

## A CRUEL FASHION.

Very few women ever imagine that by bowing to the dictates of fashion they are unconsciously encouraging a cruel practice which has now become so widespread as to be properly regarded as an evil.

The wearing of the plumage of dead birds may in itself be an innocent fashion, but to those conversant with the facts, as to the wholesale destruction now being made among our feathered songsters, and the constantly increasing demand that is made for feather trimmings, it is apparent that the fashion is accountable for much needless cruelty, as well as for the positive injury which follows the diminution in the number of birds.

The millions upon millions of birds which are annually killed for their plumage, find a ready sale among all classes of women, and yet we undertake to say that the refined sensibilities of most women would be shocked did they but know that many birds have to be skinned alive in order to preserve the gloss of their plumage, and that many nestlings die from starvation, owing to the destruction of the parent birds.

The proportions of the trade in birds' plumage may be gathered from a few facts such as the following:—"A New York ornithologist heard an agent of the millinery trade in Texas solicit a sportsman to procure for him the plumes of 10,000 white egrets.

On Cape Cod 40,000 terns were destroyed in a single season, and a million rails and bobolinks were killed near Philadelphia in a single month.

A taxidermist on Long Island Shore engaged gunners to furnish him with 300 birds a day, if possible; he intended sending them all to France.

One dealer, during three months on the coast of South Carolina, prepared 11,018 bird skins, and he states that he handles on an average 30,000 skins per annum, of which the greater part are cut up for millinery purposes. This was in the spring of 1884, and during the following summer a New York woman contracted with an enterprising Paris millinery firm to deliver 40,000 skins of birds at 40 cents a piece."

These facts are startling enough to convince us that the use of birds' plumage for purely decorative purposes, is, to say the least, a cruel fashion, but their extirpation is a most serious matter when viewed from a utilitarian standpoint.

A farmer of Michigan, writing to a New York exchange, says;—"The destruction of birds has been and is carried on here to such an extent that it is hardly possible to raise any kind of fruit; even the grapes, as well as the apples, being too wormy for use or sale. Boys, and sires of families, but not MEN, go out and shoot swallows, robins, larks, etc. It makes no difference if they are nesiling, and many a nest of young birds has starved on account of their parents being shot."

In the S. P. C. A. and other humane societies, women have ever taken the foremost part, and it is gratifying to note that the fashion which condemns to premature death so many defenseless songsters, and which is responsible for so much cruelty, is now being frowned down by women themselves.

London *Truth* declares that "the Queen contemplates issuing a ukase censuring the custom of wearing the bodies or parts of the bodies of birds for personal decoration." There are two societies organized expressly in aid of the preservation of birds in Great Britain and all other parts of the world.

Lady Mount Temple is not only a member of the plumage section of the Selborne Society, but has written a vigorous protest against the fashion of wearing dead birds on dresses, bonnets and hats. The section is under the patronage of Her Royal Highness the Princess Christian of Schleswig Holstein, and numbers among its members 20 ladies of title and also Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Sir Frederick Leighton, and Rev. F. O. Morris.

It may not be possible or convenient for every true-hearted woman to associate herself with an organization such as the Selborne Society, but if each one for herself will refrain from the purchase of plumage, and use her influence to induce others to do likewise, the fashion will soon be as dead as Julius Cæsar.

## A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW.

Newspapers in general devote such a large portion of their space to the discussion of political questions, that we have deemed it advisable not to burden our columns with editorial matter of this sort, satisfying ourselves with, from time to time, giving to our readers the news in Dominion and Provincial politics; but just now, when the air is full of political rumors, and everyone is more or less interested in political matters, it may be well to scan the field, so that those among our subscribers who do not take other papers, may have a correct idea of how the two great parties stand with respect to each other. In British Columbia, the Provincial Legislature is strongly Conservative in tone; and in the event of a Dominion election, the Pacific Province would unquestionably sustain the Government of Sir John A. Macdonald. In Manitoba, the present Government, which is Conservative, has a small working majority, which, it is thought, will be maintained in the elections which are about to take place. In Ontario, Premier Mowat has for years led a Liberal Government, backed by a handsome majority in the Legislature. Mr. Mowat's Government had still one year to run, but owing to the recent controversy which has taken place, in which Mr. Mowat's enemies accused him of being influenced by a prelate of the Roman Catholic Church, the Premier has decided to appeal to the people, and the elections, as announced, are to take place on the 20th of December. If we do not mistake the signs of the times, Mr. Mowat's Government will be sustained; but for the sake of peace and good-will we could have wished that the Premier had chosen a more opportune time than the holiday season for a fierce political combat. Political matters in

Quebec remain in *statu quo*; neither Dr. Ross, the Premier, nor Mr. Mercier, the leader of the Opposition, has the support of a clear majority of the members recently elected. The Independent Nationalists hold the key to the position, and the party with which they side must ultimately become masters of the situation. In New Brunswick, Provincial and Dominion politics are kept entirely separate. The present Government includes both pronounced Liberals and Conservatives, but its Premier; Attorney General Blair, is an out-and-out Liberal, and hence his might truly be called a Liberal-Conservative administration. In Prince Edward Island, the Government, as well as a majority in the House of Assembly, are Conservatives, but the recent election for members of the Legislative Council has given the Liberals the control of the Upper House. In the Province of Nova Scotia, as is well known, the Liberal Government of Mr. Fielding has been sustained by an overwhelming majority, leaving the Conservatives with little more than a corporal's guard to occupy the Opposition benches. It will thus be seen, that in British Columbia and Prince Edward Island, the Conservatives hold the Governments, in Nova Scotia the Liberals, in New Brunswick the Liberals and Conservatives, while in Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba, the events of the next few weeks must decide which party is to enjoy the sweets of office.

## THE PRESS AND CRIME.

The influence of the newspaper in preventing and punishing crime can be fully appreciated only by those who observe the stand taken by some of the leading journals of the day upon questions affecting public morality. Editor Stead, of the *Pull Mall Gazette*, may have adopted tactics which do not meet universal approval; but he has certainly awakened a wholesome public indignation against a terrible moral corruption which the officers of the law had failed to check, and of which those in high places were not slow to take advantage. The representatives of leading English and American newspapers have frequently, in the service of their respective journals, rendered invaluable aid as detectives in hunting down criminals. And while this may be regarded as merely incidental to the discharge of their journalistic duties, yet the power of the press is being daily exercised in a more direct way in preventing crime. There are misdeeds whose most effectual punishment is public disgrace. The fear of exposure often supplies the place of a conscience. After crime has been committed, the prison life of the perpetrator in many cases determines whether he will become a confirmed criminal or reform his life. By studying, comparing, and criticising different prison systems, and by calling attention to particular abuses, the press has done much to prevent the improper and unwise treatment of criminals.

But while the conscientious journalist effects much good by treating crime judiciously and with right motives, there are unfortunately many influential newspapers which stoop from their high position and trade upon the public craving for sensation. All the disgusting details of crime, even the supposed motives of the perpetrator and the imagined feelings of the victims are narrated with a vividness which would make the fortune of a low-class play-right or novelist. Journals of some pretensions to respectability sometimes permit this sensational treatment of crime on the ground that the public require it. In other words, they argue that the press must follow rather than lead public opinion. As well might the pulpit shape its course according to the dictates of the people whom it ought to educate. The fault, however, does not all rest with the newspaper. The patrons of such journals as pursue the base policy of pandering to a depraved taste are in the first instance to blame. If papers of this class found their subscribers dropping off on account of the publication of such matter, the tone of public journalism in this respect would be greatly improved.

The journalist, like the minister, is deserving of supreme contempt, whose aim it is

"To fawn and seek for power  
With doctrines fashioned to the varying hour."

But this does not relieve the public of the responsibility of having encouraged by their patronage methods which no honest business man would himself adopt.

No wonder the price of wool continues high when 10,000,000 sheep die during one year in Australia from the continued drouth. If this goes on much longer, we will have to economize by turning our homespun.

The last number of the *Rivista di Artigliera e Genio* contains a brief but important article by Colonel Agostino Polto, of the Italian Engineers, giving the result of certain experiments carried on by him with common sugar as a remedy for preventing incrustation in boilers. The boiler made use of by Colonel Polto was a 20 horse-power Field tubular boiler containing 126 tubes. This boiler was ordinarily scraped and cleaned out every forty-five days (i.e. after 380 working hours), when the average weight of scale removed, after making use of the best methods known for preventing incrustation, amounted to 12 kilogrammes. Before beginning the experiments with sugar one-third of the tubes were purposely left uncleaned; the boiler was then filled with water and 2 kilogrammes of sugar added to it; a further supply of 1 or 2 kilogrammes, alternately, being added every seven days. After working the boiler for the usual forty-five days, it was found that it could be cleaned easily without the necessity for scraping it, and that the tubes which had been left uncleaned were considerably more free from scale than before, whilst the other tubes remained clean and bright; about 8 kilograms of old incrustations were found at the bottom of the boiler, having become detached by the beneficial action of the saccharine solution.