

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN
THE DOMINION.

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JOHN WELD, MANAGER.

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Retired Loneliness and Active Happiness.

Prof. Dean in an article in this week's issue brings out a point which those farmers contemplating retiring from active interest in farming should think over for a while before the final decision is made to dispose of the prize-winning herd of cattle, whether they be of a dairy or beef breed; before they disperse their farm horses which have been their hard-working friends; before they scatter their sheep, their pigs and their fine poultry to all corners of their county or province; and before they say goodbye to the happiness which has been their's since life began on the farm to take upon themselves the loneliness which almost inevitably follows them if they remove from their old surroundings to town or city where everything is strange and different. Truly most men who subject themselves to such a violent change of conditions "feel like fish out of water" and truly they would generally again welcome the troubles incident upon the everyday operation of a farm to the lonesome inactivity of "retired" life. Just read this statement of a man who retired from business and see how well it fits most retired men.

"I never was so happy as when I was in the midst of my troubles as the pleasure of pulling out of them was supreme."

There are troubles and difficulties on the farm—many of them, but there is untold satisfaction in over-coming them by extra effort. A crop may be a failure but there is always a reason for it and to the wide-awake man it serves to strengthen his hands for he will profit by his mistakes and be in a better position to overcome the causes of failure the following year. It is the same and profit in doing things. Why should a man retire to town on the pretence of middle age when he has been so successful

They want "a change" but changed conditions are not always as congenial as they seem. Far better would it be to take occasional holidays and remain actively connected with the work of a lifetime than to take no holidays until fifty or sixty and plan a continuous period of recreation from that time on—recreation which stales and bores and makes the idle hands fairly itch for something to do. It is right that men past a certain age, as they grow older, should not work as strenuously as in their younger days but as the years advance let the work and responsibility gradually shift from the shoulders of the father to the sons—the former having a declining active interest while the latter are developing through their own experience and that of their father. If the father finally does nothing but advise and lives close to his old farm, or better still on one corner of it, where he can go out when he feels inclined and look over the old fields which he knows so well and can admire the improvements which have been made in the live stock by selection and breeding, he is usually much happier sharing the troubles and successes of his children on the land than he would be cooped up on a thirty by ninety lot in a town or city with all things artificial taking the place of the natural things with which he has associated all his life. Happiness and contentment are everything to the aging man and for him who has spent his life in the country, the country is the place to put in his declining years.

Nature's Diary.

By A. B. Klugh, M.A.

The spring migration is now in full swing. Passing through our woods is and endless procession of birds on their way from their winter homes in southern climes to their breeding-grounds in the north. Why do birds migrate? It is a matter of food supply. We can readily see that an insect-eating bird must forsake, during the winter months, a land where there are very few insects to be found except those which are hibernating in crevices in the bark of trees, or are secreted in the form of cocoons in some nook or corner. But why the spring migration? Why should not all the birds which winter in the south remain there to breed? Because the young require food of a special kind, viz:- soft-bodied insects, such as caterpillars and larvae of various kinds, and as the nestlings consume for several days more than their own weight of this food per day, the supply of this particular kind of food would give out if all the birds bred in a limited area. Thus we can see the reason for the fall and spring migrations.

During the height of the spring migration the birds come in waves. One day in a certain area of bush there will be comparatively few birds, next day it will be alive with birds. They will be anywhere in the branches of the tallest trees, in the bushes, on the ground. On the following day the wave may have passed on and the number of birds present will be down to normal again. Or another wave may have come to take the place of the one that has passed on. How do we know that it is a new wave and not the same wave that was present yesterday? We judge this by the species which make up the wave, or by the relative abundance of the species composing it. One wave may be marked by the number of Black and White Warblers, Black-throated Green Warblers, and Yellow Warblers in it. In the next wave these species may still be present in good numbers, but there may also be Nashville Warblers, American Warblers, and Blackburnian Warblers in it, and any one of these species may be present in such numbers as to exceed all the others.

The greatest interest for the ornithologist in these bird waves centres in the Warblers. The Warblers are a large group of small, usually brightly colored birds. The name would lead one to suppose that the members of this family were noted for their fine singing powers, but as a matter of fact none of the Warblers excel in this direction. Most of them have rather pretty and characteristic little ditties, but none of them can compare at all in musical qualities with the Robin, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, White-throated Sparrow, Catbird, Wood Thrush or with many others of our noted songsters. Their name was given to them because of their resemblance to the Old World Warblers, a group which contains many fine singers.

The Warblers arouse the enthusiasm of the bird student because of their bright colors, because there is such a variety of plumage among

them, because many of the species are rare and may be seen only a few times in many years, and lastly because they are hard to identify. The beginner in the study of birds may get along very nicely with all the earlier birds, he may even identify the various species of Sparrows successfully; but when he strikes the Warblers he comes across a group which it will probably take him some years to unravel. There are so many species, they are so active, perching here for a moment, there for a second, flitting here, fluttering there, the females often differ so much from the males that they appear to belong to a totally different species, and the young males often differ in plumage from both males and females.

The earliest Warblers to arrive are the Black and White and the Black-throated Green. The former is not hard to identify because it is streaked in black and white all over the upper-parts, and over most of the underparts and the female is much like the male only paler. The adult male of the Black-throated Green is marked by his black throat, olive-green upper parts and yellow sides of the head. But the female of this species often has no black on the throat, a Warbler with yellow sides of the head and white blotches on the lateral tail-feathers is a Black-throated Green. The ditty of this species is full of "z's" and may be rendered as "Zee-zizzy-zee-zur-zee" or as "Zee-zur-zizzy-zee-zur", both these songs being frequently used.

One of the brightest of all this gay-plumaged group is the Blackburnian Warbler, the adult male having a throat and upper breast of flaming orange. The Magnolia is another very beautiful species, having ashy gray back, yellow underparts, striped with black and a white bar across the black tail. The Chestnut-sided Warbler has a yellow crown, white breast and chestnut sides. The Parula is blue above with an orange-brown patch in the middle of the back, and a yellow throat and breast. The Redstart is garbed in orange-red and black. The Black-throated Blue is slaty-blue above, white beneath, with black throat and breast. The Bay-breasted is streaked above with black and grayish-olive, the sides of the head are black, enclosing a chestnut patch, while the chin, throat upper breast and sides are chestnut. And these are but a few of the flying gems which make gay our May woods.

Big Bugs and Little Ones.

By Peter McArthur.

At the present writing the Canadian Northern matter has taken what seems to be a final form, and probably before this goes to press it will be settled. As the leaders of both parties have given their views, the great mass of the people are no longer in any doubt as to where they stand. They either approve or disapprove according to their condition of political servitude. Because of this it is no longer wise for an independent journal to discuss the subject for fear of being accused of favoring one side more than the other. As I have already said all I wanted to say—at a time when the question was debatable on its merits rather than on political lines—I have no disposition to swell the chorus of futile argument that is now in progress. After the matter has been settled it is useless to talk—though I have noticed that it is then that most people do their talking. But before dismissing the subject altogether and undertaking the great and practicable reform of spraying aphids I may be permitted one word more—especially as that word is one of admiration for the financial genius of MacKenzie and Mann. It is quite true that "The Farmer's Advocate" and its contributors have failed in this campaign, just as they failed in opposing the Bank Act, and they may be compared once more to "The fly on the wheel," but we at least buzzed, and buzzed as much like a bunch of wasps as we could. But now for the word of admiration. You may remember that a few weeks ago I called attention to the profit that MacKenzie and Mann were making from the Canadian Northern Express Company. It was brought out in the investigation, made by the Railway Commission and published in the report of 1911, that they had invested \$5,000 cash in the company, and had issued three hundred thousand dollars of paid up stock to themselves. Six years later—in 1908—this company made net earnings of \$57,432. It struck me that this showed at least a fair profit on an original investment of \$5,000. As the investigation was brought up only to 1908, I was curious to know if this subsidiary company had continued to thrive as it had begun. It was the only MacKenzie and Mann company on which I could get any light, and I thought it might indicate how the firm was getting along with its many other ventures. On turning to the schedule of companies, whose stock is to be taken as security for the new issue of guaranteed bonds (orders of the Hon. House of Commons, April 20th) I find that the Canadian Northern Express Com-