

## The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN  
THE DOMINION.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY  
THE WILLIAM WELD COMPANY (LIMITED).

JOHN WELD, MANAGER.

Agents for "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal,"  
Winnipeg, Man.

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through the sowing of old turnip, mangel and beet seed which would not germinate. No matter whether the seed looks the very best and has been grown under the best conditions or not it would generally pay to test it out for germination.

### Would He Exchange Places ?

Farming, like many other occupations, looks like the best job on earth to the man worrying over some other business. We recently overheard a well-dressed man, evidently a city businessman, remark that farming was one of the best paying occupations at the present day, and that farmers were making money faster than ever before and faster than men engaged in other forms of work. He looked only at the prices which he had to pay for farm products, forgetting entirely that the cost of production and the cost of marketing, the two main considerations in the business of farming, have increased by leaps and bounds during the past few years. Just let our city friend stop and compare the difference between ruling farm wages at present and those obtaining a few years ago, and let him also calculate, as he does in his own business, the amount of capital required to equip a farm. They all say that highest returns come from the well-equipped farm and so they do, but what is the man to do who cannot get the money to buy modern equipment throughout? And even if he can he must make interest on his investment and get wages for his labor, or his business is not a profitable one. Most things that the farmer buys to place on his farm cost more than they did a few years ago. He must have implements and machinery to take the place of high-priced labor as much as possible. His buildings cost much more to build now. His products are handled by a large number of men, all of whom must get a living profit, and labor is getting scarcer and higher-priced year after year, and according to the rapid falling off in emigration during the past two months Ontario is likely to suffer more than ever from the farm-labor famine. It is all right for the man

with the kid gloves, the hard hat, and the nicely-creased trousers to say that the farmer has the best opportunity to-day, but he might not see it in the same light were he in the high boots and farm overalls attempting to operate his farm with about half the necessary hired help at high wages, and held down by conditions which are no fault of his own. The farm is a good place for good farmers, and we advise them to stay on the land. It is a good business, but not the proverbial "gold mine" the man on the outside looking in thinks it is. Would he exchange places ?

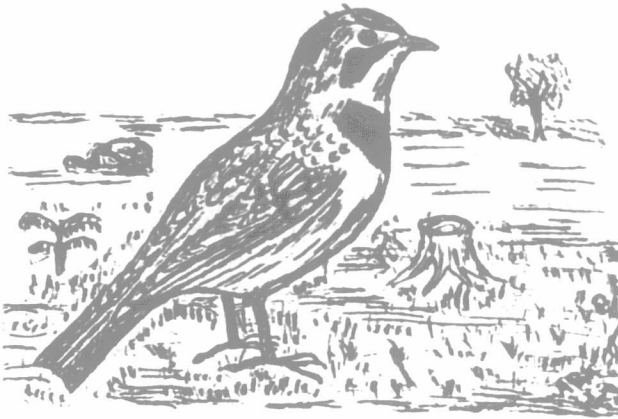
### Nature's Diary.

By A. B. Klugh, M.A.

A bird which is probably more prominent at this season of the year than at any other time is the prairie horned lark. It is certainly not particularly prominent at any time, since it is one of those grayish-colored, ground-haunting birds, which are commonly grouped together as "graybirds." This species is, however, easily told from the other species which share the common name of "graybird" by the black band on the upper part of the breast. It is the nearest ally that we have among our Canadian birds to the skylark of the Old World, and it occasionally reveals this affinity by making short flights up into the air, singing as it ascends and descends.

On the surface of the melting snow of early spring we often see little black specks which suddenly jump into the air and forward for some distance. These little insects are known as snow fleas. They jump by means of a tail-like organ, which lies folded under the abdomen when they are at rest, and which when suddenly straightened out throw them up and forward.

There is a little mammal which is common throughout Canada, and which is out and about at all seasons of the year, and yet it is so seldom seen that its very existence is unknown to the vast majority of people. It is called the common shrew. This species attains a length of three and three-quarter inches. It is slender with a long-pointed snout upon which grow long "whiskers." The tail is nearly as long as the head and body, and the coloration is dark brown above, shading gradually into gray on the underside. Thus it is somewhat mouse-like, but the larger snout and the very small ears distinguish it at once from any of the mice.



Prairie Horned Lark.

The reason that this little mammal is not more generally known is because in its hunting excursions it keeps well under cover, and about the only ways in which they come to notice are by trapping and the finding of their dead bodies. Dr. C. Hart, Merriam, one of America's foremost field naturalists, writing of the movements of this species, says: "If one is sitting quietly in the woods it sometimes happens that a slight rustling reaches the ear. There is no wind, but the eye rests upon a small leaf that seems to move. Presently another stirs and perhaps a third turns completely over. Then something evanescent, like the shadow of an embryonic mouse, appears and vanishes before the retina can catch its perfect image. Its ceaseless activity and the rapidity with which it darts from place to place is truly astonishing and rarely permits the observer a correct impression of its form."

A favorite haunt of these little animals is beneath wood-piles and logs, and they are commoner along the borders of streams than elsewhere.

The shrews are mainly insectivorous, though they devour readily animal food of any kind. Their appetites are tremendous, and it is a good thing that with meat at its present price ours are not correspondingly large, since one common shrew has been known to devour its two companions, each as heavy as itself, in eight hours.

One of the earliest birds to breed is the great horned owl, and it is now engaged in incubating its two roundish, white eggs. The nest is some-

times made in a hollow tree or in a cleft in a rock, but usually an old nest of one of the large hawks is appropriated.

This bird is the one whose loud resonant "Who—who—who—who" rings out in the still night, and to which Longfellow refers as "a monk who chants midnight mass in the great temple of nature."

Where fowls roost out in the trees at night, this fowl often avails itself of the opportunity of an easy meal, but where the hens are "brought up in the way they should go," that is, the hen house at night, it not only does no damage to poultry, but a great deal of good by destroying injurious rodents.

There is one item on the bill of fare of this species which is found on the menu of very few creatures—skunk. Many great horned owls when shot are found to smell almost as strongly as the original owner of the odor.

## THE HORSE.

### Feeding Horses.

A subscriber writes: "Would like to see Whip write some more on the feeding of horses off the floor. Would he do so in single stalls, and why is it the better way?" Hundreds of horses suffer from diseases and die as a result of over-feeding to one that suffers or dies from want of food. Most horses will eat too much if opportunity offers and, unfortunately, a large percentage of feeders provide the opportunity. The average teamster thinks it necessary to have food before the horse all the time that he is in the stable. In his opinion, it is quite proper to feed his horse in the morning and in about an hour hitch him and work him until noon; then give him food and water and in from one to one and one-half hours take him out again and work him until six o'clock or later, but on wet days or Sundays, or any day that the horse is idle from any cause, he considers that he should have food constantly before him. He thinks it is cruel to have the horse standing behind an empty manger from seven o'clock to twelve and then from one thirty to six in the evening. His theory apparently is that an idle horse requires more food than one at work. All drivers have noticed that while a horse can eat sufficient in one hour in the morning and the same length of time at noon to sustain him at regular work for five or six hours, if instead of working he is allowed to stand idle in the stable with hay or grain in his manger, he will continue to eat until, in most cases, he has either eaten all or thrown it out of the manger and trodden on it. The question might be asked: "Is it not wise to allow a horse to eat all he will?" We answer: "No." This applies particularly when he is about to be worked or driven. Most horses will eat too much bulky food. This tends to digestion trouble and renders him more or less unfit for performing his work with comfort to himself and satisfaction to his drivers for an hour or two after his meal. Horses that are performing regular work will not likely be given sufficient time to eat too much in the morning or at noon, hence should be allowed a larger quantity of bulky food at night, but not so much that there is still some before him next morning. The old-fashioned plan of feeding hay out of racks and packing the rack so full that it will last a day or two is both wasteful and harmful. In no case should a horse be given more food than he will eat in at most two hours. He then has at least a few hours rest (from eating and digesting) before his next meal, for which he will be ready and from which he will receive much more benefit and comfort than if he had been eating more or less in the meantime. For horses that are used for light work on the roads, it is good practice to feed hay only twice daily; a light feed in the morning, grain only at noon, and a reasonable amount of hay at night, but not more than will be consumed with a relish. The definite amount of hay that a horse of definite weight should be fed is hard to determine, as individualities differ so much. Some short-ribbed, light-middled horses will not eat enough hay, hence it is wise to allow them all that they will consume. One pound of hay for every hundred pounds of the animal's weight is a fair estimate fit for a daily ration. This may be fed in two meals or three meals, as expedient. This estimate is not absolute. Some horses may require a little more and others a little less. The teamster or feeder will soon determine the individuality of the horse in this respect. We claim that the hay, and, for that matter, grain also, should be fed off the floor. The normal manner of feeding is for the horse to take his food from the ground, and in all matters of this nature it is found that the nearest we can approach the nature habits of the animal the better. The getting of his mouth to the floor causes certain muscles, that otherwise would not be used, to perform their functions; it tends to strengthen