's carefully nourished bacon industry. No end of public statements can relieve them from responsibility for their negligence, which is costing both producer and consumer good money.

A Reading Hobby.

BY ALLAN MCDIARMID.

Those of us that hold it part of our religion not to make a habit of doing chores, or other work about the farm, after night, sometimes find ourselves with considerable time on our hands that we may not know exactly what to do with. Of course it is in the winter months, particularly, that this is likely to happen. And as it is these months that are directly ahead of us it might be a good plan to make some provision in the way of entertainment, (if we don't want to call it education,) that would take up our spare time until the spring comes again and does away with the necessity of taking any thought as to our spare moments. Between April and November the only "spare" a farmer is likely to get is the time he takes to sleep and eat, and I've known men that took a good deal less than the regular allowance of that.

But to get back to the question we brought up, as to an evening occupation for the moderate-minded among us who may be living too far from the city to take in the "movies," or be incapacitated by youth or age from taking in the other regular pastimes of the country, such as dancing, or going to "see the girls," for instance. The last mentioned of these amusements used to be a favorite with the young men of a past generation, but the custom has, of late years, fallen into disrepute.

So, in lieu of these things which, as we said, are not available to the majority of us, I would suggest that we take up some course of study that we might about complete in the four or five months at our disposal. It sounds bad, of course, especially to those of us that have seen a good number of years come between us and our school-days. The idea of going back to study hasn't much of a pull to it. We know we'd feel better if we did something that would stimulate our brain and get us to thinking again, but the effort is too much for us.

And now to come down to something definite. I am going to name one subject that I have been reading up a little lately and then leave it for others to either take that one or any other subject that may appeal to them for winter study and reading, not to mention the pleasure they may pick up along the way, as a sort of by-product of the main object.

That subject is Astronomy. If any of us have become tired milking cows or doing something else along that line, we can find a change and a rest right here. It won't be hard to get away from the things of this earth, in imagination anyway. As proof of this we might take the Pole star, for instance, with which the most of us are slightly acquainted. It is so far away, we are told that the rays of light that left it forty-years ago are just now reaching us, although they have been travelling at the rate of eleven million miles a minute all that time. But that isn't the worst of it. It has been found that some of the constellations that have been photographed lately are so far away that light, which travels at the rate we mentioned, would take more than five thousand years to get from them to us. There is no use talking in quintillions and sextillions of miles here. It makes no impression on us. We have to have a comparison. And so, when we are told that it is quite probable that there are some stars so distant that it would take millions of years for their light to come to us from them, we are likely to get a very wholesome lesson as to our own insignificance in the universal scheme of things. To the man with an exaggerated idea of his own importance in and to the world, I would recommend the study of Astronomy. He will find it very edifying.

Another thing that should interest us is the rate of speed at which we ourselves are travelling through space, carried along by this old earth, on which we have taken up our residence for the time being. The astronomers, who think they know, tell us that we, along with the rest of our companion worlds in the Solar System, are jogging along through the sky at a gait of about twelve miles a second. This seems rather slow after what we have heard about light, but it would undoubtedly be fast enough to take our breath away were it not for the fact that we are carrying the atmosphere along with us. It has been estimated that an artillery shell going at the above rate would penetrate a sheet of steel four city blocks thick. However, at that there are lots of the other stars, and systems of stars, in the universe that wouldn't find much difficulty in out-distancing us in a race. To the on-lookers we would probably appear to be standing still while the others were passing us. The star they call Aldebaran travels thirty-three miles a second. And there are hundreds of others in the ring that hold as good, or a better, record. But I have been reading lately of what are called "run-away stars." It appears to be hard to tell whether or not these stars have an orbit or track of their own, but, if not, it can't be very long until they will run clean through and out of the universe, altogether. The one they call "243," after some U-boat or aeroplane, I suppose, is travelling one hundred and seventy miles a second. And another, by the name of Groombridge, two hundred miles.

We haven't space to say much about the size of these "worlds in the making," as they have been termed, but we will take one of the stars on the sword of Orion as an example. It is rather hard to see without the help of a telescope, but under a good glass it shows up as one of the most beautiful nebula, as these newly-formed stars are called, in the sky. And its diameter is just twenty million times as great as that of our sun. And to give us some idea of the size of the sun they say that this earth and the moon might both be thrown into it and be about three times as distant from one another as they are at present.

It is all very big and very hard to grasp for the majority of us, but the more we think about it the more we are attracted to this study of other worlds in their different stages of growth and development, and the more we find ourselves able to appreciate the wonders of the universe in which we have been placed. If a winter's study can develop in us, even to a small degree, this quality of appreciation and understanding, the time will have been well spent and the foundation will have been laid for the education that may continue while we remain on the earth, and longer, for that matter. The coming months hold an opportunity for most of us.

I heard of a farmer's wife who was asked what her "men-folks" did during the long winter evenings. "Oh," she replied, "they just sit and weary around until bed-time." Anyone who is going to den up like that ought to go back to the woods and stay with the bears.

Nature's Diary.

A. B. KLUGH, M. A.

It is extremely gratifying to those interested in the wild life of Canada to see how the conservation of game animals is furthered by the revised game laws and regulations issued by the Ontario Game and Fisheries Branch.

Some of the points worthy of particular commendation in the regulations as they now stand are the following:

Only one deer may be shot by one person in one season. The old limit of two deer per season was too high considering the greater facilities, such as improved railroad transportation and the use of automobiles, for getting into the haunts of this animal.

No cow Moose or young Moose under the age of one year may be taken.

No person who has taken or killed any bird or animal suitable for food shall allow the flesh thereof to be destroyed or spoiled, and no person who has killed, or taken a fur-bearing animal shall allow the skin thereof to be destroyed or spoiled.

The purchase or sale of wild ducks, wild geese or other waterfowl is prohibited, as is also the sale of woodcock and snipe. This is certainly a step in the right direction. The chief exterminator of our game animals is not the legitimate sportsman, but the "market shooter," and this means the stopping of his nefarious trade. It is to be noticed that this regulation puts a double barrier on the trafficking in game birds as it makes the purchaser as well as the seller liable to a penalty. It is only a matter of time until we shall find the same regulation applied to all game animals, including game fishes.

No open season is provided for grouse, partridge, quail or pheasants. A permanent close season should be maintained for these birds for several years. The ruffed grouse, one of our very finest game-birds, is in imminent danger of extinction in many parts of the country. In many places where the woods echoed to the roll of his drum, that drum is now stilled, and we no longer see this splendid bird with his black neck-tufts erected stalking through the woods. No longer, in many of his old haunts, do we see his dark form silhouetted against the evening sky as he takes his November meal of birch and poplar buds. The quail, or bob-white, is already extinct over a large part of its former range in Ontario, and the combination of wire-fences, which permit of close cultivation and thus eliminate the cover from the margins of the fields, severe winters, self-hunting dogs, and over-shooting, threaten to eliminate it entirely from the fauna of Canada. The prohibition of the shooting of the bob-white will remove one of the factors leading to its extermination, but will not be sufficient to rehabilitate it in its old haunts, and I would appeal especially to every farmer who has a pair or more of these birds upon his land to see that some shelter is provided for them and to spare them a little grain to tide them over a severe winter. This species is, on account of its weedseed eating habits, a very valuable one agriculturally, and I hope to see it entirely and permanently removed from the list of game birds.

"Insectivorous birds must not be caught, killed sold or had in possession without a permit, except goshawks, sharp-shinned hawks, great-horned owls, crows, cowbirds, blackbirds (grackles) and house sparrows." This section is one of the most satisfactory which has ever been framed in any regulation concerning bird-life. It protects all the beneficial hawks and owls, which in most regulations are left entirely without protection or are even, in some parts of North America where the game-laws are apparently based on ignorance and prejudice, penalized by the offering of a bounty. It allows the shooting of the cow-bird, which on account of its parasitic habits, is an enemy of our smaller insectivorous birds, yet which under most regulations is protected, and it allows the killing of crows, grackles and house sparrows, three species which are often decidedly inimical to the interests of agriculture.

Under these regulations fur-bearing animals come in for some really practical protection, since it is provided that a trapper's license fee of \$5 shall be paid by anyone except farmer or farmer's sons trapping on their own land, and further that no pelts may be shipped out of the province, or dressed in the province, without the payment of the following royalties—Fisher \$1, Martin 50c., Mink 25c., and Muskrat 3c. Beaver and otter are entirely protected and may only be killed under special authorization from the Deputy Minister of Game and Fisheries.

The license fee for persons engaged in the handling of furs has been raised from \$2 to \$10 for a resident and British subject and to \$25 for a non-resident or non-British subject.