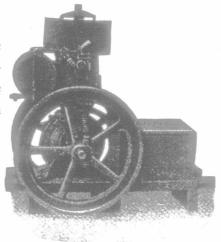
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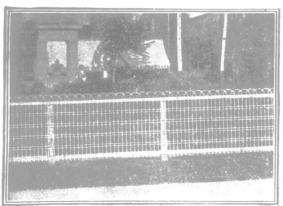
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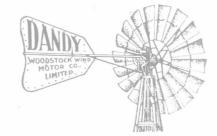
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SWALLOWS AS FARMERS' ALLIES.

The Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture has hit upon a novel plan in aiding the Southern cotton planter in his war against the boll weevil. This insect invaded the State of Texas several years ago, and has damaged the cotton crop to the extent of millions of dollars a year. Despite all efforts, it is extending its field at the rate of fifty miles a year.

Among the foremost of the useful allies against the boll weevil, are swallows. As is well known, the food of these birds consists almost exclusively of insects, and hence to the agriculturist they are among the most useful of birds. They have been described as "the light cavalry of the avian army." Specially adapted for flight, they have no rivals in the art of capturing insects in mid-air, and it is to the fact that they take their preyon the wing that their peculiar value to the cotton-grower is due.

The idea is to increase the number of swallows both at the North and the South. The colonies nesting in the South will destroy a greater or less number of weevils during the summer; while in the fall, after the local birds have migrated, northern-bred birds, as they pass through the Southern States on their way to the tropics, will keep up the

Swallows are not so numerous in the North as they used to be. The tree swallow, for instance, formerly abounded, but of late years its numbers have greatly diminished, owing to persecution by the English sparrow, which turns the swallow out of its nest in order to have a place for its own eggs. When swallow nests contain eggs or young the murderous sparrow kills the help less nestlings or throws out the eggs.

The barn swallow also is diminishing in numbers, owing partly to enmity of the sparrow, but more, perhaps, to the fact that the modern tightly-built barn denies it friendly shelter, and it finds no substitute places in which to nest. The cliff swallow, whose curious pouch-shaped mud nest used to be a common sight under the caves of barns and out-buildings throughout the North, has now been entirely banished from many localities under the mistaken impression that they are undesirable neighbors because of certain parasites which infest their nests. These have been supposed to be bed-bugs, and hence the nests have been destroyed, and the birds driven away. This is an error, for, although related to the above objectionable insect, these parasites of the swallow are peculiar to birds and not to be feared by man.

Of all the swallows, the martin is considered the most important to the farmer, and suggestions are given for increasing its numbers by the erection of additional boxes and of increasing its range by the transportation to new localities of boxes of a maint old birds and half-grown wangs in the belief that the old irds will be because of their young as wolant and feed them. It help do not be been all the belief that the life help the presence of the best young as wolant and feed them.

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