

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN
THE DOMINION.

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Protecting Birds of Plumage.

The Legislature of the State of New York is to be commended for its recent enactment protecting the lives of wild birds of plumage. It is to the effect that wild birds, other than the English sparrow, crow, hawk, crane, raven, crow-blackbird, common blackbird, kingfisher, and birds for which there is an open season, shall not be taken at any time, dead or alive, except under authority of a certificate issued under the act for scientific purposes, and under heavy bonds. No part of the plumage, skin or body of any bird protected by the section, shall be sold or had in possession for sale. Nests of the protected birds must not be robbed or destroyed except when necessary to protect buildings or to prevent their defacement.

Birds or game (except fish taken in the State) shall not be transported without the State, nor be taken or possessed with that intent. Any person who violates any provisions of the act is guilty of a misdemeanor and is liable to a penalty of \$50, and to an additional penalty of \$25 for each bird or part of bird taken or possessed in violation thereof. We hope to hear that the new law will be rigidly enforced. When we consider the rapid increase of insect pests, preying upon the grain, fruit and other crops of the farmer, these birds of plumage must be regarded as his very best friends, to say nothing of the added charm of their cheerful songs and appearance in the trees about the homestead or in the woods. Their slaughter, out of pure wantonness, by boys or young men, so called, or to minister needlessly to human vanity in the form of millinery, ought to be firmly put down by the State. We are satisfied that if women would give this matter a second thought they would do a great deal to protect the lives of these beautiful friends of agriculture by abstaining from purchasing the adornments of plumage, feathers or bonnets.

Rural Mail Delivery.

At the recent annual meeting of the East Middlesex (Ont.) Farmers' Institute, the subject of the free delivery of mail daily in the country was discussed and the principle endorsed by the unanimous adoption of the following report from a committee to which the preparation of a suitable resolution had been referred:—

"We, a committee appointed by your Institute to draft a resolution dealing with the question of 'Rural Mail Delivery,' beg to report that we consider the time has come when the farmers and all residents of rural districts should have a daily mail delivery, and we recommend that this Institute adopt this resolution requesting the Postmaster-General to use his influence in that direction; and, further, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Superintendent of Institutes, requesting him to bring this matter to the notice of other Institutes."

(Signed) J. K. LITTLE,
THOS. KNAPTON, } Committee.
R. H. HARDING, }
A. M. MUNRO, Secretary.

Though at first regarded as impracticable on account of the expenditure involved, the rural free delivery of letters and papers in the United States is steadily growing since its first trial in 1836. It now includes 383 distributing points in 41 of the 45 States, the exceptions being Idaho, Montana, Mississippi, and Wyoming, the appropriation increasing from \$20,000 to \$300,000. At the head of the States served by rural free delivery is Ohio, the most favored State, with forty-nine routes, Indiana having forty-four, and Iowa twenty-three. Thus in Texas there are only two rural free delivery routes, while in South Carolina there are twenty-one. In Washington there is one only, while in California there are fourteen, and in Louisiana, Alabama and Florida there are three routes only, while in Maine there are seven. In the opinion of post-office authorities, however, the present system is only in its incipiency, and among the plans in view for its further extension is one for rural free delivery of mail by electric cars. One remarkable and salutary effect of the extension of the rural free delivery system has been the great improvement it has brought about in country roads. The extension of the system being optional with the government, the plan has been adopted of favoring those regions in which the roads are best, and as a consequence there has been a general improvement in the condition of roads traversed by rural carriers. This has been especially the case in the west, and it accounts for the apparent preference accorded to Ohio and Indiana, in which States the construction of good roads has been a prerequisite to the establishment of a rural free delivery service. In one county in Indiana the farmers incurred an expense of \$2,600 to grade and improve a road in order to obtain free delivery. Referring to this advantage of the system, Mr. E. E. Rothermel, an Indiana farmer, writes:—

"Being a patron of a rural free delivery route, I know the value of it, and also its advantages. At this time of year it is often very inconvenient for the farmers who live from three to five miles from the post office to get their mail regularly if they must go after it, as they are too busy during the day and too tired at night. Then during the winter it is often very stormy and disagreeable. As the farmer has more time to read during the winter, it is a great convenience to have his papers brought to the door, no matter how the weather is. It is also a great advantage in mailing letters. The farmer very often has stock or grain to sell; if he can get his paper regular he can see the markets daily and will have a good idea of their condition. A great many think if they have free delivery they will be taxed extra to pay for it, but this is a mistake. The farmer has just as much right to demand free delivery as the city people. Rural free delivery has proven such a success that more routes are being established all the time. Some of the requirements to secure free delivery are good roads, the signature of the heads of one hundred or more families on a route of not less than twenty miles. The route must be so located that the carrier can travel it and not double any part of the road. Each patron must provide a suitable box for receiving the mail, and all the boxes must be located on the route, as the carrier does not drive in to houses off the road. Applications for routes must be made to the post-office department through your representative in Congress. Rural route No. 1, Richmond, Ind., is about twenty-three miles long. Our carrier gets around very regularly, varying but a few minutes from day to day. The mail comes every day in the year except Sundays and legal holidays. The carrier of route No. 1 receives \$100 a year and furnishes his own rig. He goes in a one-horse buggy and has a change of horses. He never stops for bad weather."

The farm industry is enjoying a prosperous season in Eastern Canada, pastures and prices of the product being good.

Salt Packages.

Through the efforts of Mr. R. Holmes, M. P., member for West Huron, Ont., a bill has passed its third reading at Ottawa amending the Weights and Measures Act as it affects packages of salt. According to this new Act every barrel of salt packed in bulk, sold or offered for sale shall contain 280 lbs. of salt, and every such barrel or sack of salt sold or offered for sale shall have the correct gross weight thereof, and in case of a barrel, the net weight also marked upon it in a plain and permanent manner. It is also required that the name or the registered trade-mark of the packer of this salt, if it is packed in Canada, or the name and address of the importer if it is packed elsewhere than in Canada, shall be marked, stamped or branded on every barrel or sack of salt sold or offered for sale in Canada.

Some Phases of Breeding.

The statement attributed to the Nebraska breeder who said, "Whether inbreeding or out-crossing, the breeder is a fool who uses animals that have defects which are objectionable, and my experience leads me to believe that when perfect or nearly perfect sires and dams are used there is no danger to be feared from the very closest inbreeding," is an extreme one. Many men who are not fools do things which are not wise, and sometimes animals that are in some respects defective have qualities that it may be desirable to perpetuate, though it is sometimes a very close question whether, in case of unsoundness which is known to be hereditary, if it is not better to forego the advantage of these good qualities than to take the risk of repeating the bad ones. It is not extreme to say, however, that it is always unwise to inbreed at all closely in a strain afflicted with hereditary unsoundness. That a great deal too much of this has been done by gentlemen who are enthusiasts for some particular lines of breeding is undoubted, and in spite of the manifest objections to it, it is equally certain that much more greatly infatuated with the merits of an animal that they will run any risk in order to reproduce his qualities, and even inbreed to him when the almost certain effect will be a reproduction of an unsoundness, and possibly its indefinite multiplication. It may possibly be true that all of the evil resulting from inbreeding is due to the intensification of defects, and that were sires and dams absolutely perfect, inbreeding might possibly proceed *ad infinitum* without injurious results. But such a thing as a perfect sire or dam cannot be found, and when one inbreeds at all he is sure to have some common defects in sires and dams. If these are not glaring, they may not become appreciable in the first few crosses, but as the inbreeding proceeds the intensification of defects increases, and a fault that may have been very slight in the first two or three crosses may before a great while be very much exaggerated.

There is now getting to be a pretty strong consanguinity between the different members of the whole trotting family. They are now pretty nearly all Hambletonians and Membrinos. In a very few years there will not be a trotting horse in America that does not trace to one or both of these strains, and in most of them these strains will be repeated. There will have been, however, a very great number of out-crosses absorbed, and in so many thousands of different proportions and in such an immense number of different admixtures that this general inbreeding is not apt to be hurtful, as inbreeding—possibly it will not be more than enough to give the proper homogeneity to the entire family. The fact that with nearly every instance of inbreeding there is an out-cross will be of immense value in preserving the great bulk of the family from the effects of too close inbreeding. We do not think there has ever been any great danger on this score at any rate. Another thing that to a certain extent exercises a counter-acting influence is the almost perpetual change of location and surroundings that our horses are undergoing, thus furnishing an almost continuous climatic out-cross, and while the effects of this may be at times exaggerated, there is no doubt that it is considerable. There are a good many very well known cases where stallions that have been failures in particular sections have changed their locality and become very successful sires.

While there are a few breeders that are apt to inbreed unwisely and to carry their inbreeding too far, we do not believe that the number of these is very great. There are more that are willing to take all sorts of risks of unsoundness to get speed, and this probably is the greatest fault of ambitious breeders. Some appear to be rather indifferent as to the future soundness of their stock. They are encouraged in this by the fact that so many foals escape the unsoundness of their parents, although of course this immunity may only be temporary with the individual and the unsoundness may reappear with the next generation. It is true also that an hereditary unsoundness is very liable to reappear in the offspring, when it reappears at all, at about the age it came on the ancestor from whom it was derived. This fact makes breeding from unsound ancestry appear more innocent than it really is—the bad effects being postponed. We frequently hear it said of a stallion, "He has never been known to get an unsound foal." This may be very true, and yet the horse be a very unsound breeder, the unsoundness rarely appearing at a very early age, but usually developing in the matured or partially matured horse.—*Kentucky Stock Farm.*