

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

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anything at all it surely is worth its subscription price. If it is not worth this it is the business of the publishers to make it so or reduce the price and sell it on its merits, and not attempt to hoodwink the public by giving them a paper not worth the price asked for it, as evidenced by the necessity of offering a premium, together with a premium which must be next to worthless if not quite so, otherwise it would have a selling value of its own and would not require to co-operate with something else of its own class in order to be distributed to the homes of the country. The paper which requires something more than the matter contained in its own columns to sell it cannot be expected to be worth much to the subscriber. The paper which sells on its merit alone and sells readily is the one which is likely to prove most profitable to its readers. It is a waste of valuable time to listen to agents hawking premiums with papers just as it is a waste of time to read many of the papers so sold. Buy the paper which sells because it contains the matter which is of value to its readers.

Nature's Diary.

/A. B. Klugh, M.A.

A group of birds whose services to the farmer are not sufficiently known and consequently not appreciated, is that which is made up of our native sparrows. Even those much interested in the study of birds often find it hard to distinguish the various species of sparrows one from another. I shall therefore try to help those who wish to know the different species and at the same time to consider carefully the economic value of each species.

One reason why our native sparrows are not given their just due as friends of the farmer is because that pest the House Sparrow is often taken as a type of this group, and our native species are accordingly judged to be injurious, or at best harmless. I notice that a correspondent of "The Farmer's Advocate" says a good word for the House Sparrow in connection with the attacks which he has seen it make on the Army Worm. I am glad to hear a good word put in for any bird however bad—give the Devil his due—but I am afraid that a few such incidents will not offset to any great extent the harm which this species does, day after day, throughout the country.

The first thing to do in identification is to mark off the House Sparrow from our native species. This is easily done in the case of the male as he has a black throat and breast, a feature which is not possessed by any of our native sparrows. The female House Sparrow may be known by her dingy grayish-brown crown and the buffy stripe behind the eye.

Our native sparrows are all brownish, streaked birds and have cone-shaped bills. In fact if a bird has not these characteristics it is not given the name Sparrow. The Junco is structurally more closely allied to some of the species of sparrows than some of these species are to one another, but it is not brownish and streaked—it is plain dark slate-color and white—so it gets another name and is called a Junco. But the young Junco gives away the family relationship; it is brownish and streaked. Just in the same way the young Robin and the young Bluebird show the relationship of these species to the thrushes, which the adults do not resemble at all in plumage. This fact that the young often reveal relationships which are obscure in the adults is made a good deal of use of in tracing the affinities of various groups, both in animals and plants. Did you ever see a young Cedar? As a seedling it bears leaves which resemble, not those of the parent tree, but those of the Fir. Most people, if they notice it at all, take it for a young Fir, and when it is found with some of the earliest leaves, which resemble the Fir and some of the later ones, which resemble the Cedar it is rather a puzzle. In fact I once ran across a young Cedar in a collection of pressed plants labelled "Hybrid between White Cedar and Fir."

One of the commonest of our native sparrows is the Song Sparrow. It occurs throughout Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific and can always be recognized by its streaked breast, with a blotch in the center, and the absence of a yellow line over the eye. The student of birds when in the field uses the ear about as much as the eye in distinguishing different species. This is particularly true in the spring when birds are in full song. But valuable as this means of recognition is, it is one which it is almost impossible to make use of in print, for in the case of very few species do words or syllables give any idea of a bird's song. The best we can do in the case of the Song Sparrow is to say that the song begins on three high, clear notes, after which it is a somewhat complicated trill.

The Song Sparrow is one of the earliest birds

to arrive in the spring usually putting in an appearance in Ontario about March 9th, and is one of the last to leave in the fall. It winters from southern Illinois and Massachusetts to the Gulf States.

Of the food of this species for the entire year vegetable matter makes up sixty-six per cent., the rest consisting mainly of insects, but during the spring, summer and early fall, the time of the year which concerns us in Canada most, more than half its food consists of insects. Prominent among the insects eaten are such injurious species as weevils, cutworms, grasshoppers, click-beetles, leaf-beetles, army worms, canker-worms. The vegetable food consists mainly of weed-seed, and the seeds of many of our worst weeds are eaten in large quantities. It was at one time thought that some of the weed-seed eaten by sparrows might pass through their digestive tract whole and thus be transported to other places, but experiments have proved that even the hardest and smallest seeds are ground into such fine particles that subsequent germination is impossible.

The Great War and the Great Peace.

And answer, England! At thy side,
Thro' seas of blood, thro' mists of tears,
Thou that for Liberty hast died
And livest to the end of years!—
And answer earth! Far off, I hear
The peans of a happier sphere.

Earth has not been the same since then
Europe from thee received a soul,
Whence nations moved in law, like men,
As members of a mightier whole,
Till wars were ended . . . In that day,
So shall our children say."

—From "The Redemption of Europe" by Alfred Noyes in "King Albert's Book"—A tribute to the Belgian King and People.

After The Great War what? Of one thing the world is well assured Freedom will in the end overthrow brute force; Kaiserism will not prevail. It is in conflict with the stars in their courses, doomed like Napoleon at Waterloo because he had "troubled" The Eternal Government of the world. But who can forecast its ending, compute its cost or calculate its consequences? What will be its ultimate effect upon Europe and the world? How will democracy, or the rule of the people, emerge from the welter of waste and blood? What spectres of anarchy will arise to haunt guilty despots? Humanity is paying a fearful price for Redemption from the fetters of force. Are the shackles to be rewired with greater armaments and a more universal militarism to culminate in a still more gigantic war? Peaceful Belgium has been crucified, the tragedy of earth since Calvary. Were the sacrifice in vain, dark indeed would be the future for humanity. As the end draws on, statesmen and the public must think on these things and be prepared in a spirit and temper that will evoke a settlement embodying new conceptions of the society of mankind and its relations.

As an augury of better things to come we have seen no pronouncement from writer or responsible statesman so full of hope, so pregnant with suggestion as the memorable speech by the Rt. Hon. Herbert H. Asquith, the present honored and trusted head of the British Administration in the greatest trial of its noble history. The end to be kept clearly in view, he declared, to be the enthronement of Public Right. Translated into concrete terms, this meant, he said, first and foremost the clearing of the ground by the definite repudiation of militarism as the governing factor in the relation of States and in the future moulding of European States. It means next, that room must be found and kept for the independent existence and the free government of the smaller nationalities each with its own corporate consciousness, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland, and the Scandinavian countries, Greece and the Balkan States—they must be recognized as having exactly as good a title as their more powerful neighbors—more powerful in strength and wealth—to a place in the sun. And it means finally, or it ought to mean, by a slow and gradual process, the substitution for force, for the chaos of competing ambitions, for groupings and alliance and a precarious equipoise—of a real partnership based on the recognition of equal right and established and enforced by a common will. A year ago this may have sounded like a "Utopian" idea but if and when this war is decided in favor of the Allies it will at once come within the range and grasp of European statesmanship. This being what the allies are really fighting for, their victory will mean the end of militarism and therefore the end of war and, in a not remote future, the United States of Europe. That, declared, Hon. Mr. Asquith, is what all the common people want in all countries, if only they could be made to understand the issue, he had not the smallest doubt. Those who do not want it are men brought up in old and bad traditions