

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

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1. THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE is published every Thursday.

It is impartial and independent of all cliques and parties, handsomely illustrated with original engravings, and furnishes the most practical, reliable and profitable information for farmers, dairymen, gardeners, stockmen and home-makers, of any publication in Canada.

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produce more. He reads in his daily paper that there are large numbers of men out of work in the cities and if these men are any good and are willing to work he would be pleased to get their services to help him "Increase Production." Here lies the big problem for 1915 and it must be solved quickly as the men are needed early. Financial difficulties, long hours, hard work, no Sundays off, no recreation—all these general factors in the "Rural Problem" are overshadowed by the real factor in this crisis, farm labor. All these and others must be considered in ordinary times, but in war time with a nation to be fed and an army and navy to be well looked after, for they deserve the best the country can give, long hours, hard work and all these things which drive men to towns must be overlooked—they are largely imaginary anyway—and the out-of-workers must get behind the plow and help not only themselves but the country. If these men are to get on the land and the farmer is to increase production as it is hoped he will, there is need of some organization to bring the man out of work who is willing and able to do farm work and the farmer who is willing and ready to engage him together. Here is where the Government can do a great good. Last week we suggested that a man be temporarily placed in each county to facilitate the matter and look after men needing work and place them with farmers requiring help. This may not be the best method but it is at least something more than talk. There is no getting around the fact that the real problem for this year is farm labor. Give each district the required number of farm laborers at a reasonable wage and the increase in production will surprise us all. The land requires better tillage and more work. If the labor is not available it will get even less than it has been getting in the wild rush to seed and cultivate more acres. Better tillage and more acres mean greater production. The problem which our authorities must face is

that of sending laborers to the farmer. It will never be accomplished by talking. Something must be done.

The Fertilizer Question.

With the agitation and the need for an increased production in 1915, and with the main source of one of the most-widely used commercial fertilizers cut off, farmers, gardeners and growers of special crops are beginning to ask themselves how they can fill the place of the potash which formerly came from the German mines. In a letter in this week's issue a correspondent raises the question and the matter is discussed. There is a great need of conservation of all the fertilizing ingredients in farmyard manure this winter. Save all the liquid manure possible as this contains considerable potash and nitrogen. There never was a greater need of putting forth extra precautions to prevent the loss of the liquid which is so often allowed to escape from the average stable or manure heap. The stockman's best plan is to use all the bedding procurable to soak up this moisture and then apply the manure in its green state direct to the fields, spreading as it is drawn. If all the liquid manure produced this winter could be saved and applied to the soil it would take the place of a great deal of potash which is ordinarily bought in other forms.

Then there is wood ashes. As shown in another column these are valuable. If well preserved and unleached, they should contain at least 6 per cent. of potash and possibly up to 10 per cent. They also contain from 1.5 to 2 per cent. phosphoric acid and are made up of anywhere from 30 to 50 per cent. of lime compounds. Lime is valuable in that its action in the soil renders insoluble potash salts already in that soil available to plants. Continuous liming without other fertilizer would prove disastrous but its stimulating affect might be used to good advantage for a year or two in the absence of commercial potash.

Farmers should not neglect the forms of fertilizer available and required by the soil simply because potash is unobtainable. Give the land a good dressing of the fertilizers available, and supply as much potash as possible by saving liquid manure and wood ashes and by releasing as much of the potash already in the soil as the crops will need. Canada must produce big crops this year and the lack of potash should not upset the calculations of the growers of these crops.

Nature's Diary.

A. B. Klugh, M.A.

C. W. Beaven sends us the following description of some birds which visited the vicinity of Prescott this fall and remained into the early winter. "The male is about the size of the Red-winged Blackbird, ground color black, wing-buffs scarlet and yellow with black markings, not so bright as the Red-winged Blackbird. Head grey-brown and black, neck, upper back and two inner secondaries edged black, secondaries and coverts edged white, short tail feathers and lower part of back edged grey-brown, breast speckled grey." He states that they did considerable damage to the corn, and wants to know what they are.

These birds are undoubtedly male Red-winged Blackbirds in the first winter plumage. The young Red-wings in this plumage differ from the adult males in exactly those points which Mr. Beaven has mentioned. The unusual feature of the case is their remaining so late in the season as they usually leave about the first of November. Also the Red-wings in the East do not as a rule do much damage to crops, though the Western Red-wing often eats grain to a very considerable extent.

Eslic Carter, of Clandeboye, Ontario, writes a very interesting letter in response to our request for information on the Bob-white in a recent issue of "The Farmer's Advocate," which we quote:—

"Kindly accept my hearty appreciation of your article re Bob-white. For the past two years, through the columns of Ontario papers, I have been advocating the protection of birds and harmless wild animals. Needless to say, therefore, it is a pleasure for me to answer your queries about Bob-white. I am writing from a place approximately twenty miles north and a couple of miles west of Clandeboye, Ontario.

"Twenty five years ago the Bob-whites were plentiful here. I frequently saw flocks and in the winter they often sought food, shelter, or both in our barnyard. But with the advent of wealth,

guns became more numerous here and Bob-white was relentlessly pursued. Fifteen years ago he became scarce indeed. Ten years ago the sadly sweet, or plaintive call 'bob-white' was seldom heard. For three years, three, four or five years ago I had scarcely ever heard him. Last year I frequently heard him and good-sized flocks were seen at various places in this locality. This re-appearance and in greater numbers I attribute to the good work done by our Game Association here in educating farmers to leave the birds alone and make others do likewise by prohibiting hunting and shooting on farms. His disappearance is due to, (1) handier, better and more numerous guns; (2) Tidier farming, old logs, stumps, briars, long grass and the projecting ends of the lower rails on fences, formerly protection for the nests, have practically disappeared with the advent of wire fences; (3) Decay or fire has consumed the logs, stumps and brush heaps of the woodlot, thus his shelter is gone and in the absence of such he has been snowed in and smothered. This latter could and should be prevented by placing three or four quail shelters on each farm. Half a dozen sheaves of corn or three poles and canvass arranged wigwam fashion with opening to the south would suffice for each shelter."

It is most interesting and encouraging to see that Mr. Carter records the re-appearance of the Bob-white in his locality, and to notice the reason he gives for this. The conservation of all beneficial and harmless wild life is one of the duties which this generation owes to succeeding generations. Some forms are already dangerously near extermination, and now is the time to protect and encourage them and prevent the total elimination of the species. In this conservation the farmer, as the owner of the land upon which this wild life exists, must play a most important part.

A northern bird which is paying us a visit at the present time is the Pine Grosbeak. In this species the adult male is red, with blackish-brown wings and tail, while the young male and the female are smoky gray, with the head, and rump orange-green and the breast tinged with greenish. In both sexes there are two white wing-bars. The bill of the Pine Grosbeak is conical and thick—very efficient seed-crushing apparatus. This species breeds in Labrador, Newfoundland, Northern New Brunswick, Northern Quebec, and in the territory lying round Hudson Bay.

The usual reports of the "First Robin" are now appearing, all of them founded either on individuals which have wintered over in sheltered localities, or on the Pine Grosbeak, which is not infrequently mistaken for a Robin, as no migrants of this species ever arrive in Canada before the end of February.

"There will be a vast amount of restoration work to be done in the devastated parts of Europe, but it is hardly likely that capital will become available for the execution of it immediately, and the task will probably be spread over three or four years."—Financial Times, Montreal. Centuries would probably be nearer the mark.

THE HORSE.

Why Mares Do Not Breed Regularly.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

One reason why the percentage of foals dropped on farms is not larger is that many farmers in the breeding season neglect to see to it that their mares are bred regularly. It may seem much trouble and perhaps a waste of time to stop some important work to go and have the mare bred, but the fact remains that not to take the mare regularly on that errand is a losing policy for which there is no defence. We do not believe in running to the horse every few days after she is bred, but it is always well to consult the wishes of the owner of the stallion with which she has been mated. If his rule is that the mare be returned on a stated day; then she should be brought back on that day. Some mares are such regular breeders that they get with foal at the first service each season for a term of years. In such cases, however, it invariably happens sooner or later that the regular breeder misses, and then the owner inveighs against his carelessness in not attending to his business. Everyone knows that at the present time horses are of the most valuable and profitable animals raised on the farm. It seems likely, moreover, that this condition will continue for many years. Therefore the man is foolish who neglects any point in the business. Every brood mare on a farm that does not produce a colt is so much dead timber to the farmer, and even if she does her work and earns her keep she is not turning in the profits which may reasonably be expected from her. If a mare is simply kept for the foals she may raise, and goes over a year she is nothing but a bill of expense for that year. In any case the failure to try mares as they