

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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the benefits to be derived by the people as a whole, and the future vitality of the nation from the existence of a farming community, 1st, Contented because their conditions are equitable compared with those of other classes; 2nd, Educated aright beginning in the public schools, and 3rd, properly compensated for labor and investment, one must confess to astonishment that so little care and attention by statesmen has been given to this, the foundation of all the nation's activities.

Opportunity Close at Hand.

How often we do not make the most of our opportunities or possibilities right at home. The President of the Bank of Commerce, at that institution's last annual meeting, placed emphasis upon the fact that including the new district of Patricia, Ontario's 14,000,000 of acres under cultivation represents only seven per cent. of her land area. Yet with all this land uncultivated and waiting the settler, all eyes have been attracted to the four provinces of the West, and the young people who did not go to the city went West. Why go West if there is an equally good opportunity in the home province? This applies to the other provinces of the East. Far off fields are green, and their verdure draws with such irresistible force that many easily overcome the diminishing pull of the old home section and fly away to make their fortunes. Some succeed; some fail.

What province is there in Canada, this great and growing young country, which does not offer plenty of opportunity to the energetic? All the provinces have good land and poor, and every new settler or old in making a change should have a clear understanding of the district into which he goes—its advantages, its drawbacks, its assurance of success and its chances of defeat and failure. What is the use of locating people in sections of country in any of our provinces, the very character of which indelibly stamps those who live in them failures? There is plenty of good land—productive land lying idle in our eastern provinces awaiting the sturdy settler, but the man looking for a new home must make the most of his time spent in choosing. The best

districts should be settled first. Land which from its rocky nature and scant fertility was never intended for cultivation should not be settled with that end in view, and undue advertising of it while better country lies idle is not in the best interests of progress. What can a man accomplish tied to a farm which will not grow anything, and surrounded by just such land and conditions which arise from it? There is an excuse for the man so situated not making good, but none for the man on good soil who neglects to make the best use of his land and his location.

Let us not think of this in provincial-wide scope, however. Take the matter nearer home. How many farms in your own locality have changed hands and their former owners have gone to new districts, while under new management the old farm has paid and paid well? And again mayhap there are still some farms half worked and unprofitable, manned with dissatisfied would-be-millionaires, if work and good management were not required to gain that end. We may not be cultivating more than one-seventh of our available land, and yet much of that small area now under the plow is not worked at the profit it should be. In many cases a smaller acreage well tilled would yield better returns than the large area "scratched over." Whether we go east or west or north or south in this Dominion there is land and opportunity, but it must not be forgotten that if located in a productive, thriving section of the older provinces there is, provided the same amount of energy is put into it as is done in the newer sections, plenty of chance to improve position, and if new fields are to be conquered they are often present near our own doors in sufficient number to warrant attention. Comparatively only a small area is cultivated, but our oldest fields have not yet been worn so threadbare that they should be discarded. They still will make a respectable appearance if well cared for. All the land of opportunity is not in the far west or the far north. Some of it is nearer home. When we have more people engaged in agriculture then will the area of cultivated land extend rapidly, but not while all eyes are turned towards the city or towards other provinces.

Nature's Diary.

By A. B. Klugh, M.A.

"The busy Nuthatch climbs his tree
Around the great bole spirally,
Peeping into wrinkles gray,
Under ruffled lichens gay."

A little bird we see quite frequently in winter is the white-breasted Nuthatch, and its loud "quank-quank-quank" note is a cheerful sound in the winter stillness.

Most birds have at least some preference for keeping "right side up with care"; the Nuthatch has no such preference, right side up or up side down is all the same to it, and I am not at all



White-breasted Nuthatch.

sure but that it prefers the inverted attitude. This peculiarity has given it the name "Devil-downhead" by which it is known in some localities. In color the white-breasted Nuthatch is bluish grey above with white throat and breast and reddish underparts. The sides of the head are white, and a black cap extends back upon the neck. The wing feathers are dark brown edged with pale grey. The middle tail feathers are bluish grey like the back; the others are dark brown and tipped with white in such a manner

that when the tail is spread it shows a broad white border on both sides. The feet are well adapted for clinging to the bark as the front toes are strong and the hind toe is very long and has a long sharp claw. The bill of the Nuthatch is really straight, but has the appearance of pointing upwards a little because of the upward curve of the lower mandible.

The name Nuthatch is derived from the habit which these birds sometimes exhibit of wedging a nut or acorn in a crevice of the bark, and "hatching" it open with the bill. As far as my personal experience goes with our two Canadian species this habit is a rare one, and it is a point upon which I should like to hear from readers of "Nature's Diary."

One winter a white-breasted Nuthatch furnished me with a good deal of entertainment. The next-door neighbors used to leave the slit in the double window of their pantry open, and keep their butter-dish just inside on the inner window sill. This Nuthatch would come down from the tree at the back of the house, perch on our fence, take a sharp look round, and then fly down to the window sill of the pantry. It would then take another look round, crawl in through the slit, peck out a piece of butter, emerge with it in its bill and fly off. I daresay the neighbors laid the blame on mice, particularly as one day the Nuthatch flew off with a piece of cheese.

This species is not only an interesting and cheerful friend in the winter, but it is decidedly beneficial as far as its food habits are concerned. Over half its food consists of insects and spiders, the rest being made up of nuts, acorns and large seeds. Mr. McAtee, of the United States Biological Survey, mentions it as one of the enemies of the Codling moth.

The white-breasted Nuthatch is a common resident in Canada from the Atlantic coast as far west as Western Ontario. The nest of this species is made either in the old woodpecker's hole in the trunk of a tree or it is cut in the rotten wood of a half-decayed tree by the birds themselves. Sometimes it is lined with hair and feathers, and sometimes leaves also are used as a lining. The eggs are from six to eight in number, and are white, spotted thickly with reddish brown.

The Farmer's Boys and Girls.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

What is the farm going to do for young folks? A few days ago I was running over in my mind the changes which have taken place in our neighborhood since we moved on the farm, now almost a quarter of a century ago, and I was startled to find that there are almost no young folks left here. Where there once were from three to five or six boys and girls in every farmer's family, now they have grown up and gone—where? Who knows? It would be a wonderful story if we could have it all written up. On these places, instead of boys and girls and young folks, we now find on one farm a man and his wife well past middle age; on another an old man with a maiden daughter for a housekeeper, but not a son left, although he had several; on still another a man and his wife both well along in years, he a cripple and she nearly blind, with no son or daughter to care for them, and so it goes, until one becomes almost discouraged thinking of the present and the still more important future and wonders what is to come out of this dearth of young men and women.

The shops and factories of a city a few miles away have swallowed up many of these boys and girls, others have gone away to be teachers, while still others are now in professional life or away at college. The work is done very nearly exclusively by hired hands, who, as a rule, do not care much how they do it, if only they get their pay, or else by renters, whose object seems to be to get what they can out of the land and when it is exhausted go somewhere else and repeat the operation.

On a good many farms of our township we may now find people who have the characteristics described by Prof. Ross in a recent article on the immigrant as being "hirsute, low-browed, big-faced persons of obviously low mentality," in every face of whom "there is something wrong." Very different are these men and women from the class of people who came to us in the past, who are now becoming the farmers of our country. What changes these people may work out in the course of time in the destiny of our country we must leave to time to determine. The point we are now considering is, that the boys and girls of the native settlers are going and their places being filled by a strange class of men and women, who are not governed as yet by the high ideals that once swayed the farmer folk of this nation.

Our young folk go from the farm for different reasons. Some of them are led away by the short hours and the attractive life of the shops and the mills. Some have a natural bent toward other occupations, some do not know why they do want to go, save that others are going