

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

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Agents for "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal,"
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1. THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE is published every Thursday. It is impartial and independent of all cliques and parties. It is illustrated with original engravings, and furnishes the most practical, reliable and profitable information for farmers, dairymen, gardeners, stockmen and home-makers, of any publication in Canada.
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Successful farmer must be a stayer. He must be a manager and a worker, a thinker, planner and laborer all in one. Those who fit will succeed. Now, the question is, why should it will change, if change is necessary, be temporary? There is a great future for agriculture in Canada, war or no war, and it remains with those already on the land and those who may now adopt farming as a calling to give agriculture a permanent impetus not a temporary advance, to end in a hapless and hopeless recoil when the time comes for the farmer to pay his heavy share of the burdens following in the wake of war. Every farmer now on the land should cultivate more thoroughly than ever before, should plan his rotations, and should handle his live stock, fruit or special crops to the best advantage, and every new farmer should learn from his older-established successful neighbor and do the thing right at first and better each year thereafter. Now is a good time to read your farm paper carefully. Advanced practical ideas are contained in every issue. Through it the reader gets the experience of thousands of practical and successful farmers. Let us join hands to make a rapid and permanent advancement in agriculture.

Supply and demand regulates prices, and also regulates to a marked extent the live-stock end of our autumn exhibitions. Just a few years ago exhibitions were all "horse." Horses were dear, and cattle were cheap. This year horses made a smaller showing, and beef cattle topped the live-stock section with sheep and pigs strong. The latter three classes of stock are in demand.

"The 'censor' must get tired of reading war news, but if he had to read some of the wild-cat reports which have been published since the outbreak, he surely would become extremely bored. He may be thankful his is not the 'war extra' stuff.

Nature's Diary

A. B. Klugh, M.A.

Speaking recently of the preservation of birds I enumerated the following species as birds which should not be preserved—the House Sparrow, the Crow, the Cowbird, the Bronzed Grackle, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, the Cooper's Hawk and the Sharp-shinned Hawk.

The House Sparrow should be systematically destroyed, because it drives away from the vicinity of our dwellings many birds which are most beneficial in their food habits, and which delight our ears with their melody and our eyes with their attractive plumage, because it eats grain, both in the field and in the barn, and because it makes a mess round our buildings. The introduction of this bird from Europe was one of the greatest mistakes ever made—a mistake for which we and our descendants will apparently have to pay for all time. I say "apparently," because the House Sparrow could be eliminated from the American continent. If a general, continent-wide, crusade with guns, poison, and nest destruction were carried on for a long period this pest could be exterminated. Such a campaign may come some time, though realizing how hard such co-operation as would be needed for a successful issue is to attain I hardly hope to see it. So the best we can do is to keep our own premises free from this nuisance.

The Crow has some points in its favor, such as its fondness for carrion, and the fact that it destroys some insects and field mice. But the harm which it does by destroying the eggs and young of other birds, and by eating sprouting corn outweighs the good. It is quite safe for us to kill all the Crows we can, for the Crow is a wary bird, and there is no danger of its extermination, the only result of our efforts being a much-needed reduction in their numbers.

The House Sparrow and the Crow are well-known species, but the Cowbird is not so generally recognized. It is about eight inches in length. The male is iridescent black, with a chocolate-colored head and neck, while the female is a nearly uniform dusky brown, rather paler beneath. As far as the food habits of the Cowbird go it is a beneficial species, for though it eats some grain, it destroys enough noxious insects and weed-seeds to more than pay for this. But in spite of its food habits the Cowbird should be killed whenever opportunity offers, because of its parasitic breeding habits. This species builds no nest of its own, but deposits its eggs singly in the nests of smaller species. The young Cowbird on hatching is larger than the rightful heirs, and gets most of the food brought to the nest by the parents, and not even content with this it hoists the other young out of the nest to perish miserably on the ground beneath. Not only does the young Cowbird destroy from three to five nestlings of the brood with which it is hatched, but it follows its foster parents about for such a length of time and demands so much food that species which would normally have a second brood are prevented from doing so. Thus we see that every young Cowbird raised means the loss of from three to ten young birds, each as beneficial, in its food habits as the Cowbird or more so. And the more limited the breeding places of our birds become, the greater is the damage wrought by the Cowbird, since more nests in proportion are parasitized.

The Bronzed Grackle is a species which should not be encouraged, because it drives away birds of greater economic value and whose voices are far more melodious than its own "wheel-barrow-need-of-oiling squeak." This species eats grain to the extent of 46.5% of its diet, though a large part of this is probably waste grain left on the ground after harvest. Cultivated fruit makes up only 2.9% of its food, mast, such as acorns and beechnuts constitutes 14%, and weed-seed 4.2%. Of the animal foods taken over nine-tenths are insects and of these two-thirds are noxious species. It also shares the habit with its big cousin, the Crow, of eating the eggs of other birds. So looked at all the way round we see that while its evil deeds are not pronounced enough for us to advocate a war of extermination it is a species which may be kept off our premises without any injustice.

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker cannot be placed on the preserved list, because of the fact that in its search for sap and for the cambium layer of trees it leaves wounds which seriously depreciate the value of the timber. It is the only one of the woodpeckers which is injurious, the rest being among the most valuable birds which we possess, because of the splendid work which they do in extracting the borers which would if left alone kill the tree. The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker may readily be told from any of the other Woodpeckers by the white stripe down the wing, by the crown being wholly red, not merely having a red patch on the nape as in the males of other species, and by the black crescent on the upper breast, taken in conjunction with the other marks.

The Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks are the only injurious hawks which are common

enough to do much damage. How they can be distinguished from other Hawks will be dealt with later.

THE HORSE.

We would not hesitate to breed mares for fall colts.

The horse business may be a little slow just now, but it is safe.

Feed the colt well, especially just after weaning him and during the first winter.

A carrot, once a day, will give the colt something to nibble at, and be beneficial at the same time.

Action still counts for much in the drafter. Avoid the animal which goes wide at the hocks or rolls or paddles in front. Such are not winners.

Be careful with the weaning foal. Keep it in a stall or paddock that is high and strong; many good ones have been injured in their attempts to escape to their dams.

If the colt's dam is required to work and he has reached the age of four and one-half to five months of age, he would do better weaned, and the mare would have a better chance.

High-class stallions will be scarce next year. If you have a good breeding horse keep him, and if you need one buy him now. It is not a question of price; it is a question of supply.

When bringing the horses and colts from the pasture there is nothing that will take the place of succulent grass better than bran. Feed some each day, and the change will not be so noticeable to the horses.

If you have returned from the exhibition after not having shown your horse or colt and still believe he is better than anything you have seen there, would it not be wise to prove the truth of your contentions by entering him at the winter fairs, or at next year's fall exhibitions and get in the game to stay?

When the demand for horses for war purposes was made known in the neighboring republic some commission houses bought indiscriminately, thinking to unload them onto British buyers. In the majority of cases they still have them, or have disposed of them at unprofitable prices. Englishmen prefer to ride good horses, and Britain sends her men to the front with horses suitable for the purpose.

With so many horses being bred and so many imported, it is surprising how few are the real topnotchers. The best is what every breeder should have in view, but few of the matings made result in anything approaching what the breeder would like. Some come near to the ideal but these are few indeed, and there need be little fear of over-stocking the market with clean-limbed, short-coupled, nicely-turned, 1,800-lb. draft geldings.

Fall Care of Hard-Worked Horses.

It is very often the case that very little extra care is given the horses during the rush of fall work. Men who take especially good care of their working animals in the spring of the year are often inclined to overlook the fact that fall work is strenuous work, and requires horses in good fettle and ready six days out of seven. Fall, on a well-organized farm, is one of the busiest of the seasons, and every available horse is brought into use to get the work done before winter sets in and stops the plow. Every foot of land needed for next year's crop must be plowed once or twice and cultivated; there are roots to draw, silos to fill, and much heavy teaming to be done, and the horse must do the heavy work, and hustling on hot days and cool, in hard and soft ground. His coat is thickening up for winter, and he sweats easily and profusely, and altogether fall is a trying time.

In keeping with the practice which has gained a place in most large teaming barns, in livery stables, and on some farms, we believe that it is advisable during times of heavy work to feed little or no hay at noon and give more oats. Good feeders give very little hay in the morning also, and make the night meal the only big hay feed of the day, filling the mangers to keep the horses busy during the night. It is a fact