

## The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE  
DOMINION.

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growth which will come through the next few years, and the buildings made large enough accordingly. There were those who complained when the present Winter Fair structure was completed that it would never be filled, but it was filled the first year and has overflowed ever since. It must still be remembered that even Old Ontario is a young country and is growing fast agriculturally, notwithstanding the fact that large numbers of her farm-born sons and daughters migrate to the West or to the cities. We have faith in the Winter Fair, and we would like to see it in a home big enough to show it off to the best advantage for both exhibitors and spectators. Little can be done in the way of increased accommodation until the close of the war, but plans may be developed to be put in operation when conditions right themselves. It is time now to be thinking in preparation for the action which must come later.

### Col. George Harvey on the War.

A close and capable observer of public affairs, Col. George Harvey, editor of the North American Review and formerly editor of Harper's Weekly, after a sojourn in Great Britain, where he conferred with members of the government and personally inspected the reserves, an immense army of 4,000,000 men, expressed his absolute certainty, as to the outcome of the war in triumph for the Allies and the overthrow of Germany, not by starvation as some imagine, but from the force without. What impressed Col. Harvey next to the immense British army in the making, was the wonderful development by the government of the department of munitions, which controls over one million men and women, and which, as by magic, had transformed the balance of shell power within one year, from three to one in favor of the enemy to five to one in favor of the Allies. Germany might fight on for a couple of years and perhaps longer, but they were destined to be thoroughly beaten. The claim which has been made by some newspaper correspondents that to ensure victory Britain needed a strong, dominating personality to dictate the war, Col. Harvey set down as absurd. There is no such personage in the world to-day, no Crom-

well, no Napoleon. The nearest approach to it was the Kaiser himself, but not because he is a super-man but because he is an absolute monarch and head of the Hohenzollern House. As far as the end was concerned his victories were hollow, and the German Chancellor's recent speech before the Reichstag merely bluff. The war was different from other wars, and in its various aspects must continue to be administered by groups of able men. In conclusion, however, he paid a tribute to David Lloyd-George, who had shown a marvellous grasp of affairs, and developed into a statesman of the first magnitude.

### Get the Most for Your Money.

Subscribers have many times told us that our annual Christmas number was worth more than the subscription price for one year. Other subscribers have said that the answer to one question has saved them many times the price of the paper. Our columns are filled 52 weeks in every year with the most advanced writings of the most capable, practical agriculturists in Canada. Our editors are practical men. We give from 2000 to 2300 pages of farm information yearly. No farmer can afford to miss this. You cannot get equal value in any other paper in this country. Our illustrations are in a class by themselves. The Home Magazine is outstanding. Renew now. Get a new subscriber. Your own and a new subscription at \$2.25 from now to the end of 1916. This offer is only good until Dec. 31st. Just a few days left. Remember the new subscriber gets a copy of our Half Century Christmas issue, the best of its kind ever published. After Jan. 1, the regular subscription price, \$1.50 per year, will obtain. Get the paper that is worth paying for and gives you most value. You cannot expect something for nothing, but you get more for your \$1.50 in the old, reliable Farmer's Advocate than you can get for the money spent in any other way.

### Nature's Diary.

A. B. Klugh, M.A.

During the winter most of the small mammals which are common in the settled parts of Canada are underground, sleeping the deep sleep of hibernation. There is one little mammal, however, which is always in evidence, one which is very common in all parts of the country where there are trees—the Red Squirrel.

We have in Canada several sub-species, or geographical races of this species which differ in size and coloration from one another. The race of the Maritime Provinces is small and dark-colored, the tail is dark with a red fringe, and the breast is sprinkled with gray in winter. The race which is found in Ontario, as far north as a line running from Ottawa to the lower boundary of Muskoka, is large, very red above, and always pure white beneath. The race of our southern Rockies is very large, olive above and tinged with rust-yellow on the under-parts. The race which inhabits our west coast has the tail blackish above and the under-parts tinged with brownish. Over the rest of Canada, from the Yukon to Labrador, and thus found in all our northern forests, is the race which is olive, sprinkled with gray above, becoming redder on the legs, tail and ears, white beneath in summer, and white sprinkled with gray beneath in winter, and a broad band of black near the end of the tail. All the races have a blackish band extending along the sides in summer, which is lost in the winter pelage.

Like most of our wild mammals the home territory of the Red Squirrel is small, Seton, after much careful study, placing its area at about ten acres. This comparatively small home area is of a decided advantage to it, as it knows this territory intimately. It knows what jumps from tree to tree it can make and what jumps are impossible; it knows each hole in which it can hide,

whether the hole be in a tree or in the ground. Thus when pursued it knows refuges and how to get to them. N. V. Freeman, who is a close student of wild life, tells me that he has seen a Red Squirrel going along the branches of certain trees and cutting off twigs which projected upwards from them, then going along these branches from tree to tree several times, and cutting off more projecting twigs. After some time spent in this way it went over the whole route at full speed. Mr. Freeman is certain that the Squirrel was "road-making," and clearing obstructions from its path among the tree-tops.

Red Squirrels apparently mate for life, though the evidence on this point is not conclusive. The young are usually born in the early part of May, though some litters are considerably later. There are five or six young in a litter, and only one litter in a year. The nest in which they are born is usually a hole in a tree, very frequently in the abandoned home of a Flicker, (High-holder, Yellow-hammer, and Golden-Winged Woodpecker, are other common names for this bird) though often in globular nests among the tree-tops. These latter nests are often old Crows' or Hawks' nests which the Squirrels have roofed over with leaves, pine-needles and strips of Cedar bark, or they may rest on platforms which the Squirrels have built themselves of short branches and twigs. The roofs of these outside nests are made quite water-proof, as those which have been examined after heavy rains have been found perfectly dry inside. The young are weaned late in August, and the family breaks up in October.

The food of the Red Squirrel is extremely varied. In summer it feeds on seeds, berries and fleshy fungi. In the fall on the seeds of coniferous trees, nuts and acorns. In the winter it feeds on seeds and nuts which it has stored up during the late summer and autumn, and on the seeds of the Hemlock, which remain in the cones all winter. The hoards which the Squirrel lays up are stored either in hollow trees or in vaults underground. Before storing them they are sorted over and prepared: all unsound nuts, husks, etc., being rejected. This preparation is usually done in one particular place, such as the top of a stump, and such workshops are marked by heaps of empty nuts, husks and debris of cones, and are never very near the food-store.

The Red Squirrel also stores up fleshy fungi for the winter, placing them in the forked branches of the trees, where they dry up and remain in good condition and available at any time. Speaking of the gathering of these fungi Seton says, "I was once witness of a comic display of frugality and temper on the part of a Red Squirrel. A heavy footfall on the leaves held me still to listen. Then appeared a Red Squirrel laboring hard to drag an enormous mushroom. Presently it caught in a branch, and the savage jerk he gave to free it resulted in the "handle" coming off. The Squirrel chattered and scolded, then seized the disk, but again had the misfortune to break it, and now exploded in wrathful sputterings. Eventually, however, he went off with the largest piece and came back for the fragments one by one."

In the spring the Squirrel drinks the sap of the Maple, sometimes making incisions for itself, often taking advantage of the "tapping" done by the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

While the foregoing items make up the bulk of the Red Squirrel's diet there is another item which sometimes appears on its menu, an item which makes some inclined to condemn this species as injurious and advocate its extermination—the eggs and young of birds. That a good many nests are rifled by Red Squirrels is undoubtedly true, but it strikes me that to urge extermination of this familiar and interesting little mammal is too far-fetched, though in any particular locality in which Red Squirrels are abundant and birds rather scarce, a reduction in the number of Squirrels might be advisable.

This species is a good swimmer, swimming with much of the head back and tail out of the water.

The tail of the Squirrel is an important part of its equipment. It acts as a rudder in its long leaps from branch to branch, and also as a parachute in case of a fall. In the case of those which have lost their tails it has always been observed that they soon disappear.

Though the Red Squirrel is such a common and familiar animal our knowledge of its life and habits are yet incomplete. Do they pair for life? How long do they live in their wild state? Are any ever poisoned by poisonous fungi? These and many other questions remain to be answered, and I would suggest to the readers of "The Farmer's Advocate" that they observe this species carefully and report to me the result of their observations. In studying any wild animal the habits of the individual are the hardest to ascertain, because it is so hard to recognize individuals, and anyone who has the chance to observe an individual which is peculiarly marked and thus can be identified should make the most of such an opportunity.

Ontario has again demonstrated that live stock is the backbone of agriculture.

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