

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL
IN THE DOMINION.

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JOHN WELD, MANAGER.

Agents for "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal,"
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or "dime" picture show. This is the city workman's social life. He may know two or three of his fellow laborers, but his acquaintances are far fewer than they were in the country. Is his social position more elevating than when he sang in the village choir, attended the village literary society, spent his evenings reading at home, or in elevating conversation and innocent games in the home of a neighbor? Socially the verandah of the village grocery is much to be preferred to the pool room, the picture show, or standing on the corners of the main streets smoking cigarettes, and making uncomplimentary remarks about the latest in fashions which passes by. Financially, socially, mentally, morally, and physically, the country wins.

A Yearly Business Statement.

"There are a lot of us who haven't the nerve to sit down and figure how we are coming out. We are afraid books will show a loss. So the year closes and all we know about our business is whether we have less money in hand or in the bank than we had a year ago. In the long run we know that we must be getting ahead a little, for most of us are worth more than we were ten years ago, but just how much more, how much we have made in each successive year, or what we have really made our best profits out of, we cannot precisely say. We have only a general idea, which is hardly more than a guess."

Thus candidly spoke a fellow-farmer of our acquaintance in the course of a visit not long since, and he undoubtedly voiced a general attitude. It is not easy to keep books on a farm. It is harder to keep a full and exact set of farm-books than to keep such a set in most other businesses. To secure the information necessary to make double-entry accounts, time records and feed records are necessary first of all, and, as a rule, there is no one to keep these and the other accounts but the busy working proprietor himself. It is not as in a large industrial or mercantile business, where a special book-keeper can be employed, with whatever assistance may be necessary. Work crowds, details press past, unexpected happenings postpone the entries and the overworked amateur bookkeeper soon finds him-

self behind, with what seems like a hopeless confusion of accounts. Probably about this stage the bookkeeping is dropped in despair, or deferred to a more convenient season, which never seems to arrive. City folk who deplore the farmer's unbusinesslike methods know little of the difficulties which beset him.

It is not every one whom we would advise to attempt a complete set of farm books, though such bookkeeping will very well pay any farmer with a reasonably good public-school education, an ordinarily good head for figures and enough resolute painstaking to keep up the records and carry them through. Others had better content themselves with a simpler system, but every one can do these two things: He can keep a simple diary record of receipts and expenditures, probably classifying each under several heads such as personal expenditures, household, implements and vehicles, horses, cattle, sheep, swine, etc. Then once a year he can set down in black and white a plain statement of his assets and liabilities, striking a balance and comparing it with the balance of the previous year. Such a statement will include the valuations of his real estate, horses, cattle and other stock, implements, household goods and the like. March 31st is a good time to compile this statement, as feed is low then and most of the previous season's crops have been either sold or converted into salable products. Also there is usually more time to take the inventory than a month later. There will be a great satisfaction from these annual records, and in time they may lead to a more minute and satisfying system of accounts. Make a start and know where you are at. The man who is afraid to find out is neither courageous nor wise.

Spring Seeding.

Half a dozen causes combine to make spring seeding the most strenuous season of the year, especially for the teams. There are many acres to be covered, and covered promptly. Experiments at the Ontario Agricultural College indicate that, for each day's delay in seeding oats and barley after the opening week has passed, there is a decrease in yield, per acre, of a bushel to a bushel and a half. This means that a week's delay in sowing a ten-acre field of oats may reduce the yield by seventy to a hundred bushels.

Practical experience bears out the lesson of these tests. Almost invariably the early seeding gives best results, even in those exceptional seasons, when, for a time, the later seeding appears to have an advantage. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, it is early seeding for a full crop. There is need to haste.

Probably the weather comes on warm. The horses, not yet all shed of their winter coats, sweat freely under the exercise of hauling heavy implements over the soft fields. Their shoulders scald easily, as the soft palms of a hand unaccustomed to work. A little over-doing now, a little neglect to watch closely, lift the collars often, scrape them clean at noon and night, and bathe the heated shoulders with a toughening saline solution, and a summer's trouble may be speedily produced, perhaps laying up a horse for a time, or partially incapacitating him, and delaying the very work it was sought to rush. In the beginning, it pays to make haste slowly.

The temptation usually is to overdo. Perhaps the morning start is late. The stock is still all in the stable, and there are many chores to do, several fresh cows to milk, calves to feed, ewes lambing, and perhaps the maple-sugar season interfered with the cleaning of the seed grain. So the temptation comes to make up for lost time in the field. Do not do it—not on the start, any way. Prudence before haste, and forethought before prudence.

Is the grain all cleaned and bagged for the field? The clover and grass seed cleaned and mixed? The implements overhauled, and oiled? Plates of disk harrow and disk drill scraped and oiled? Harness oiled and in good repair? Collars well fitted and refaced if need be? Horses gradually fed up and toughened by exercise at drawing wood, manure, etc.? Shoul-

ders conditioned by washing with Castile soap suds to remove the old epidermis, and then toughened by bathing with white lotion (acetate of lead and sulphate of zinc, of each one ounce, in a pint of water)? All possible ditching done to facilitate removal of water from low places or cradle-knoll hollows in the fields to be seeded?

These things attended to, one is in a position to expedite spring work unhampered. The first day any knolls are fit to work, hitch up to the stone-boat, take out the harrows, and give a double stroke to these knolls, thus exercising the team lightly, breaking the crust on the clay, forming a mulch that will arrest evaporation and thereby help to warm that piece of soil. Then when you come to disk through these places they will pulverize nicely, instead of breaking up into refractory clods. We believe it will pay well to give every field such a stroke with the harrow as soon as it is fit, even though it means delaying the main working of the first field ready by half a day or so. In the end, it will mean less work and a better seed-bed on this land. The only exception we would make to this rule, in the case of clay land, would be when rain was impending and one had a chance to slap in some seed on the field he was at.

After the preliminary stroke of the harrow, or in some cases without it, a double disking will usually put a field into good condition for the disk drill, to be followed with smoothing harrow, the grass seed having been sown in front of the drill disks, and thus twice covered. Unless the drilling is crosswise of the disking, a stroke with the harrow preceding the drill is desirable to smooth the seed-bed and secure a more even depth of sowing. Details differ, however, and what one soil demands is superfluous on another. We would emphasize the four principles: (a) preparedness; (b) starting easy; (c) preventing crust from forming on the fields to be sown last, and (d) thorough pulverization of all seed-beds. The farmer to be congratulated is not necessarily the one with the first field sown, but the one with all his crop seeded in good condition, in good time, with a minimum expenditure of energy, and with teams fit for a summer's work.

Nature's Diary.

By A. B. Klugh, M. A.

The spring robin has arrived, the real spring robin, not the "Globe Robin" which appears at various far too early dates each winter and is really a bird wintering over in some sheltered spot in Ontario. You can always tell the true spring robin, because there are always "several of him," for robins do not arrive here as single birds or in pairs, but in flocks which spread out over the locality.

We welcome the robin for itself, its cheery calls, its rich carol, and its familiarity, but still more do we welcome it for what it stands for. We know that the arrival of the robin does not mean immediate and continuous spring weather, but we also know that such weather is at least comparatively near, and the call of the robin brings to our minds the woods filled with spring flowers, the sound of the "spring peeper" the little frog, the bursting of buds on the trees, the chorus of bird-song,—in short the awakening of life in its myriad forms in forest and swamp, in thicket and field.

Spring is a joyous season to the lover of nature, but it has a joy not untinged with sadness. It brings to our mind other springs now long past, and where are our companions of those other springs? Where are the good friends and true who shared our tramps afield, who shared our enjoyment of the spirit of spring, who shared our interest in some rare find? Gone, many of them, to "that land from whose bourne no traveller returns." Others are in distant lands and we feel that the spirit of spring will bring to them the memories of the old days and the old friends.

Besides the robins other birds have arrived, namely the Bronzed Grackle and the Killdeer Plover.

The Bronzed Grackle is commonly known as the "blackbird," or "crow blackbird." It is a maker of most unmusical noises, but even these noises sound good to us when we hear them for the first time in the early spring.

The Killdeer Plover is one of our few "shore birds" (a name applied to birds of the order Limicolae, which includes the sandpipers, snipe, woodcock, curlews and plover) which breeds commonly throughout Ontario. It is about ten