

until it covered every State and Territory in the Union. The terrific fire on the 31st of January last wiped out the offices, together with the great library and picture gallery of the *Turf, Field and Farm*, and since then the paper has occupied temporary quarters at 20 Vesey street. The journal, however, has been issued with the greatest promptness, and the quality of the matter seems to have improved. The courage with which the publishers faced adversity has been warmly commended, and the circulation is larger than ever. New and handsome offices have been secured in the *Times* Building, 89 and 41 Park Row, for the *Turf, Field and Farm*; and as every member of the staff feels at home in that locality, we may look for him to do good work, and we may expect to see the paper made even better than it is, if such a thing is possible. The spirit shown by the *Turf, Field and Farm* during February and March is of the fire-proof kind, and it makes plain the fact that a journal with perfect organization and proud traditions is indestructible.

### SALE OF AYRSHIRES.

The sale of the Ayrshire cattle of Mr. Andrew Allan, at Lachine, Que., was well attended, Americans being present from a number of different States, with a good company of local visitors. Bidding was good, though no specially high prices were obtained. The result was as follows:

|                   |              |            |
|-------------------|--------------|------------|
| 4 bulls, average, | \$48.12..... | \$192.50   |
| 56 cows, do       | 56.40.....   | 3,169.00   |
| 52-yr. olds, do   | 43.00.....   | 2,15.00    |
| 13 yearlings, do  | 29.20 .....  | 879.50     |
| Total .....       |              | \$8,946.00 |

This sale adds another to many indications that the Ayrshires are somewhat at a discount, notwithstanding their high milking qualities. The reason is not probably far to seek, and will be found in the demand for large-sized cattle, which, when their usefulness in the dairy has been outlived, can be profitably turned into beef. Dairymen in general are turning their attention to bulkier breeds, such as the Holsteins and good milking strains of Short-horns. This tendency will most likely exist so long as cattle shipped to Britain are carried at so much per head, instead of being carried by weight.

### THE VALUE OF THE FARMERS' CLUB.

More eloquent than any plea we can urge in favour of the Farmers' Club, are the testimonies given as to its value by those who have been in the habit of regularly attending these meetings. Here is a specimen from the correspondence of the *Farmers' Review*:-

"There is another retrospective thought which the coming spring suggests, namely, the value of the Farmers' Club. From it I have gained many most valuable things. I understand, better than ever before, how plants grow, and why they need to be fed. It seems to me that there is not so very much difference between animals and plants, after all. Of course, plants are fixed in the soil, and have to feed on soil and air, while the sheep and cattle go from place to place, and feed upon plants. They all have to be fed, at any rate. There is an interdependence of life, it seems to me. It looks as if the plants fed the animals, and in turn the animals fed the plants. If this is so in creation, then the principle should be applied to the farm. If a piece of land is to be kept in the same state of fertility, or strength, it must have both animals and plants upon it. If there are no

plants, the animals will not stay long, and if there are no animals, the plants—if crops are continuously removed, with no return—will grow smaller and weaker. It seems to me that the normal condition of farming is a mixed one, where both animals and plants are properly adjusted to each other's needs. This is one thing that the club has set me to thinking on, and I sort of see through the scheme of things better than ever before. It is more of a comfort to work when one mingles the ideas of things with the labour of his hands. It does not seem quite as hard to plough a piece of land when one knows the changes that are going on in the soil, and understands—though but a little—about the way plants get their substance from that soil and the air."

### SKETCHES OF CANADIAN WILD BIRDS.

BY W. L. KELLE, LISTOWEL, ONT.

#### THE FLY-CATCHERS.

This genus of birds is numerous and widely diffused, some species being found in most of the countries of the earth between the Polar circles. But while some species frequent the neighbourhood of human habitations, even in towns and cities, others prefer to dwell in the deep shadows of the wildest woods, and being, as their name indicates, almost wholly insect-feeders, they are among the most useful of the minor tribes of the feathered race. They differ considerably in size, but in habits and general appearance there is much resemblance. In Canada five or six species are met with, but as several of these take up their *habitat* in the deep swampy woods, they are but little known or noticed by even the pioneers. The common king-bird and the pewee are the most common and distinguished. In the construction of their nests the same general rule is followed, though the situations in which these are placed are usually different. The eggs of all are nearly white. Those in Canada are migratory, but do not collect in flocks.

#### THE FEWER FLY-CATCHER.

This is the commonest and best known of this genera of birds found in this country, and is one of the earliest of our spring visitors. In the early morning, while the air is still cold, and patches of snow still linger in the woods and round the fences, and while but few others of our feathered visitants have returned from their tropical exile, perched on the top of some building, or among the leafless boughs of some tree, the pleasant and familiar "pewee" of this little wanderer may be heard greeting the new-born day, and returning spring, to the delight of the rural Canadian and the student of nature. Its simple notes seem always pleasing, not for their variety or melody, but rather for the pleasing ideas of renewed life and animation with which they are associated, and the confiding nature which the little warbler itself evinces.

This species remains in Canada for about five months in each year, and during that period it may be found ranging the outskirts of the woods, the vicinity of farm buildings, and the streets of towns and villages. It is an expert insect-catcher, and generally captures its victims on the wing, by a series of darting evolutions, though it will also alight upon the grass, or down among the grain, in order to secure a prized morsel.

Its favourite haunts are the margins of water-courses, and under the bridges by which the streams are everywhere crossed its nest is often found. Those whose *habitat* is on the margin of the woods make their nests in the roots of fallen trees, while others, who prefer to abide near the

habitations of man, find nesting places in the barn, the woodshed, or on some projection beneath the eaves of the dwelling house. Its nest has also been found in chimneys, caves, wells, saw-mills, and under logs elevated a few feet off the ground. The nest is composed of moss and wool, mixed with mud, and lined with fine dry grass and hair. The eggs, of a white colour—sometimes with a few reddish dots—are from four to six in number. It seldom hatches more than once in the year. The length of this bird is six or seven inches. Its tail is constantly jerked up and down with a wagging motion. The plumage on the upper parts is yellowish-black, the under parts have a greyish hue, the feathers on the head are loose and crested; and there are short bristles at the base of the bill.

#### THE WIRREE, OR WOOD FLY-CATCHER.

In form and plumage this species resembles the pewee, but it is smaller in size, and its song-notes and *habitat* are different. Among our summer visitors it is late in its arrival, and as its sojourn here is passed in the wild woods, and it is seldom seen to approach the open fields, it may be called the wood fly-catcher, though there are others of this genera, which are little known, whose homes are found in the wilderness. The wirree does not frequent the low, swampy lands, but takes up its abode in the high, hard-wood timbered districts, where there is deep shade, and an abundance of dead twigs and branches shooting across the gloom, and where its insect food is abundant. Taking its stand on a naked limb, it for a few moments glances around, its tail meanwhile wagging with that peculiar motion common to the fly-catchers, then darting off, rapidly snapping at the insects that flit around, and after a circling sweep of a few rods returns to its starting place, quivering its wings and uttering its peculiar notes, "wir-a-we, we-too, and which are repeated by another of its species at a short distance. These dismal notes are but little noticed until most other of our summer songsters have become silent, then when the fallen leaves and chilly winds of autumn herald the approach of winter, this sad and doleful ditty becomes conspicuous, as it echoes in the silent woods in melancholy strains, as though the little performer was bewailing the departing glories of summer, the approaching desolation of nature, and the loss of all that is lovely and gay, which, noticed in conjunction with the scenery of the surrounding landscape, may often fill the mind of nature's student with sad reflections and gloomy anticipations. As the fall advances and the leafless woods assume a barren and desolate aspect, no longer able to procure its insect food, the wirree ceases to battle with the elements of nature, leaves our woods and forests for a season to the sway of the icy monarch, and seeks a refuge from the winter's storms in the evergreen valleys of the south. This bird is four inches long; its colour is dusty black, and its head has a small crest. Its nest, placed on a branch or in the fork of a small tree, is composed of moss, fibres of bark, and lined with hair. The eggs are four in number, of a dirty white colour, sometimes dotted with a few dark spots on the large end.

#### THE YELLOW-BARRED FLY-CATCHER.

In form and size this variety resembles the wirree, but it is more rare and solitary, and found only in the low, swampy cedar woods. Its plumage is a dusty slate colour, with yellowish bars crossing the wings and tail. Its common notes are a simple "chip," nor am I aware that it utters any other. Its nest is placed in a mossy bank, or the root of a fallen tree, and formed of moss, fibres of bark, fine dry grass, and hair. The eggs, three or four in number, are white, with a ring of reddish spots towards the large end.