

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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range for his interests and sympathies. Talking about our neighbors' affairs and their failings, forgetful of our own is still worse. The acquisition of books and reading is an inexpensive hobby nowadays and a good one, for it cultivates discretion and provides the comradeship of the world's best minds. The same is to be said of music and pictures in the home. It is a great mistake to think that these things are luxuries for the idle rich. In the making of a life they are just as real factors as bread and butter. One may very properly make a hobby of having the best-kept horse in the neighborhood or the choicest flock of sheep or poultry, but he should not let his hobby run away with him to the neglect of other things nor become a faddist by absorption with trifles. In live-stock breeding there have been fads positively mischievous. The man who in showing a friend about his fields stooped suddenly to pull a solitary weed with the exclamation, "Ah!" I missed that one," was making a hobby of clean farming which, however good rather lacked the recreative element of unexpectedness and delight which is experienced in maturing a surprisingly fine, new fruit or vegetable, or a beautiful and unfamiliar strain of flowers in the garden. These might be called natural hobbies and they are not as costly as the artificial ones. It may be objected that they take time. True. But the time is well invested, and we have all the time that's going. If we examine the situation carefully we will find that we probably waste more time reading partisan politics in the newspapers and otherwise than would suffice for a couple of healthy hobbies that would divest farm life of monotony and invest it with charm. Do not wait till you are ready to totter into the grave. Begin now. A good hobby will help you to keep you young.

When you subscribe for your farm paper see that you get a properly signed receipt and always refrain from doing business with the fountain pen and worthless razor carver.

The Young Men are Taking Hold.

A Short time ago a reader of "The Farmer's Advocate" who lives in Nova Scotia called at this office, and in the course of his remarks said in effect: The younger farmers, agriculturally-trained men, are taking hold, and a great improvement is noticed in the farming done. They are beating any records which their fathers made, and the older men are content to sit back and let the boys go ahead.

We had been speaking particularly of turnips, a crop which does exceedingly well in Nova Scotia, and one which the young men in that province are improving. Our informant said that a yield of 1,500 bushels per acre had resulted on some farms under these modern methods, and the young men are bringing about further developments. Two or three things in our friend's statement are significant. The young men are taking hold. Nothing could augur quite so well for the future of agriculture. Agriculturally-trained young men are taking hold. These are men trained in farm practice, and educated in theory at the Agricultural College. This institution stands vindicated; it has proven its worth. It has trained young men and sent them back to the farms so much better farmers than their fathers that the older men are ready and willing to sit back and let the boys show them how to grow big crops. An institution that can turn out men of such calibre as to convince their old fathers that their agricultural training has made better farmers of them than their sires ever were is no joke; it is the real goods. And we are glad also that the older men are willing to sit back and watch developments. They are convinced. More than that they have earned a rest in the many years of good farming and hard work which they have done. Oh, what a change has taken place! A few years ago agricultural colleges were not esteemed by the men they were intended to help. Now they are appreciated. Now the young man applies scientific principles to his practical knowledge. He rotates his crops; he fertilizes; he feeds balanced rations; he farms conditions; he keeps tab on things; he farms. The young man is taking hold; the young man is the farmer of to-day and of the future, and the older generation sits back and admires. Oh, agriculture, a great and noble calling, a change has come over you! Young man make good!

Nature's Diary.

A. B. Klugh, M.A.

A plant which is quite common in bogs from Labrador to the Mackenzie River but which is comparatively little known is the Pitcher Plant. The reason that it is regarded by most people as being a rare plant is undoubtedly because few people except the ardent botanist visit its haunts—the uncertain footing, the sometimes almost stifling heat and the dense clouds of mosquitoes



Pitcher Plant.

do not make an alluring combination to tempt the wayfarer to pass much of his time exploring bogs. But the botanist is well repaid for the discomforts he endures as in the bog we find many of our most beautiful and interesting plants. The name Pitcher Plant is a very apt one for this species for not only do the leaves resemble pitchers in shape but they are nearly always about half full of water. In this water there are always numbers of drowned insects. In fact the whole design of the leaf appears to be an insect trap, as the lower portion of the inside is smooth and the upper portion is covered with downward-

pointing hairs, so that once an insect gets in it cannot crawl out again and is drowned. The nitrogenous matter which results from the decay of the insects is taken up by the leaves and used as food by the plant, so that this species is termed an insectivorous plant.

The flowers of the Pitcher Plant are large and peculiar in construction, the peculiarity lying in the shape of the style, the upper part of which is expanded into a broad, five-angled, umbrella-like structure, the little hooked stigmas being under the projecting angles.

In his recent letter to "The Farmer's Advocate," B. Armstrong tells of a Hawk which took one of his chickens and from this seems to argue that all so-called "Hen Hawks" are enemies of the hen-yard. He says that he refers "to the hawks with feathers somewhat speckled or barred, and which are in the habit of soaring quite high in the air and screaming loudly." This would fit equally well a large number of species. The probability is that the bird Mr. Armstrong shot was a Cooper's Hawk—a species which as we have before pointed out, feeds largely on birds but which is fortunately not common. If all Hawks that were shot as Mr. Armstrong shot his—when raiding the hen-yard only injurious species would be destroyed. But the trouble is that they are quite commonly shot whenever an opportunity offers and thus many Hawks whose services are of the very highest value to the farmer are killed.

Robert Ridgway of the United States National Museum, one of the foremost of American ornithologists in an article in "Bird-Lore" discusses the decrease in the number of birds in Southern Illinois. The causes for this decrease he enumerates as follows:—

(1) Shooting.—The game laws are not only defective but poorly administered, as must necessarily be the case as long as the framing of the laws or their enforcement is connected with politics. It is very doubtful, however if any law, even if rigidly enforced, short of absolute prohibition of shooting for a term of years, can save the remaining game birds from extermination for any considerable time. The number of gunners is out of all proportion to the number of birds that remain, and the yearly increase of the latter is more than balanced by the annual slaughter.

(2) Decrease in the number and extent of shelter and nesting areas.—Continued clearing of woodlands, drainage of swamps and marshes and removal of trees and shrubbery from roadsides and fence-lines have destroyed the places required for nesting places, shelter and food.

(3) Introduction and naturalization of the European House Sparrow.—The amazing increase of the so-called English Sparrow has profoundly disturbed the "balance" of bird-life. Although introduced less than forty years ago, this species is now, without question, by far the most numerous bird in the region of which I write, even if it does not exceed in numbers all the small native birds combined, not only in the towns but on the farms as well. The effect on native birds is exceedingly well marked, for the foreign pest has literally crowded out, or by its aggressive meddlesomeness driven away from the abodes of man those charming and useful native birds, the Bluebird, Purple Martin, Barn Swallow and Cliff Swallow.

(4) Destruction by house-cats and self-hunting bird-dogs.

(5) Wanton killing of birds by boys.

(6) Spraying of Orchards.—To what extent the spraying of orchards has to do with decreasing bird-life I have no positive information. I only know that during my boyhood days fruit trees were the most prolific nesting-places. A majority of the trees in any orchard, no matter its extent, would contain at least one bird's nest, occasionally four or five. Of late years I have repeatedly gone carefully through similar orchards without finding a nest on more than one tree in fifty, sometimes none at all. Of these causes some—for instance Nos. 2 and 6 are unavoidable in any agricultural district—though it is true that more trees and shrubbery might often be left without interfering in any way with arable land. What is written of Southern Illinois applies almost equally well in any thickly settled part of Canada.

What are the Gross Returns from Your Farm?

The other day a city man expressed great surprise, when, in discussing farming and returns therefrom, he was told by a man from the country that \$1,500 was a big gross return from the average 100-acre farm in Ontario. He could not understand an investment of \$8,000 or \$9,000, or perhaps more, yielding so small gross returns. And yet it is true that many farms do not yield more. Or do they? We'll leave it an open question for our readers to discuss through these columns. What are the gross returns from your farm?