

The Farmer's Advocate

AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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course no farmer could very well afford to pay such wages to a hired man. This may be an extreme case, but nevertheless it illustrates the fact that the demand for labor in the cities and the prices that city business can afford to pay have drawn and will continue to draw men, who are good farmers and know how to do the work necessary to increase production, away from the land. The present-day farmer is willing to pay a fair wage, but of course he cannot afford to give all he makes to hired men. He figures that with wages running from \$30 to \$50 per month, with board, he is paying about all his business will stand and in many cases more. Consequently, he has planned during the past few years to do with as little hired help as possible. An adjustment of wages between city and country would make a great difference in production, but this adjustment would also mean far-reaching economic changes affecting all business, urban and rural.

Preparation For Future Usefulness.

BY SANDY FRASER.

I wis lookin' ower a newspaper the ither day an' I ran across a letter frae a subscriber in which he wis askin' the editor some pretty hard questions. At least the editor seemed tae find them pretty hard, for he didna' mak' muckle o' a fist o' answerin' them.

In the first place the chap wanted tae ken whether there wis a God or no, an' gin there wis, why did he allow sic a thing as war tae exist on the earth an' tae destroy a' the works o' civilization ap' a progressive race, as weel as the best pairt o' the race itself.

About a' the editor could tell him wis that this wis a free country, an' gin he didna' want tae believe in a God, he didn't have tae. But he went on tae say that the presence of evil in this world wis something naeboddy understood. It wis what one mon had called, "the problem of the ages."

Noo, I dinna' believe in this way o' takin' it for granted that there are some things we canna' understand. Gin a' oor thinkers an' inventors had taken that ground, we would be awa' back in the dark ages yet, when men were afraid tae think for themselves, an' got punished gin they did. Oor forefathers didna'

understand muckle aboot wireless telegraphy, but sic a thing wis possible then an' wis juist waitin' for the mon wha wad dae thinkin' enough tae bring it intae existence. An' there's na reason that I can see why the same principle willna' apply tae the problems o' God's relation tae the Universe, an' tae mankind in particular. Gin we apply oor reason an' a wee bit o' common-sense tae this matter, as we dae tae oor ither problems in life, we'll get an answer tae the question. Noo, as tae why this war has been permitted tae tak' place, wi' a' its accompaniment o' suffering an' death. Are we no' all willing tae admit that man is in this world tae be educated an' fitted for some higher state o' existence where he will live a fuller an' mair useful life? An' we believe as weel that he is free tae choose his ain road, be it right or wrong. It's the only way tae mak' men sae far as we can see, tae pit their fortunes in their ain hands an' tae let them abide the consequences o' their choice. Noo, grantin' that this is the case, we'll juist suppose that one o' the nations o' the earth got tae thinkin' along wrang lines an' believin' in the auld idea that "might is right" an' a' that sort o' thing, an' first thing we kened they were pittin' their theories intae practice by makin' war on anither nation, for na reason but that they expected tae gain something by it, juist selfishness, naething less. Noo, what is this but the natural animal instinct comin' tae the top again; the auld instinct o' self-preservation, that mak's the beasts o' the forest fight for their food an' for their dens in the rocks. Na doot all mankind should be lang past this stage o' development, but it seems they're not. They appear tae be unco' subject tae relapses as yet.

But what I want tae ask is—how can man be taught tae choose the right way an' tae avoid the wrong, except by getting the experience that is the consequence o' his actions? What ither road is there for him tae travel frae the lower tae the higher life than the rocky highway o' effort an' mistakes an' consequently suffering? When we send the wee bairns tae school it is wi' the intention that they will get an education. We dinna' conseed the fact that they may hae a hard time o' it before they are through, for it's no' their present happiness that we're thinkin' maist aboot, but their future usefulness. Sae juist the same is it wi' ourselves. We're supposed tae be gettin' ready for future usefulness an' when we, as nations o' the world, lose sight o' this ideal an' get rinnin' off the track in oor chase after happiness, the only result we could expect, gin there's ony Ruler in the Universe at all, wis tae be brocht up wi' a short turn an' made tae realize what kind o' a precipice they were headed for. They say desperate diseases need desperate remedies, an' I think we maun a' admit that there wis guid reason for the application o' a remedy o' some kind or ither tae ilka one o' the nations o' the earth that are noo at war.

My idea amounts tae this. War is the natural result o' national wrang thinkin' an' living, but at the same time there is a higher Power than man taking a hand in the conflict, an' we've got tae reckon wi' this mind, gin we are tae get ony clear understanding o' passing events. This man-made world-war is being used as a means o' bringin' aboot a change in the ideals o' mankind and the proof o' this is brocht tae us almaist ilka day. Dae ye no' think that the change o' heart an' mind in Russia shows that something is at wark tryin' tae bring good oot o' a' this blunderin' an' wickedness o' man. An' suppose this nation-wide movement towards temperance gae on tae its logical conclusion, will it no' be anither proof? I've no kind o' a doot that mankind will be kept movin' on, some way or ither, if no' by leadin' it 'ill be by drivin'. He can hauld himself back for a lang time by his stubbornness but he'll move along in the end.

This question o' why God allows the war reminds me o' the discussions I used tae listen tae lang ago, when the auld folks wad be arguin' aboot the reason for sin comin' intae the world. They had a hard time o' it explainin' how a good God could permit the presence o' sic an awfu' thing as sin on this earth. They didna' seem tae be able tae understand that it wis man that wis on the earth, wi' a' his load o' inherited animal passions an' instincts, as weel as his ignorance, an' that sin wis simply his lack o' ability or inclination tae control these passions an' instincts. They didna' realise how much o' an animal man is at best, an' how lang a struggle it must be tae acquire the knowledge that will help him tae raise himself frae the lower tae the higher life. When humanity has mastered itself an' attained tae perfect manhood there will be no sic a thing as wonderin' why sin cam' intae the world ony mair than the college graduate wonders why he couldna' read an' write when he started tae schule. As oor auld meenister says, "sin is a tendency towards degeneration", or as I wad pit it masel', "a gaein' doon hill". But I'm not one o' those that think the world is showin' this tendency at the present time, in spite o' the war an' a' fightin' for a better condection o' things an' while they dae that we dinna' need tae be afraid aboot the outcome. Gin this war has proved onything it has proved that the world as a whole will sacrifice onything for a principle, even tae giving up life itself, an' what mair could ye say for it. Some think the millenium is a lang ways aff yet, but a' the same it's gettin' nearer, I dinna' think we'll dae that.

A cartoon recently published in an American paper depicted two men at a cross-roads. One shouldered his gun and took the way of the sign "To Arms"; the other shouldered his hoe and turned in the direction of the sign "To Farms". Both were ready to do their bit.

Nature's Diary.

A. B. KLUGH, M. A.

One of the most interesting phenomena in the study of Canadian bird life is the migration of sharp-shinned Hawks at Point Pelee. This point, which is a sand-spit some nine miles long, is the extreme southern tip of Canada. The migration of Sharp-shins is quite well marked in the spring, but it is in the fall that the great movement takes place, as at this season not only the adults, but immense numbers of juveniles are migrating. This heavy flight begins from September 10 to September 15 and lasts three or four days, and during this time there are Sharp-shins everywhere on the Point. As we walk through the woods they dart away between the tree trunks at every few steps. Just over the tops of the trees a steady stream of Sharp-shins beats up and down, while looking higher and higher one sees them at every level until the highest look like specks. Standing in an open place one can see two hundred at once—more by far than one would meet in ten years of ordinary field work. This stream of Hawks passes off the tip of the point and out over the lake towards the Ohio shore, and Saunders and Taverner, who stationed themselves on the observatory tower near the end of the point, counted 133 striking out over the lake in half an hour.

During this migration the Sharp-shins are very bold and often dash by so closely that one can feel the wind of their wings on his cheek.

The effect of this great abundance of Sharp-shins upon the smaller birds and mammals is very marked and they keep close covert. The Blue Jay can hardly



Fig. 2—Cooper's Hawk.

be forced out of its grape-vines, the Towhee and Brown Thrasher slink deep within the tangle, and the Red Squirrel, for once, is silent, gathering his nuts and scurrying away hurriedly to a hollow tree. When forced into the open by hunger the first sight of a hawk causes the small birds to "freeze" instantly, and they remain absolutely motionless until the immediate danger has passed. And the efficiency of this "freezing" can be observed very well during the Sharp-shin migration, as none of us who have worked on the Point have ever seen a motionless bird taken by a Hawk, and Taverner has seen a Sharp-skin pass right by a flock of Cedar Waxwings which had "frozen" in the top of a dead tree.

One of the most interesting species to watch during the Sharp-shin migration is the Flicker. Time and time again I have seen the Hawks strike at these birds as they clung to the side of a tree, the Flicker remaining quiet until the Hawk was within a few feet, then with a quick hitch disappearing round the trunk. Often the Hawk would return and strike again and again but always with the same result. In this game the Flicker had all the advantage, as it had a circle of but a few inches to describe while the Hawk had one of many yards.

But in spite even of "freezing" and dodging the loss of bird-life during these Sharp-shin migrations is tremendous. All through the woods little bunches of feathers mark the end of some Sharp-shin victim, and from these feathers we identified Olive-backed Thrushes, Gray-cheeked Thrushes, Towhees, Blue Jays, Brown Thrashers, Red-eyed Vireos, Chipping Sparrows, Wood Pewees, Catbirds and various Warblers. The most frequent victims are the Olive-backed and Gray-cheeked Thrushes, and it appears as if the Sharp-shins follow these species in their migration and depend mainly on them for their food-supply. It is further probable that Point Pelee is selected by the Sharp-shins as a migration route because it is the great migration highway for the small birds of a considerable portion of Canada. The nest of this species is placed in the fork of a tree at from 15—30 feet from the ground, usually in a coniferous tree. It is composed of sticks and lined with bark strips. The eggs are 3—6 in number and period of incubation is 21 days.

Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) is practically a large edition of the Sharp-shin, having the same outline, except that the end of the tail is rounded. This species is about eighteen inches in length. Cooper's Hawk has a wide range in Canada, being found from ocean to ocean, but it is not very common in any locality. It is an extremely destructive species feeding almost exclusively on birds up to and including the Ruffed Grouse and on Cotton-tails. It often carries off nearly full-grown chickens.

The American Goshawk (*Accipiter atricapillus*) may be recognized from its outline, which on account of the short, rounded wings and long tail, resembles that of the Sharp-shin and Cooper's, taken in conjunction with its large size. In the southern portions of Canada this species is seen only as a winter visitor. It breeds in the Maritime Provinces, Ungava, Northern Ontario and the forested country of Northern Saskatchewan, and Alberta. In British Columbia it is replaced by the closely allied sub-species the Western Goshawk.

This species feeds largely on Ruffed Grouse and Hares, though it also takes such smaller birds as the Blue Jay, and Hairy Woodpecker. It carries off full-grown fowl and in the winter when it comes into the cities it often plays havoc with the pigeons.

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