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DOMINION.

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Nature's Diary.

A. B. KLUGH, M.A.

The Birds of an Old Homestead.

Just out of the village of Malpeque, on the north shore of Prince Edward Island, stands a fine old homestead known as North Shore House. About the house are huge willows, several spruces, paper birches, and other trees, as well as a good many shrubs, which provide foraging and nesting places for birds.

Three pairs of Robins nested about the house, one pair having their nest on a ledge over one of the windows. The males were the earliest musicians of the morning, beginning their blithe carol before it is yet light, and they were also the last songsters of the evening, singing on into the dusk after night had wrapped the landscape in her encircling shadows. The songs of these three males differed considerably in quality, and one of them sang a most characteristic refrain, in which the syllables "Rip-rip—ter-rurr" occurred very conspicuously and with great frequency.

Two pairs of Yellow Warblers had their nests on the premises, one of the nests being placed in a gooseberry bush. It was built in a fork and was composed of dried grass, pieces of twine and yarn, and bits of birch-bark, lined with hair and a few chicken feathers. When the female was hunting material for her nest she frequented the lawn, verandah and walks, and accepted pieces of yarn on her hunting territory with alacrity. When she was seeking hairs with which to line the nest she seemed to find the verandah the most promising field, and finding a hair caught in a crevice she pulled at it, now from this direction, now from that, swinging round and round, hanging on to the end of the hair. Usually she secured the hair, but occasionally her efforts to dislodge it proved fruitless, and she abandoned it to try for others not so securely attached. She laid four eggs which she incubated most conscientiously. The male appeared to take no part in incubation, but brought insects to his mate, sang his "Sweet-sweet-sweet-sweet-sweet" to her from the neighboring trees, and showed considerable solicitude if the nest was approached. Three of the eggs hatched, and the shells and the unhatched egg were removed from the nest. For the first two days the female spent most of her time brooding the young while the male was busy foraging. As he approached the nest he invariably sang, and when the female heard him she usually slipped from the nest and went off to secure a few insects, sometimes for herself, sometimes to give to the young upon her return, while the male fed the nestlings. In the early days of feeding whole insects were not given to the young, but the insects were pounded and swallowed by the male, then regurgitated into the mouths of the nestlings. Sometimes the female remained on the nest when the male approached, and he gave her insects which he carried in his bill.

Several pairs of Song Sparrows were inhabitants of

the grounds, and two pairs of Juncos had their nests in a row of spruces.

The Barn Swallows built their mud nests in various situations, under the eaves of the house and barn, in the barn and drive-shed, and all day long they coursed about, now high, now low, depending upon the altitude at which most insects were to be found.

A pair of Ruby-throated Humming birds spent a good deal of their time on the premises, particularly when the Horse-chestnuts were in flower, as these blossoms seemed to provide a brand of nectar most acceptable to them. Like winged gems they hovered, motionless but with fast-whirring wings, in front of a flower, then with a sudden dart shifted to another, and after feeding in this manner for a time they rested on a branch, to return in a few minutes to their feast.

The most persistent singer of all the feathered denizens of the grounds was a Least Flycatcher. His chief haunt was in one of the tall willows, and here he sat and uttered his "Chebec-chebec-chebec-chebec-chebec" so persistently that one wondered when he found time to eat. Once I saw him describe an arc in the air and sing a song while in flight, a song quite different from his usual "Chebec."

A pair of Purple Finches had their nest somewhere in the vicinity, and the male was a frequent visitor to the grounds. He was an exceptionally fine singer, and his rich, long-sustained, warbling refrain was a most delightful piece of bird music.

A pair of Kingbirds lived somewhere close by and spent a good deal of their time in the willows, while an Olive-sided Flycatcher, whose home was in a patch of spruces down the road, occasionally paid a visit to the grounds, and sitting high up in a tree uttered his loud, ringing notes.

A dead limb on one of the willows proved attractive to a couple of Flickers who came and pounded on it to their heart's content, and mingled their varied calls with the sound of their hammering.

A Race with the Rain on the Glorious 12th.

BY SANDY FRASER.

A lot o' people are unco' superstitious about things that will be turnin' up every day. They wouldna start on a journey or get married or any little thing like that on a Friday, for fear they might hae some bad luck in connection wi' the thing. I'm no' that sort myself, but just the same I've never been in the habit o' cuttin' any hay before the 12th o' July, or gin I did I'd mak' it a point to hae it in the barn before that date, for I dinna think I ever saw an Orange Walk yet but had a guid rain to finish up the day with.

But this year I says to myself: "what's the use o' lein foolish? The weather is lookin' settled and it's only a notion onyway about it rainin' on the 12th. I'll tak' a chance." So the day before I went at it an' cut doon about three acres o' clover. It wis Friday too, but as I tauld ye, I'm no' superstitious. I counted on gettin' the hay raked up an' into coils the next day, as it's only once in a dog's age that I tak' in an Orange Walk. This year Jim, my hired man, says to me, "If ye're no' goin' yerse' Mr. Fraser, I'd like to be takin' the woman an' the children tae the 12th. The youngsters seem tae be set on goin'. I wouldna gie a straw for the thing sae far as I'm concerned myself."

"Gae ahead," I replied, "I guess ye're a better Protestant than I am, onyway. I'll stay at hame and hauld the auld ranch doon till ye get back."

Sae, on the mornin' o' the day Jim wisna' lang in gettin' what wark had to be done oot o' the way and in joinin' the procession that wis headin' for the toon.

It wis an unco' fine day, wi' not a cloud in sight, an' I says tae the auld wumman: "Weel Jean, for the first time in yer lang life ye are gaein' to see a 12th o' July wi'oot rain. The country is certainly gaein' dry in earnest," says I.

"Dinna be too sure," returns Jean. "A habit is hard to get over."

My niece Jennie is back frae the city on her holidays just noo, an' she says to me that day: "I think I'd like to go the Orange Walk myself, Uncle Sandy. I've heard that there is quite a bit o' excitement at these celebrations sometimes."

"You'd better stay by yer Auntie, Jennie," I replied "Ye might be gettin' tramped on if ye got intae a crowd like that. Dae ye no ken that an Orangeman is not held responsible for onything he may do on the 12th o' July?"

Jennie juist turned up her nose at me, but I could see that she had a hankering to be wi' the crowd, and she wis a wee bit disappointed.

About nine o'clock I took a fork an' went back to the field to turn over some o' the hay where it wis too heavy to dry oot well. I wis all through by the time Jean called me to dinner, and things looked good for gettin' it raked an' coiled up in guid time, even if I wis alone on the job.

After dinner I went into the front room an' lay doon on the sofa, intendin' to tak' a short nap, accordin' to a habit I hae got intae the last couple o' years or so. I slept langer than I had intended to, an' when I got outside I saw some clouds comin' up in the west that I dinna like the looks o' ony too weel. It didn't tak' me lang to get the auld mare hitched up to the rake an' headed for the hay-field.

When Jennie saw me gettin' in a hurry she followed me oot an' says she: "Let me rake the hay, Uncle Sandy, and you can get yer fork an' lunch it up."

"I dinna think ye'd better," I said. "This wild animal I'm tryin' to drive has made a vow that no fly

will get ony o' her blood this day, an' it tak's all my time to keep her on the job."

Juist then a big horse-fly lit on the mare's nose, an' she backed the rake an' me an' all right up intae the fence-corner. That wis enough for Jennie, an' she says: "Weel, I'll get a fork an' help ye one way or anither." And away she went to the barn for a pitch-fork. When she cam' back she started wark at the far end o' the field while I finished up the raking. When I had pit the auld mare in the stable I got anither fork an' went over to where Jennie had started bunchin' up the hay. As soon as I saw what she wis daein' I called oot to her: "Hoot, Jennie," says I. "What like coils are those that ye are makin'? Is that the way they mak' hay in the city? Ye must hae been takin' lessons frae yer Auntie when she made that nest for the auld settin' hen yesterday. Watch me for a meenute," says I, "an' I'll show ye the orthodox style o' pittin' up hay so that it will hae a chance to shed a wee bit o' the rain that may be comin' before lang." For by this time things were beginnin' to look bad enough.

When Jennie had watched me for a few meenutes she went at it again, an' before lang she wis makin' a pretty guid fist o' gettin' the hay into coils, as we call them doon here.

By this time the sun wis oot o' sight behind the clouds, an' I found myself beginnin' to get in a hurry. Jennie had taken note o' the signs too, an' she wis daein' her best. There wisna muckle o' a breeze goin' an' she wis a guid bit warmer, I'm thinkin', than mony anither time when she would be complainin' o' the heat. There wis no use tellin' her to quit, though, so I said naething. I wis losin' some sweat myself by this time. "I'll tak' na mair chances on havin' hay oot on the 12th o' July, after this," thinks I. "It must be the beatin' o' the drums that brings the rain, I guess."

"We'll not ony mair than mak' it," says Jennie, as we cam' to the last two windrows. I said naething. I wis too busy. I wis going to get that hay up if my fork-handle held oot. By this time Jennie had got the knack, an' she could handle her fork like an auld-timer. We took those last two windrows together, an' she wis in at the finish if onything a wee bit ahead o' me. But there wis na time for us to argue aboot the matter. It wis rainin' some before we had the finishin' touches put to the last coils, an' we made a run o' it for the hoose. But we couldna mak' it. Before we'd got half way the rain struck us wi' a splash. I wis dressed aboot as light as the law allows, an' that could rain made me gasp. By the time we reached hame it didn't matter much whether we kenned enough to "come in oot o' the rain" or not. The water wis rinnin' oot at my boot-tops.

Jean opened the door for us, an' I says to her: "Ye mind what ye were sayin' aboot Jennie here? That naething could dampen her spirits. Look at her noo." "Oh Auntie," says Jennie, pushing the hair oot o' her eyes an' tryin' to look sober: "I always heard that people that lived in the country never had ony o' the modern conveniences o' city life, but here you even have a shower-bath."

That night at supper as Jennie wis showing her appreciation o' Jean's cookin' by helpin' hersel' to anither hot biscuit, she says to me: "Weel Uncle Sandy, we saved that hay from destruction to-day, onyway, didn't we?" "Weel, whether we did or not," I replied, "we did what we set oot to do. We got ahead o' the auld Clerk o' the Weather, for once."

"Sure we did," says Jennie, "it was more fun than going to an Orange Walk."

Optimism vs. Pessimism.

BY FRED. SCOTT SHEPARD.

Optimism and pessimism have had many definitions or designations, as, "The optimist sees the doughnut; the pessimist sees the hole," or, "The optimist believes in mascots; the pessimist believes in hoodoos," or, "The optimist thinks the times are ripe; the pessimist thinks they are rotten," but however designated or distinguished it is always very apparent that they are directly opposite one to the other, that the one can never be the other, that the one is constructive, while the other is destructive.

The optimist goes through life with his eyes open, his head up and his courage firm. He knows that the sun shines behind the clouds, that assurance begets confidence, that courage is contagious, that what man has done man can do, and so he wins or dies fighting—his face to the front.

The pessimist is ever looking downward, his steps lead to the shadows, his heart fails at the thought of the unknown and uncertain, his doubts are stronger than his faith, and he is doomed to failure before he begins.

Successful men in all walks of life—commercial, professional and religious, are always optimists; the slothful, the laggards, the failures, the down-and-outs are always pessimists.

Optimism and pessimism are alike contagious, but one is positive while the other is negative. As in other realms of life, the positive is stronger than the negative and so the practice and acquirement of the cheerful, the hopeful and the courageous will make for the overcoming of the dismal, the doubtful and the fearful.

The cultivation of faith in God, faith in men and faith in one's self is a certain antidote to pessimistic tendencies, and leads from the shadows of the valley to the radiance of the hill top, from the gloom of despair to the glow of success.

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