

BIRDS AS A PROTECTION AGAINST INJURIOUS INSECTS.

A correspondent of the *Indian Agriculturist*, published at Colombo, Ceylon, relates the systematic methods used to domesticate insect-eating birds in the cultivated plantations as a protection against injurious insects, which in that tropical climate are very destructive. Among the most useful birds is the magpie robin, which, from the description given of its habits, we judge is a family connection at least of our robin red-breast. The method of domesticating them is given as follows, and is worthy of the attention of fruit growers in this country:—

"We attach chatties or flowerpots, with suitable holes in them, to the wall, in places where no cat can reach them, and so arranged that the crows cannot get at the eggs or young ones. These are intended as breeding places, and in most cases instinct tells cock robin and his mate that they are safe harbors of refuge. After due inspection—for he is a knowing and a cunning little dodger—he will hop in, hop out, hop on to the top of his chatty, and pour forth his long shrill notes of love and approval. In a day or two the materials for the nest begin to arrive, and one then knows all is right, and we betide the impudent crow whose curiosity may lead him to be too inquisitive. In due course the period of incubation is completed, and the process of grubbing commences, the two parents incessantly bringing caterpillars for the young.

"When the little ones are nearly fledged we remove them from the nest, and place them in a good roomy wicker cage, outside, but protected from rain. The parent birds now get very excited, and express their disapproval of these proceedings with harsh screeches, and cock robin no doubt is highly indignant at the liberties taken with his offspring. Gradually, however, he and mother robin get reconciled, and go on assiduously stuffing the young with caterpillars or larvæ through the bars of their cage. In this case the young undergo an imprisonment of six weeks, during which time the dietary arrangements are entirely left for the parents to settle. At the expiry of their term of servitude the youngsters are liberated. They are, of course, delighted, overjoyed, and show their gratitude by still remaining near the compound, to which they have become attached, and by regularly visiting our pot plants, and rose trees, till not a vestige of a poochie can be found.

"We were very anxious to get at some reliable statistics as to the number of larvæ a family of robins would destroy in a day, and had a careful hand told off, to take tally of the number of trips the male and female each made to their young with food, during the entire day. He was furnished with a pencil and a board, and stationed close to the cage, and whenever cock-robin arrived with a mouthful of caterpillars, down went a x; and whenever old mother robin came, down went a 1. On reckoning up the crosses and strokes, for three successive days, we arrived at the following average result, viz:—

	Per day,
"Cock Robin, 92 trips a day,	} 213 trips.
"Mother Robin, 121 trips a day,	
"Take the average to be two larvæ at each trip (a low estimate); then larvæ—double the number of trips, or—426 larvæ.	

"As the cage on this occasion contained two young ones, the allowance for each bird was 213 larvæ.

"Now, even say the adults will not require more larvæ than the number they gave their young, viz.: 213 each, we arrive at 852 larvæ per day, for the four birds, or 35,784 for the six weeks the young are in confinement.

"Again, at and in the neighborhood of the nursery grounds and garden, we have at least five

families of say six each, including the adult birds, i. e., 30 birds, each capturing 213 larvæ daily; then for the year of 365 days, [The birds do not migrate as in this country, ED.] we arrive at the enormous number of 2,332,350 destructive larvæ captured by the five families of robins.

"In this calculation, you will see, we have not allowed more food for the adult birds, than was sufficient for the young in confinement, and we think one half more might, with safety, be added to the number of larvæ destroyed. It is better, however, to be on the safe side, and these figures as they stand are sufficiently startling."

When is the safest time to buy the draught horse stallion in England? is a question which some of our foreign contemporaries seem to be asking. The best time to see a draught horse stallion is in the middle of his season, when he is in his natural condition. Then he is to be found in fair good working order, not rolling in beef and not lean and lank. Those who buy at our stallion shows run a great risk, and if foreigners really wish to have something to take away with them, they should make their selections in autumn. Of course, certified stock-getting horses are always safe to purchase at the spring shows, but the certificates in our opinion should be more reliable if a foreign market is to be established. There can be nothing more dissatisfactory in trade than to see a foreigner buy a stock certificated stallion, and watch him pay freight, insurance and all, and so off with an animal which is less worthy in value than a clothes horse. Such things have happened frequently of late years. —*London Live Stock Journal*.

Live Stock & Kindred Markets.

OFFICE OF THE CANADIAN BREEDER
AND AGRICULTURAL REVIEW.

TORONTO, Dec. 2nd, 1885.

There has been no change in the general condition of the British cattle trade and latest cables indicate that no new developments have taken place. The colder weather, however, has created a slight improvement in the meat markets, which show some advance as compared with a week ago. The improvement in cattle has been maintained, although demand has not been active. Receipts from Canada and the United States have been of fair proportions, while the general supplies have been ample, but not any larger than during the previous week. There has been a moderate to fair enquiry from buyers, who, however, are not anxious to go in heavily. Home trade has been of a quiet character. Sellers have held the advance fully and are opposed to forcing matters as the winter receipts from this side will not be heavy. At Liverpool on Monday trade was quiet but steady in tone, although a good supply was offered.

MONTREAL.

Quotations at Liverpool on Monday, being calculated at \$4.80 in the £, were:

Cattle—	\$ c.	\$ c.	
Prime Canadian steers.....	0 12½	to 0 00	per lb.
Fair to choice grades	0 12	to 0 00	"
Poor to medium.....	0 11	to 0 00	"
Inferior and bulls.....	0 08½	to 0 10	"

TORONTO.

Receipts of live stock at the Western Cattle Market keep up very well, and for several weeks past have been in excess of those for the same time last year as well as for the year before. The demand generally has been good and a brisk business has been done. Prices rule much about the same as a week ago, there being no change of importance to note.

CATTLE—There was a fair enquiry for shipping cattle yesterday, but none were offered; values are nominal at 4 to 4½c. per lb. for choice, with extra 1,400 beeves ¼c. higher. Butchers' cattle show no change; supplies yesterday were sufficient; quite a few good were offered, but the majority were second and third class qualities; for the former there was an active demand, but the latter were somewhat slow; it is not possible to make any change in the table of quotations; good loads sold at 3½ to 3¾c. per lb. and small lots of choice at 4c.; among the sales were 11 head, averaging 1,000lbs., at \$30 each; 4 do., 1,025lbs., at \$38; 10 do., 1,000lbs., at \$31; 11 do., 1,100lbs., at \$32; 20 do., 1,050lbs., at \$41; 22 do., 1,050lbs., at \$32.50; 22 do., 1,075lbs., at \$37; 20 do., 1,100lbs., at 3¾c. per lb.; 7 do., 1,000lbs., at \$33 each; 8 do., 1,200lbs., at \$46. Feeders were in fair demand, and almost enough were secured yesterday to fill the stables at the distillery here; a few farmers were also on the market, but they did not buy many; prices ruled unchanged at 2¾ to 3¼c. per lb. for fair to choice loads, with bulls at 2 to 3c. Milch cows and springers in good demand; offerings continue light; one extra milker sold yesterday at \$53; a pair with calves changed hands at \$100; another fairish cow sold for \$36; one springer also sold at that figure; strippers are worth \$20 to \$28.

SHEEP—Are in good demand for export; by the dollars they are worth \$4.50 to \$5 each; only a few are offering; a couple of bunches offered yesterday changed hands at \$4.50; they averaged 140lbs. each.

LAMBS—Coming in more freely; prices are steady and yesterday's sales were made at very good figures, still it would take but a slight increase in the run to cause a drop in values; some very choice bunches have been offering and good prices have been realized, among yesterday's sales were 73 lambs, all ewes and wethers, averaging over 100lbs. at \$4.10 each; 49 head, about 100lbs., at \$3.75; 98 do., 90lbs., at \$3.50; 129 do., 92lbs., at \$3.60; 25 do., 90lbs., at \$3.60.

CALVES—Quiet, but choice grades will sell well. **HOGS**—Demand continues good, receipts this week are not large; a bunch of mixed sold yesterday at \$4.05 per cwt.; light are in good demand at 4 to 4½c. per lb.; heavy slightly firmer than a week ago at 3½ to 3¾c. per lb.; stores sell readily at 3¼ to 4c. per lb.

Quotations are:

Cattle, export, 1,200 lbs. and upwards,	
heifers and steers, choice	4 to 4½ per lb.
" Mixed	3½ to 4 "
" Butchers' choice	3½ to 4 "
" " good	3½ to 3½ "
" " inferior to common ..	2½ to 3 "
" Milch cows, per head	\$25 to \$50
" Stockers, heavy	2½ to 3½ per lb.
" " light	2 to 2½ "
" Bulls	2 to 3 "
" Springers, per head	\$25 to \$45
Sheep, export, choice	3 to 3½ per lb.
" inferior and rams	"
" Butchers' per head	\$2.50 to \$3.25
" Lambs, choice, per head	\$3.50 to \$4.10
" " inferior to common per	"
head	\$2.50 to \$3.00
Hogs, heavy fat, weighed off the car	3½ to 3¾ per lb.
" Light fat, " " " "	4 to 4½ "
" Store " " " "	3½ to 4 "
Calves, per head, choice	\$5.00 to \$8.00
" Common	\$2.00 upwards.

The receipts of live stock at the Western market here for the week ending last Saturday, with comparisons, were as follows:

	Cattle.	Sheep and Lambs.	Hogs.
Week ending Nov. 28 ..	1,387	1,355	717
Week ending Nov. 21 ..	1,716	1,091	1,085
Cor. week 1884	967	873	1,125
Cor. week 1883	821	541	166
Total to date	53,558	59,420	16,635
To same date 1884	39,244	57,902	12,658
To same date 1883	32,530	47,151	8,171

MONTREAL.

The export cattle trade has ruled quiet, as might be expected, after the close of navigation. About 560 head, however, have left to take the Carthaginian at Halifax for Glasgow. Offerings of export stock have been light and demand slow. A few sales have been made at 4c. per lb. live weight. There was a good demand for butchers' cattle at 2½c. to 3½c. per lb. live weight. Choice beeves, however, were scarce, but larger receipts are expected, as the Christmas markets are coming on, when choice cattle will sell well. Receipts of hogs have been large, but demand was slow at 4½c. per lb. for the best. Sheep were steady at 4c., and calves sold at \$4 to \$8 each as to quality.

EAST BUFFALO.

Nov. 30.—Cattle—Arrivals were very heavy, about 225 loads being among the fresh receipts, while there were five loads held over from Saturday's trade. The market opened with a fairly good demand, but later was duller. The quality of the supply was better than last week, there being