

## The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE  
DOMINION.

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done that they are not permitted to obtain an education equivalent to that received by city children of even less prosperous parentage? The wonder is that rural parents have not been fired by the injustice of our educational system, and have not risen to protest against the inadequacy and antique character of the facilities provided to train and develop the minds of their children.

Is it that prejudice on the part of parents themselves has balked any effort made by the Educational Department to improve conditions? Have rural parents feared an increase in taxes not commensurate with the advantages which would accrue to them and their children through more up-to-date schools? Certain it is, in later years, there has been in our Department of Education no champion to carry the fiery cross up and down the side-roads and concessions of Ontario, urging the rural people to enlist in a campaign for better rural schools and a system that will give rural children the training they deserve.

Old customs, old systems and old methods are being scrapped daily. We are entering upon a new era; mind and intellect will dominate body and physical strength. Can we as agriculturists expect to cling to the dogmas of an outworn age and still occupy our rightful position in the arena of Canadian citizenship? Certainly not! A unified public opinion is necessary before any substantial improvement can be effected in our educational system. Where do you stand?

## The Modern Minister and His Salary.

BY SANDY FRASER.

It's mony a lang day since I reported one o' oor ministers' sermons for yer benefit and ye will maybe be thinkin' that oor preacher has up an' left us an' gone to try his hand at some ither job where they pay wages enough to enable a mon to buy bread for himself an' his family, with maybe a wee bit o' butter for it, or if not that then some o' this oleo stuff that they are makin' noo-a-days for the man o' small income or economical disposition.

But gin ye think anything like that ye're mistaken. Ye dinna ken oor man. He's no' the kind o' a man that looks after the moral welfare o' his people because he's paid for it. The quality o' his sermons are no' affected by the amount o' siller he sees on the collection

plate. He's one o' the kind that oor feythers used to tell us aboot, that thought o' the church's welfare first and their ain welfare second, or not at all. They took it for granted that gin they did their wark the best they kened how, that somehow or ither they wad be pulled through wi'oot being clean starved to death. And it's a fact that although we never paid oor minister salary enough to permit him to invest to any great extent in mining stocks or real estate, still I never knew him to be in sic a tight pinch but what he found a way oot, and he always had at least a couple o' days provisions on hand even at the worst o' times. And he had the laugh on the rest o' us when the Government tauld us that we wad have to learn to economize while the war lasted. Sae muckle o' this an' sae mickle o' that an' naething at all o' something else, until we'd see how the thing wis gaein' tae turn oot.

But the minister had all these lessons off by heart lang before, and sae far as his manner o' living wis concerned the war might as well have been in the moon. There wis nae further degrees o' economy for him unless someone invented a plan to get oor food oot o' the air, as some say they will after a while. It will be a great day for the preachers, all right, when they can live themselves, and bring up a family, on east wind and water.

It used to be the custom lang ago, when money wis sae scarce that people didna like the idea o' payin' it oot for juist talk, for them to mak' what they called "donations" for their ministers, when ilka member o' the congregation wis supposed to bring a present o' some kind tae the parsonage on a certain evenin' that had been fixed for the occasion. It was a great event; for everyone but the preacher an' his wife, wha had to do the "cleanin' up" the next day. As ye ken, "it's mair blessed to give than to receive" and there wis never better proof o' this than in the auld-fashioned "donation." The man that makes a present generally feels aboot three times as big as the chap that has tae accept it, sae, as I said, we all had an unco' fine time, with the exception o' oor parson an' his wife. And oor pleasure wasn't spoiled by the knowledge o' the fact that we had given awa' anything o' muckle value tae oorselves. Gin it happened tae be a year when potatoes were sae plentiful that there wis likely to be na market for them, we wad bring a couple o' bags or so. But when it happened tae be a bad year for the rot and potatoes were scarce, we wad be mair likely to think o' bringin' a bag o' oats for the preachers' horse. That is, if oats weren't mair than aboot twenty-five cents a bushel.

And then the women-folks wad be cookin' all sorts o' pies an' cakes, that they wad be sayin' wad last the minister's family for sax months or mair. But as it generally turned oot there wouldn't be muckle o' them left by the time the last o' us started for hame, after the ceremony wis all over.

It used to remind me o' a story I heard aboot a certain auld wumman in my feyther's hame town in Scotland. This auld lady used to mak' hersel' oot to be a great friend o' her "pastor," as she called him. One day she went to visit him and took with her a cooked chicken and a lot o' doughnuts an' some ither things she had made. "Aye," she said, when the minister thanked her for her kindness, "when I come, I come." But before she left she had eaten everything she brought, and mair too. So when the preacher was seein' her to the door he says, "anither thing; when you go, you go." So it wis wi' us an' oor "donation." We came and we went and nobody was the muckle the better off. On the whole, I'm thinkin' that those that go intae the ministry noo-a-days are better off than those that went before them, for the reason that what they get they get in guid real money and dinna have to be takin' it in trade, accordin' tae the auld style. I ken there's no mony among them that are gettin' the compensation for their labors that one wad think should go wi' the present high cost o' livin', but since it's a sort o' an understood thing that none o' them went intae the business for the money there is to be made oot o' it, I suppose we maun tak' them at their word an' let them get what discipline there is to be had by workin' for the pleasure o' the thing.

I see there's some talk o' fixin' a minimum salary for all preachers, but gin they dae that I canna see but they should fix a minimum standard o' quality for the preachers themselves. This fixin' prices an' monkeyin' wi' the law o' supply an' demand may be a richt in an emergency, but it's no' the thing in the lang rin. When a mon thinks he has been called tae the ministry and doesna find oot till later on that it wis some ither noise he heard, then I'm thinkin' that starvation may be the only thing that will rouse him up tae a realization o' his mistake. If the people he preaches to hae to pay him sae much for his sermons, be they guid or bad, there's na hope for him—or them. He'll gang right ahead grindin' oot the same auld theological hash that he handed oot to them the first day he went intae the pulpit. Progress or development or evolution, call it what ye like, will mak' no headway there. But let things tak' their natural course, wi' pay accordin' tae the preachin' and yer third rate minister will soon be starved intae a better job. Better for all concerned.

I think I'll have to be makin' an apology. I started oot wi' the intention o' givin' ye part o' the sermon that the meenister preached tae us last Sunday, but it looks unco' like I'd got switched off my text, and noo I hae neither the time nor the space tae do it in. I dinna ken how it happened. It must be age is beginnin' tae tell on me. However, I'll gie ye the sermon later on, or maybe a better one, if the auld chap continues to preach up tae the salary he's gettin'. It's naething great, but it's good for a meenister.

Repair the implements and order all needed parts.

## Nature's Diary.

A. B. KLUGH, M. A.  
Birds of the Week.

The Bronzed Grackle, otherwise known as the Crow Blackbird, makes its presence known by a vocal performance which can hardly be dignified by the name of a song. He takes up a high perch in a tree, inflates his chest, spreads his tail-feathers, then stretches up his head and—after all these elaborate preparations for vocal effort—emits a squeak like that of a wheelbarrow sadly in need of lubrication.

The Bronzed Grackle is a well-known species from New Brunswick to the Rockies. It builds its nest in many very different situations, the most common site being on a branch of a coniferous tree, though it also makes use of deciduous trees, bushes, the rafters of barns, deserted Woodpecker's holes, and hollows in old stumps. The nest is composed of twigs, grass and mud and is lined with fine grass and sometimes with hair. The eggs are from four to six in number, smoky blue in color, with irregular blotches, lines and spots. The period of incubation is from thirteen to sixteen days.

This species nearly always breeds in colonies, which may be small or large, and when a colony is established in a group of trees they persecute and drive away all other birds.

The Bronzed Grackle is one of those species whose economic status requires careful consideration. It consumes much grain, this item running as high as 57 per cent. of its food in April, 49 per cent. in August and 54 per cent. in September. A good deal of this grain is undoubtedly waste grain left on the fields, but a good deal of that taken in April is sprouting grain. It eats many injurious insects and these constitute 47 per cent. of its food in May, and 63 per cent. in June. Of beneficial insects, that is of those species which prey upon their injurious cousins, it takes a considerable number as they make up 13 per cent. of its food in June, 11 per cent. in July and 9 per cent. in August. It also eats some weed seed and some cultivated fruit. If we balance up the good and the harm as shown by the foregoing data we come to the conclusion that they are about equal, but the fact that it sometimes eats the eggs and young of other birds and also drives away many beneficial birds we are forced to regard it as a species which should be kept in check.

The cheery whistle of the Meadowlark sounds once again over the fields. This species is about ten inches in length, brownish above, yellow beneath, with a large black crescent on the breast. Several of the outer tail-feathers are white and are very conspicuous when the bird is in flight.

The food of the Meadowlark consists of three-quarters insects and one-quarter vegetable matter, the latter consisting of weed seed and waste grain. Of the insects eaten the most important item is grasshoppers which constitute about 50 per cent. of the food for the summer months. Since a grasshopper averages about fifteen grains in weight and consumes its own weight of food per day, a Meadowlark consumes about fifty grasshoppers per day, a Meadowlark saves three pounds of forage per month. Further than this it reduces the supply of grasshoppers for the following year by eating the insects before they have deposited their eggs.

The nest of the Meadowlark is placed in a tuft of grass, is built of grass and is often partly arched over. The eggs are from four to six in number and are white, dotted and sprinkled with reddish-brown.

The Killdeer is one of the few Shore Birds (a name applied to members of the order which includes the Sandpipers, Snipe, Plover, Woodcock, Curlews, etc.) which occur commonly inland. This species is readily recognized by the orange-brown upper tail-coverts which show when the bird is flying and by its characteristic cry of "kill-deer—kill-deer—kill-deer." This species, like most of the shore-birds, makes no nest, but deposits its four clay-colored eggs in a depression in the ground. It is a valuable bird because of its insect-eating propensities, and consumes numbers of wireworms, May beetles, grasshoppers, and other injurious insects.

The White-rumped Shrike is a pale slate-colored bird about eight and a half inches in length, with a white breast, black wings and tail, and a black bar through the eyes. It is fairly common in Ontario wherever open country with scattered thorn-trees occur. It almost invariably places its nest in a thorn-tree and usually fairly well in toward the centre, building it of twigs, rootlets, and grass. The eggs are from four to six and are of a light grayish color spotted with yellowish-brown.

The White-rumped Shrike is mainly an insect-eater, but upon occasions it takes a small bird. Once in early spring, when the ground was covered by a late snow-fall I saw it kill a Junco and on another occasion I saw it capture a young Vesper Sparrow, while other observers report having seen it kill Song Sparrows, Tree Sparrows, House Sparrows, Chipping Sparrows, and Snowflakes. In the 88 stomachs of this species examined by the U. S. Biological Survey the remains of 7 birds were found, so that we may conclude that 8 per cent. of its food consists of small birds. Mice form 16 per cent. of its food and insects, among which grasshoppers predominate, about 75 per cent.

The Red-winged Blackbird is a common species in marshes. The male is easily recognized by his red epaulets, but the female is a dull, brownish streaked bird. Usually the males arrive several days ahead of the females.