

**Our Birds.**

SIR,—I notice in the last ADVOCATE a piece on the English House Sparrow. I am much pleased to see them, but, as you observed concerning our Canadian birds, there is not half enough care taken of them. We cannot too highly praise them; since the timber has been cleared away and the land become stumpless and highly cultivated, the small birds have greatly increased. Twenty years ago where there was one then there are five now—that is the sparrow family; the bluebirds have decreased greatly, and I attribute their scarcity to the want of timber, as they nest in stumps and holes of trees.

The stump wren, also, it is a great pity to kill, for they are wholly insectivorous. Something was said about taxing the young sportsmen. I think they should be prohibited altogether; I would as soon see one of my hens shot as one of those sparrows that frequent my garden. I think that farmers are not half particular enough, for they keep half a dozen cats about them for fear of a mouse getting into their barns—not taking into consideration the mischief they do, I am sure, for to every mouse they catch they destroy five young birds. Now I think that five sparrows would do more good in destroying insects, and be of more benefit to the farmer, than five cats, for they lie lazily about the premises during the day, and when the birds should be at rest they are busy in hunting and killing them. I do not keep a cat, nor allow one about my premises, if I can prevent it. I shoot them with as much satisfaction as I would a hawk.

I expect to follow gardening, and am very careful to protect all birds, for they are the friend of man and should be preserved. I will now mention the names of a few birds that I find to be the farmers' and gardeners' friends:

The bluebird; there are nine different sparrows, nearly all of which are omnivorous; cow tropple or cow bird; all the blackbirds are insectivorous, until migrating, when they visit cornfields. I have heard great complaints about the blackbirds picking up the seed corn when planted, but I think it must have been poorly planted, for I live near the shores of Ontario and a marsh on each side of me about a mile and a half each way, and I never saw the blackbirds too thick for me yet. The oriole or golden robbin, as it is called, is a great friend to the orchard; the tent caterpillar is their chief support when raising their young. The cuckoo, too, I have seen tearing the nests to pieces for the caterpillars.

I think this will be enough for the present.

A SUBSCRIBER, Ontario.

**Hard Times.**

SIR,—All complain so much of the hard times, and verily it is hard times in regard to getting money. As an illustration: A farmer told me today that he had paid over \$90 municipal and school taxes from the sale of wheat at 75c per bushel, and the grain averaged only about 7 bushels to the acre. There are far too many in a similar position—and not a few even worse off than he is, if that can be possible. Now this man owns 200 acres of land, 150 of which are cleared.

I know another man who has owned and worked 25 acres a less number of years than the former, who has always money in the bank, and hard times have no terrors for him. Not very long since he sold \$700 worth off his farm in a single year, though not all the produce of that year. He had a surplus of 3 crops of wheat, in addition to beef, pork, butter, etc., all realized in the same year.

Contrast the position of these two men—the latter always easy in his circumstances, owing no man anything, complete master of the situation; the former always behind, overworked bodily and mentally.

Surely it is time farmers began to realize some of these facts, and to know that it is impossible to work land successfully without capital in proportion to the acres cultivated. I write to you because I think you are working in a good cause, and I would like to assist you as far as I can without troubling you too much.

T. H., Meaford.

SIR,—Is there any difference between White Russian wheat and Russian White?

R. B., Eversley, Ont.

[Russian wheat and Russian White wheat are the same variety.]

**Caterpillars—Curculio.**

SIR,—I wish to give your fruit growing patrons my experience in dealing with the caterpillar last season, which I consider the cheapest and best:—

In the winter I went through the orchard and picked off all the eggs I could see, and made, as I supposed, a clean job, and congratulated myself that my orchard at least would be free from that pest the next summer, but, alas! how vain are human plans, sometimes. When spring came there were plenty of caterpillars. I have tried to kill them with fire, soapsuds, coal oil, etc., but the result never equalled the expense. My plan is to tack round the body of the tree a strip of sheep skin, say an inch and a half wide, with wool some two inches long. I found that not one in fifty could pass the wool, though a few may. I then take an old house broom and cut it off just below where it is sewed across; with this I brush the caterpillars down the trunk of the tree. In this way I have killed thousands in a very few moments. Some recommend cotton batting, but wool is far more durable and much more impassable. Such is my experience with caterpillars.

Some seem to be of opinion that plums cannot be raised without great expense and—smoke. But two things are required to grow plums. Cultivate them well, manure moderately heavy, give heavy coating of leached ashes, and keep the curculio out. But, says one, how do you do that? Simply with a band round the tree coated with tar. Why? Because the female curculio cannot fly, nor can it crawl through the tar, and unless it can get into the top of the tree it had better give up the business. The tar band must be put on just before the blossoms open, and be kept well tarred till the fruit is well set. So much for plums, and they are worth \$3 a bushel.

The manure heap has been called the farmers' bank, and so it is. I use a pen some 30x12 feet, into which I put all from the stable and all I buy, where it heats and rots until required, which it will do much faster if forked over once or twice.

M. F. T., Westminster, Ont.

**Better Farming Needed.**

SIR,—I am pleased with the ADVOCATE, and would not like to go without it. Mr. Slow has a great many friends in our Province of Ontario. Farmers do make a great mistake in cultivating nearly all the land they have cleared every year in succession. Fifteen acres well cultivated and put in proper order will produce more grain and straw than 40 acres as ordinarily worked. The crop of spring grain of 1878, I am sorry to say, returned upon a great many farms about three or four bushels per acre, while in my settlement, where the land was in a fit state for wheat, 15 to 20 bushels is about the average, but I do not say every farm has that, for Mr. Slow is here also.

There is a long article on the judging of the proper qualities of a milch cow in your journal from some American paper. I would like if he would inform the readers of your journal what kind of sire he would use to have the cows low in front and high behind. My opinion of milch cows is, like farming, the better they are cared for the better they will pay.

There is another article on salt. Of what use would it be to sow 15 lbs. of salt to the acre? I have used a good deal of salt on grain and turnips, but I never sow less than 200 lbs. per acre. Plenty sow 300 lbs., and say it is not too much. There is no doubt where fall wheat is sickly in the spring salt will renew it. I tried the experiment in the spring of 1877, and proved it by leaving one ridge without any salt in the middle of the patch. I rolled immediately after sowing. I sowed 200 lbs. per acre.

The Clawson I got from you three years ago turned out last year 36 bushels of cleaned wheat per acre. The Silver Chaff about the same; Treadwell about 27, but not on as well prepared land; the former on summer fallow, and the latter pea land, manured and plowed twice.

G. L., Greenock, Ont.

[In the article referred to, the application of salt to land, there is a printer's error—fifteen pounds to the acre appeared in print instead of one hundred and fifty as intended. The quantity generally applied is even more than this. Two imperial cwt. are frequently used.]

**Melenotic Tumors.**

SIR,—I would like to know through the ADVOCATE if there is a cure for growths almost the nature of a wart, some of them three inches in diameter, filling up at times and running out matter which is very disagreeable.

As I have a very valuable brood mare affected with them, I have taken her to two farriers and had the warts cut out, but they came on again in the same place. The mare was not affected with them until she was three years old; now she is seven.

If you know of anything to cure them, please inform me in your next issue.

J. F., Watford, Ont.

[Your beast is troubled with melenotic tumors, and they are easily removed when properly treated. It is our opinion that Messrs. Rudd & Tennent, of this city, can treat them better than most veterinaries in this Dominion.]

**Defiance Wheat.**

SIR,—Having purchased one pound of Defiance wheat last spring, I wish to know how it has turned out in comparison with others. I cannot say much about it yet, as the season was unfavorable. By answering you will greatly oblige.

M. J. A. F., Pakenham.

[We would not advise you to invest in unknown and little varieties unless in small quantities. It is well to buy a pound or so of a new variety of seed, but we would not advise more.]

**A Farmer's Club.**

SIR,—I am surprised how a farmer can get along without your paper. I believe I can almost tell what farmers take the ADVOCATE by the general appearance of things around the farm.

I have started a Farmers' Club through the guidance of the ADVOCATE.

C. L., Nottawasaga.

**Run-down Land.**

SIR,—I would like to know if it would do to seed down this spring, and what time is best if the ground is clean? I don't mean to crop with grain, as the land has been run down—before I got the place. Give all the information you can.

A. McR., Wardsville.

[It will do to seed down in spring. Sow as soon as possible. Read past, present and future ADVOCATES.]

SIR,—As an old subscriber to your excellent paper, the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, I beg you to inform me how to plant white beans as a spring crop, as spring wheat is almost a total failure in our neighborhood. I was thinking of planting five or six acres. If you can inform me which is the best way to plant them, in hills or drills, what distance apart, how much seed to the acre, and the best kind to plant, any information will be gladly received.

H. D., Plainville.

[We prefer drills to hills. Quantity of seed, if in drills, one to one and a half bushels to the acre; if in hills, four to six beans in each according to the distance between the hills. What kind of bean to plant? The small white is the most commonly grown. It is the most prolific, and keeps longest on sea voyages. It is always in good demand, if of a good quality. The kidney, or long white, is larger and generally better liked for table use. It takes a longer time to mature than the smaller variety; and the large marrow, a large round bean, is preferred for table use to either of the two mentioned. It matures as slowly as the kidney variety. Beans have also been sown broadcast on dry, well prepared soils, and produced heavy crops. A good crop of beans, well saved, pays well. As much as forty bushels have been raised on an acre. Twenty to thirty bushels per acre is the usual crop. Kidney and marrow beans sell for fully 25 per cent. more than the small variety.]

SIR,—As you are always willing to answer questions, I wish to enquire if barley grown in 1876 or 1877 would grow if sown next spring?

C. W. R., Cumnock, Ont.

[Barley if properly kept may grow though one or two years old. However, it is well to test it before hazarding the sowing of it. Two days testing will be enough.]