

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN
THE DOMINION.

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JOHN WELD, MANAGER.

Agents for "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal,"
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Address—THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE, or
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LONDON, CANADA.

general public. During the past year, we encountered the sinister propaganda of the big oleo interests to get a foot-hold in Canada and undermine butter dairying. The Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Martin Burrell), is putting an effectual quietus on this attempt by the new dairy bill, referred to in another article, which will preserve the good name of honest Canadian products established by a former government. Then we have had the open and covert schemes of a few big firms to enrich themselves by palming off on the people a lot of supposedly cheap syrup products, under the guise of the word "maple" which if not stamped out, as happily a new measure undertakes to do, would strangle the genuine maple syrup industry. The clear-cut law, which also covers honey, now before Parliament, deserves support and public backing in order to effect its passage and whole-hearted enforcement. A widespread and wasteful program of militarism is being fastened on the country, and the naval armament trust from across the sea are preparing to fasten upon the tollers and resources of this new country, while fresh and staggering onslaughts by railway interests are being made on the treasury or credit of the Dominion and the iron infants clamor for bounties. These demands involve pressing issues that require publicity now, if the country is not to be "bled white" and the work-a-day needs of agriculture and people suffer by the imposition of increased and long continued burdens.

We recently heard the remark that a feeder who could keep his live stock looking well at this season of the year must be a successful live-stock man. It is a fact that it is more difficult to keep the stock in good flesh during the spring months than at any other time during the year, but it will pay in the long run to feed a little extra during the next month or six weeks, and have the stock go to grass in good condition. If they get down poor now, it will require all the bush of the grass season to bring them up to fair condition, and then the hot, dry season comes on and the best of the pasture is over, making it a very easy matter for them to slip back to a low condition again before stabling time in the fall.

Nature's Diary.

By A. B. Klugh, M.A.

Broken the grip of the ice-king
On land and river and lake,
The whole world gently is stirring
From the deep sleep of winter awake.

The murmur of running waters
The babbling stream's refrain
From the Maple boughs the Robin
Carols his joyous strain.

Through the forest carpet
Of leaves of a bygone year
The unfolding spotted leaves
Of Yellow Adder's-tongue appear.

The Bluebird softly warbles,
As over the fields he flies
Reflecting on his wings
The azure of sunny skies.

Midst the Soft Maple flowers
The earliest bees are humming
In the green Cedar thickets
The Ruffed Grouse is drumming.

Where the swollen water-courses
Bear the melting snows away
The Willow's bursting buds reveal
The catkins silky and gray.

From the ponds the voices of Hylas
Unite in the chorus they sing
And the Song Sparrow in the Alders
Pours forth his ode to the Spring.

Spring! The season of awakening; the time when the stillness of winter gives place to sounds and sights which foretell the coming activity in the realm of nature. The joyous songs of the returned feathered migrants wake an echo in the heart of man, and the flowers which first appear in the woodlands are appreciated far more than much more showy blossoms which bloom later in the year. To feel the true spirit of Spring one must live in a northern land, for there this season owes much of its charm to its contrast with the cold, still season which it replaces.

One of the earliest birds to return is the Bluebird, the bird which carried the blue sky upon its back. It competes with the Robin for the honor of first place among our spring arrivals. The records of the Wellington Field Naturalist's Club, of Guelph, Ont., show that in three years the Bluebird arrived first, in three years the Robin, and in three springs they arrived on the same day.

The Bluebird haunts open fields, shrubby hill-sides and orchards. When feeding, the bluebird usually sits on a low branch or on a fence post, keeping a keen eye on the ground below, now and then dropping suddenly on an unsuspecting insect, and returning to its perch. This species makes its nest in a hole in a tree or in a fence post, a hollow apple tree being a very favorite site. The nest is made of soft grass, and in it are deposited four or five bluish-white eggs. The young Bluebirds have spotted breasts, thus revealing their kinship with the Thrushes, to which family they belong. The food of the Bluebird consists of sixty-eight per cent. of insects, and thirty-two per cent. of vegetable matter. The largest items of insect food are grasshoppers, beetles and caterpillars, all except a few of the beetles being injurious species. The vegetable food consists chiefly of fruit pulp, only an insignificant portion of which consists of cultivated varieties. Among wild fruits Elderberries are the favorite.

Another sound of Spring which we welcome is the "Kill-deer-kill-deer-kill-deer" of the Killdeer Plover. This is one of the Shore Birds which has forsaken the shore and taken up its abode in cultivated fields. This species is brown with an olive tinge above, the rump and upper tail coverts are orange-brown. It has a black bar across the crown, and two black bands on the neck and breast. It is from nine to ten inches in length. The nest is a depression in the grass, and the eggs are four in number, clay color, marked with blackish-brown. The Killdeer breeds from central Quebec to British Columbia, and winters from North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arizona south to the Bermudas, the West Indies and South America.

This species feeds upon beetles, grasshoppers, caterpillars, ants, bugs, cadis flies, centipedes, spiders, earthworms, snails, crayfish, horse-flies, wire-worms, clover-root weevils, white grubs, and mosquitoes. Thus among the items of its bill of fare are found many pests of the farm, and in destroying these it renders the agriculturist such a service that it should be withdrawn from the list of game birds, and protected as an insectivorous bird.

THE HORSE.

Blind Mare and Foal.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

One of the "common objects of the country" in summer is a mare with a foal at her foot. In a field near Biggar, Lanarkshire, an uncommon object of this kind could have been seen—a blind mare attended by her foal. This animal, that came of good Clydesdale stock, had a history of some interest. Going back to her earliest days, it is related that when the farmer who owned her dam saw that she had presented him with a foal without eyes he came to the conclusion that it was a useless acquisition, and sent a man for a hammer to give it a summary dispatch and thus get rid of the unwelcome arrival. In the nick of time another farmer interceded on its behalf, obtained the foal and carried it home in a sack. It was reared on cow's milk, supplied in the first place from a flask. At the time the photograph was taken the mare was five years old, in excellent condition, and of good size, although for the first year of her life growth was slow. Trained at the usual age, she had the reputation of being an excellent worker in cart or plough. As if to compensate somewhat for the want of sight her senses of hearing and smell were remarkably acute. When at work apart from her companion, either in the field or on the open road, she was constantly on the alert and kept turning her head leisurely from side to side as if listening or trying to ascertain whether the way was clear or not; much as a blind man feels his way along the street. When being led or when working alongside another animal, she failed to show the same caution, and behaved as if she were in possession of all her faculties. To a stranger her most noticeable peculiarity was the way she kept moving her head, carrying it high, and usually to the side. In doing so she threw back her ears, as shown in the photograph, an action suggestive of temper, but of vice she was entirely free. To her foal she was greatly attached, and kept as closely in touch with it as circumstances permitted. She must also have been sensitive to the proximity of other animals, and careful, if not considerate towards them, as a cat at one time reared a litter of kittens in safety among the straw on the floor of her loose box. The greater part of her time had been spent grazing in the fields. The ability to find her way to the pond or watering place was said to be quite surprising. Even in a strange field, if once taken to the spot she readily found her way afterwards. On one occasion she was seven months in the same field, during which time no one went near her. By some means or other she came to be aware when nearing any obstruction. She could run rapidly about the field, and still pull up when nearing a fence. The only mistake she had been known to make was at a time when she occupied a field along with two other young horses. Taking advantage of an open gate her companions got out and started galloping in the vicinity of the field. Hearing the clatter of their hoofs she also began to run, and, forgetful of any intervening obstacle, she was for once thrown off her guard, and rushed against a wire fence in which she got entangled. This mistake nearly cost her her life, but fortunately she was observed in time and released from her perilous position in which she was placed by misadventure.

CHARLES REID.

Kicking and Switching in Horses.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Kicking and switching are two troubles often found together, but, like many other troubles, have to be treated separately. Kicking is often an act of defence caused by aggravation when handling, or it may be caused from some neglect in making the colt or animal familiar with its surroundings. As in the case of kicking when a line gets under the tail: a colt that has been made familiar with such before hitching will not be annoyed with the line under the tail. Switching is caused by nervousness.

In either switching or kicking try and arrive at the disposition of the animal, whether of a nervous or sullen temperament. If of the nervous type extra careful handling must be used. The sullen type must be conquered by force (not abuse).

To stop a horse from kicking, as I have said, make him familiar with his surroundings. If he persists take a straight bit, check the animal fairly tight, put on backband and crupper, snap one end of lines around backband, pass other end down through ring of bit. This gives you extra purchase, and when he goes to kick do not jerk but by a quick and firm pull on lines command "whoa," and make sure you are understood. Another way is to use a separate rope, make a good war bridle and put it on. When animal makes any attempt to kick, by a quick pull on rope you will surprise; again use the command "whoa."

Switching is a mean habit to treat. A good