

THE PLOW-BOY'S INSPIRATION.

He had followed the plow, this youth, for days,
From early morn till evening shade,
And the loosened earth, turned up to the rays
Of the sun, in many a furrow laid.

But now he turns from the plow away,
Pausing to listen again and again,
What melody charms the youth to day,
Is it cow bells tinkling adown the lane?

O, is it the coo of the turtle dove,
Woefully calling her wandering mate—
"Come back, come back to your own true love;
Don't elsewhere seek for a happier state?"

No, no; but his listening ear has caught
The sound of music from far away,
Inspiring him with the glowing thought
That burdens the new-found minstrel's lay.

And this is the strain of the minstrel's lyre:
"For toil there is recompense; labor is meet;
But the seats of honor reach higher and higher,
And the humblest may rise from seat to seat."

Though the cowbells tinkle down the lane,
And the dove sings woefully up in the tree,
The bell's tinkle and the dove's refrain,
Harm never so much as that melody.

But harken, youth, in the hush of that song,
This chorus comes to the tutored ear,
With a mawkish cadence floating along,
A sad interlude to the strain you hear:

"To the worthy, seated on Honor's throne
The statesman filling the chair of state,
The judge on the bench, little rest is known,
Mock-rose and flattery woo the great?"

The seekers for glory have seldom found
In hard-earned honors more pleasures than pain,
But harken again from seed in the ground
Will grow abundance of golden grain;

And yearly the sheaves in the farmer's barn
Be piled till they up to the rafters climb,
And the scented hay and the ripened corn
Be stored away for the winter time.

The farmer is promised a new reward,
In the fruits of the field and the orchard and stall;
With heaven's blessings on land and lord
To mortal no happier lot could fall.

In his peaceful home, in a quiet nook,
Away from the world's turmoil and strife,
With friends and plenty, and little to brook,
The proudest might envy him such a life.

Inspiring the strain of the minstrel's lyre:
"For toil there is recompense; labor is meet;
But the seats of honor reach higher and higher,
And the humblest may rise from seat to seat."

But sweet the refrain of the turtle-dove,
Woefully calling her wandering mate—
"Come back, come back to your own true love;
Don't elsewhere seek for a happier state?"

—Scribbled.

ACCLIMATISATION.

Our failures in the acclimatisation of vegetable life have almost always been due to sentiment. The useful plants and trees have, as a rule, flourished admirably. For example, Mr. J. A. Froude states in his "Oceana" that the oats, barley, peas, beans, and potatoes were produced in such luxuriance in Ballarat that he could believe Herodotus's account of the crops grown on the plains of Babylon. A reaping machine had stopped in a field of oats, the stems of which stood up like a wall, and seemed as if no horse could force a passage through them. For seventeen successive years the ground had been cropped, and not a particle of manure had been put upon it. The strangest point about it was that there were no weeds, and Mr. Froude offers the rather bold suggestion that "weeds are said to be a product of high civilisation, and do not exist in nature."

Almost the only failure in useful plants has been the watercress. Introduced some years ago in New Zealand, it has spread as rapidly as did the "American weed" in our own country, choking up the rivers, and involving the annual outlay of many thousand pounds in keeping the rivers sufficiently clear for navigable purposes. Otago and Canterbury have been severe sufferers from the watercress. Sentiment, however, has always been a deadly foe to the colonist: for example, some thirty years ago a Scotch emigrant to Australia took with him a thistle in a flower-pot. Great were the rejoicings among the Scotch colonists, a dinner was given in honor of the national plant, and it was then carefully transferred to the soil. Now it has played the same part on land as the watercress in the rivers, and has rendered whole tracts of land useless. It defies all attempts at expiration, and great sums of money are paid yearly in restraining the once welcomed plant. That the thistle would probably become an injurious plant ought to have been anticipated, and the very seeds should have been prohibited as relentlessly as we prohibit the Colorado beetle. But who would have thought that the sweetbriar could do any harm? At home we are only too glad to have it in our gardens, and a sweetbriar hedge is a thing of joy and an object of justifiable pride. No one, therefore, would have blamed the missionary and his wife who took with them a plant of sweetbriar as a fragrant memorial of their garden in the old country. But when set in the fresh rich soil of Australia the plant grew with almost savage fury. It drove great roots into the ground, developed itself from a shrub to a tree, and spread with such alarming rapidity that it is quite as troublesome as the thistle. Tasmania, which is to be the mainland of Australia what the Isle of Wight is to England, has suffered terribly from the sweetbriar. New

Zealand has fared no better; Mr. Froude states that it is a worse foe to the agriculturist than the native fern. "At home so chary of growth, it expands here into vast bushes, becomes a weed and spreads like a weed. It overruns whole fields in two or three seasons, will turn a cleared farm into an impenetrable thicket, and has to be torn out with cart ropes and teams of horses."

The reason for this astonishing growth of the thistle and sweetbriar is the same as that which accounts for the fecundity of the rabbit and sparrow. The rich and fertile soil affords the plants abundance of food, and the native flora is so feeble that the sturdy intruders have no rivals to check their progress. Another remarkable point in the history of acclimatisation is its effect upon previously existing animals. The Chinese soldier, when rebuked for running out of an assaulted fort, replied logically, "No two piecy man can stand in one piecy man's place. If he will come I must go." The aphorism is equally applicable to the animals. When the flocks and herds of the white man enter upon a new land the previous occupiers must make way for them. So, in America, the bison is disappearing in exact ratio with the increase of sheep, swine, and oxen. Of course the depredations of hunters have some effect on the bison, but the rapid and steady decrease in its numbers is not due so much to the rifle bullet of the hunter, whether red or white, as to the continual increase of sheep and cattle, which crowd it out of its pasture lands. Similarly, in Australia, the kangaroo has been forced to give way to the sheep and horned cattle. No "two piecy" beast can stand in "one piecy" beast's place, and the inferior must needs retire before the superior.

Now comes the question of Reciprocity. We have given much to other lands, but we have taken a little in exchange. From New Zealand and the Pacific Archipelago we have received nothing. There are no mammals more than a few inches in length, and the only large bird, the moa of New Zealand, has long disappeared down the throats of the natives. Neither has Australia given us anything, inasmuch as the mammals are all marsupials, for which our climate is not suited. There are certainly a few gallinaceous birds, such as the brush turkey, the jungle fowl, and the leipoa (or "native pheasant"), but these birds need too much space to be useful in this country, where every yard of ground has its value. From America we have received the turkey, a bird which has withstood acclimatisation so well that, like the barn-door fowl (which came from Asia), it has long been considered as a British bird. This is the more remarkable as the bird belongs to a different continent. Like most acclimated creatures, it has undergone some changes of form and color, and has nearly learned to abandon its wild ways, such as straying and concealing its nest. The two greatest gifts, however, which we have received from America are the potato and tobacco. How the latter plant would thrive in this country it is impossible to say, as the law prohibits its cultivation. I believe, however, that it would be perfectly successful, and, indeed, the very fact of its prohibition infers as much. As for the potato, it is now as completely a British plant as the wheat or the barley, and has been again acclimatised over the greater part of the earth's surface. Maize (which in America is invariably called by the name of "corn") has not succeeded in this country, but has been thoroughly successful in South Africa, where it thrives wonderfully under the name of "mealies," and now forms the chief nourishment of the various tribes which are called by the collective name of "Kaffirs."

The great fish question is far too large for more than a casual mention, and we will proceed to what I will venture to call the Reflex question—i. e., the effect of the indigenous animals upon those which have been imported, and its reciprocal action on themselves. We have seen how marvelously the sheep has increased in New Zealand, where exists no carnivorous beast or bird that could check the increase of the flocks. But the introduction of the sheep has caused the development of a carnivorous bird far more destructive, because more plentiful, than the eagle itself. This very unexpected foe is one of the long-beaked parrots peculiar to New Zealand (*Nestor notabilis*), popularly called kia, or mountain parrot. Just as the sparrow abandoned insects for fruits, grain, and flowers, the kia has reversed the process, and abandoned its normal vegetable diet in order to become a sheep-killer of the most confirmed atrocity. Like other criminals it is a nocturnal bird, and not easily seen on account of its dark-green plumage. In 1868 it was noticed that the kia was in the habit of visiting the carcasses of sheep which were hung up for consumption, and eating the fat around the kidneys. Finding this fat very much to their taste, but not being able to procure a sufficiency of it, the birds took to attacking the sheep while living, never doing more than perching on the backs of the unhappy animals, tearing away the skin, and digging out the kidney fat with their pickaxes of beaks. In a few years this formerly harmless bird has become the curse of the sheep-run, and not long ago out of three hundred fat sheep two hundred were killed by the kia within five months. The natural consequence is that war has been declared against the kia, which in all probability will be exterminated. A more bizarre result of acclimatisation could never have been anticipated. The part which has been played by acclimatisation in the modern history of the world cannot be overrated. Our vast and numerous colonies—"Greater Britain," as they have been happily called—would have been impossible had we not been able to take with us our beasts, birds, cereals, and fruits. We cannot imagine Australia or New Zealand without cattle, sheep, horses, grain, and fruit. We have made some mistakes, but not so many as might have been made, and we can at all events take warning by those failures, so as not to repeat them in the future. Of this we may be certain. For successful acclimatisation it is necessary to be thoroughly acquainted with the animal or plant which is to be transferred to a new soil. It is also necessary to understand the climate and other conditions of both countries; and, lastly, no animal or plant should be imported which cannot be kept within the control of the breeder or agriculturist.—*Longman's Magazine*.