

THE WEST

An Ontario Farmer's Impressions of British Columbia.

One of the returned holiday makers, who had resumed his place at the table, told of a trip across the boundless prairie. They were talking about the illimitable stretches on which thousands were yet to find homes and independence. One member of the company, a son of Erin, said: "Gintleman, yez 'think this is a big country. Just wait 'till yez get to British Columbia. Shure, 'that's the biggest country in the 'wurruld. Av British Columbia was all 'spreadout flat loike Manitoby and 'Saskatchewan and Alberty, it wud fill 'the whole av the Pacific Ocean. Why, 'to make room for British Columbia it 'had to be rowled up, and crumpled up, 'and humped up into great big moun- 'tains rachin' to the sky. An' the 'mountains had to be made on a moir- 'ty big scale to make room for the gold, 'and the silver, and the lead, and the 'copper and the coal that they're fair- 'ly bustin' wid. An' the rivers, wait 'till yez see the rivers! They have to 'be big to make room for the millions 'av salmon that are crowdin' in eager 'to settle in the interior ov the coun- 'try.

"I suppose you men from Ontario 'think yez know something about trees? 'Wait till yez see the trees. It's a nice 'marnin's walk around some av them. 'An' they have to climb the trees wid 'ladders to cut them down. An' the 'fish! Gintlemen, Oi'm a bit av a west- 'erner myself, and I can tell a good



GRAND TRUNK RY. BUILDING, A-Y-P. EXPOSITION.

"yarn, but on me honor, Oi couldn't 'lie about the fish no matter how hard 'Oi tried.

"Yes, things are built on a mighty 'ginerous scale in British Columbia, and 'the size av the apples and the pears 'and plums and cherries, sure yez cud 'niver belave it till yez tried to ate 'wan before breakfast and, be dad! 'there's no fear av bitin' a worm in two 'while your at it. Yes I'm going back."

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BIRDS

Friends of the Fruit-Grower and the Farmer.

As objects of human care and interest birds occupy a place filled by no other living being, and the various

movements to protect and foster them would be fully justified were there no returns other than esthetic. Only the thoughtless and the ignorant still hold that the graceful forms and beautiful plumage of these masterpieces of nature serves their highest purpose when worn on a hat for a brief season, to be cast aside and forgotten, the plumage dimmed and faded, the beautiful songs quenched forever.

While by no means insensible to the higher value of birds, the farmer who is asked to aid in measures for their protection is entitled to inquire as to the practical purpose they subserve, and how far they may be expected to return his outlay of time, trouble and expense.

Since most birds eat insects and since it is their insect-eating habits that chiefly invite inquiry, for so active and persistent are birds in the pursuit of important enemies.

When birds are permitted to labor undisturbed they thoroughly police both earth and air. The thrushes, sparrows, larks and wrens search the surface of the earth for insects and the larvae, or hunt among the leaves and peer under logs and refuse for them. Thus each family plays its part in the never-ending warfare, and the number of insects annually consumed by the combined hosts is simply incalculable. It is well that this is so, for so vast is the number of insects and so great is the quantity of vegetation required for their subsistence that the existence of every green thing would be threatened were it not for the birds and other agents specially designed to keep them in check.

While birds are not numerous in the sense that insects are, they exist in fair numbers everywhere—or would were it not for the interference of man—and so rapid is the digestion of birds and so perfect their assimilation powers that, to satisfy the appetite of even a small bird, great numbers of insects are needed. Much of this food is hidden and must be searched for; much of it is active and must be vigorously pursued. Hence only by the expenditure of much time and labor do birds procure their daily food. With birds the struggle for existence is peculiarly a struggle for subsistence; shelter is obtained with comparative ease, and if



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