

strongly emphasized in speeches and press articles since the war began.

Breeders of pure-bred live stock have one golden opportunity ahead of them. It is true that the English ports are also closed for a period of six months on account of foot and mouth disease and our breeders must rely on their own efforts, but Canada has not been backward in the pure-bred live stock industry in late years and there are in this country large numbers of first-class individual animals of the several breeds. It is up to the breeder to get the best sires possible and do all in his power to keep the standard of his live stock up to a high level and even advance it—somewhat, notwithstanding the crisis which has come over the industry. Those into the live stock business in a small way, or those contemplating making a start in the business should have no hesitation in purchasing foundation stock from our own live stock men. This would make an outlet for nearly all the surplus breeding stock on the farms where large herds and flocks are already established. There is a need of more herds and more flocks of the right kind of stock and we should like to see them established with good Canadian-bred animals of the right kind. These are available and now that we cannot buy in England, in the United States, in France or in Belgium there is no excuse why we should not buy at home and boost our own business. The word "imported" looks very fine after the name of an animal but it really means very little. If the animal is a first-class individual and has the right kind of blood behind it, it matters not whether it first saw the light of day in Scotland, in England, in France, in Belgium, in the United States or in Canada. Individuality is what counts and we have seen scores of scrub imported animals and thousands of creditable Canadian-bred individuals. Of course some of the best animals we ever had in this country were imported from the other side of the water or from the United States but this is not saying that with our herds and flocks well founded and running along on right lines we are not capable of fairly well taking care of ourselves, as far as pure-bred live stock breeding is concerned for at least a short time.

Nature's Diary.

A. B. Klugh, M.A.

The war which is waged by the Hawks on the small rodents which are so destructive to farm produce is given up with the coming of evening, but as the Hawks retire the conflict is taken up by another group—the Owls.

The Long-eared Owl is a fairly common species from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Just how common or how scarce any species of Owl is in a given locality takes a long time to ascertain, because of the time at which they are abroad. The hours of daylight are usually spent in the centre of some thick tree, and the ornithologist, has most of his Owls found for him by the Crows. The Crows hate an Owl, and if they find one in the daytime they set up a great hullabaloo. This commotion attracts other Crows to join in the sport of Owl-baiting. They gather in the tree, dart at the Owl and often carry this persecution so far that the Owl takes flight. But flight avails little, for the Crows follow in a long string, and as soon as the Owl alights surround it again. This often goes on till the evening, then if the Owl happens to be the Great Horned Owl the tables are turned and the Owl turns Crow-hunter, and goes about the work far more quietly but far more effectively, and makes a meal of some of its persecutors. The food of the long-eared owl consists almost exclusively of small animals.

Another species which has a transcontinental range in Canada is the Short-eared Owl. This Owl inhabits more open country than the last species and breeds in marshes. In the fall and winter it often congregates in large bands about meadows and marshes. About seventy-five per cent. of the food of the Short-eared owl consists of meadow mice. It takes a few birds, usually the small, ground-haunting Sparrows.

In the case of Owls, where the terms "eared" or "horned" are used, it is tufts of feathers on the head which are referred to.

The Screech Owl is a very common species in Canada. It is a little Owl with a voice quite unlike that of most of the Owls, as it does not hoot, but utters a tremulo whistle. "Whistling Owl" would in my estimation be a far better name than Screech Owl, though it does occasionally indulge in a rather loud screech, but far, far

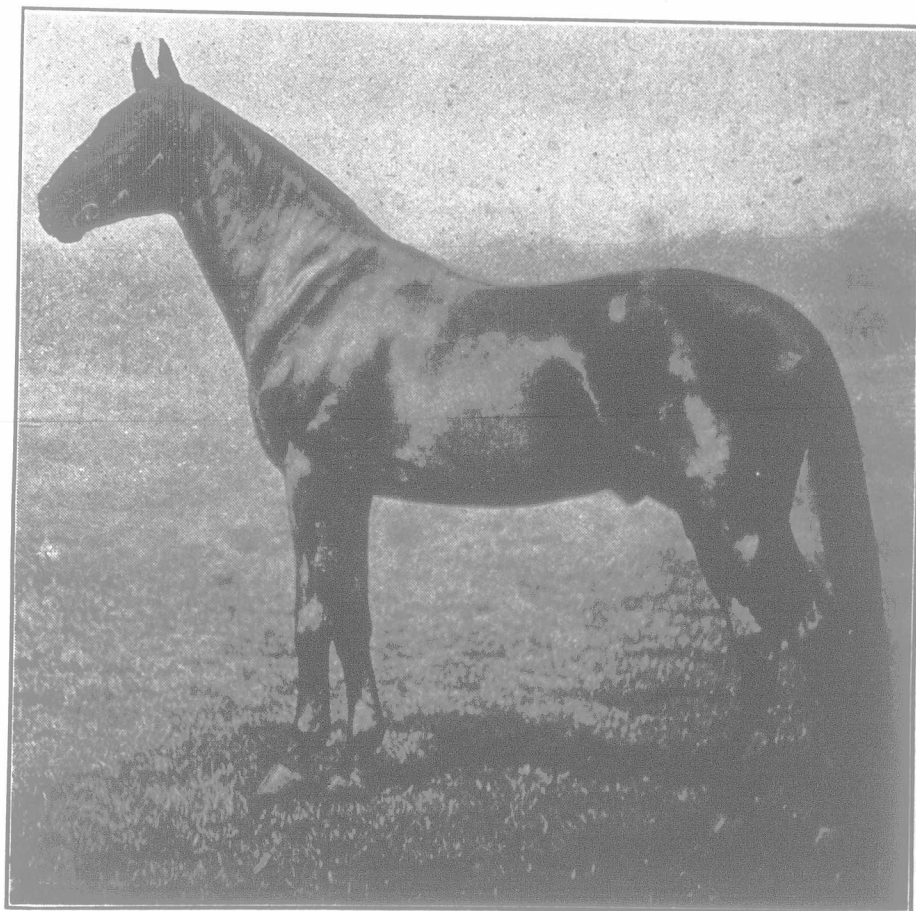
more rarely than it whistles. This species has two phases of plumage, a reddish phase and a grey phase. These phases have no relation to age, sex or season, but as a rule a certain phase very largely predominates in a certain locality. The Screech Owl feeds very largely on insects, but also consumes quantities of field mice. About fifteen per cent. of its food consists of birds, nearly all House Sparrows. It also eats Crayfish, Frogs, Lizards and Fish. It catches most fish in winter, when it sometimes watches by holes in the ice and seizes such fish as come near the surface.

The Snowy Owl, which comes down from the North in the winter, also destroys large numbers of injurious rodents, and it is extremely unfortunate that many people consider that they are doing a good deed when they shoot one of these allies of the farmer.

In the southern parts of Manitoba and Saskatchewan and in the Dry Belt in British Columbia the Burrowing Owl is found. It breeds in old badger holes. The food of this species consists almost entirely of insects.

The Great Horned Owl occurs in all the timbered parts of Canada, and is the bird whose deep "who-who-who-who" sounds out in the still nights. The main food of this Owl consists of small and medium-sized mammals. It takes a great many rabbits, rats and various species of mice. The only harm it does is in attacking poultry which are allowed to roost out in the trees. If all poultry were shut up at night this species would do a lot of useful work and no harm.

Thus we see that the birds of prey are far from being the enemies of the farmer, but are in reality among his best friends, and that he should in return for their good services not only protect them himself, but should urge others to do so.



A Great Stallion.

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THE HORSE.

The Season's Inspection Work.

The work of the Ontario Stallion Enrolment Board for 1914 has been placed before the public in bulletin form. Their records reveal the enrolment of 3,201 stallions, an increase of 441 over the previous year. The total is made up of 888 new enrolments, and 2,313 renewals.

In the work of the past year there were six forms of certificates, namely: Number one—pure-bred, inspected and approved; number two—pure-bred that has failed to pass inspection; number three—pure-bred not inspected; number four—grade that has passed inspection; number five—grade that has failed to pass inspection; number six—grade not inspected. By the amendments to the Ontario Stallion Act, which came into force on Aug. 1st, 1914, inspection was made compulsory, eliminating the non-inspected classes. Consequently there will only be four forms of certificates to be issued in 1915. Another feature of the amended Act is that grades failing to pass the official inspection will not be granted certificates

after 1916, which eliminates all stallions carrying number four certificates, and after 1916 certificates will be granted to none but pure-bred stallions.

The report gives 1,118 grade stallions enrolled, which is a very high percentage when we consider that the total number is 3,201. A few horses, however, that received grade certificates might have been enrolled as pure-breds, but they did not receive pure-bred certificates because the owners did not furnish proof of breeding and ownership.

The Stallion Enrolment Board are very pronounced in their efforts to improve the quality of the Ontario horse by the elimination of grade sires travelling in the country, and claim that history has shown that in districts and countries where pure-bred sires have been used for generations the average quality of the horses is much higher than in those places where grades and nondescript sires have been used for breeding purposes. In view of the fact that France and Belgium have suffered heavily through the destruction of many good Belgian and Percheron horses, it would be well for Ontario breeders to strengthen the reputation of their horses of all recognized breeds by using only pure-bred sires of undoubted quality, and by selecting such females for breeding purposes as from their sires, conformation and soundness will insure high-class progeny.

Pure-bred mares are, of course, desirable, but by resorting always to the use of pure-bred sires the progeny will in time be eligible for registration in four of the different stud books, which are a part of the Canadian National Records. Females of the Clydesdale, Shire and Standard-bred breeds with four top crosses by sires recorded in the Canadian Stud Books of the Associations to which they belong are eligible for registration, while female Hackneys with two top crosses by

such sires are capable of being recorded in their stud books. Percherons, French Coach, Belgian draft, Thoroughbred and Suffolk breeds do not admit of grading up, yet it is the right policy for the breeder of those horses to pursue a course wherein only the pure-bred sire receives recognition, and even if they cannot be recorded as pure-breds the animals will reach that perfection of form and quality which will insure the highest market prices, and yield that satisfaction which comes only to those who do their share towards improving the live stock of the country.

It is very necessary that all stallions be recorded in the names of their owners, and a buyer should make it a condition of sale that his own name (the buyer's) should appear in the stud book established for

that particular breed of horse. This is to insure owners of mares that the certificate of service furnished by the owner will be accepted by the National Live Stock Records at Ottawa when the owner of the mare makes application to register the progeny.

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