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SOUTHERN AGRICULTURE

BIRDS AND BOLL WEEVIL.

Some of Our Feathered Weevil Enemies.
U. S. Department of Agriculture, Biological Survey—Bulletin 29: In view of the rapid spread of the cotton boll weevil in the Southern States and the enormous damage to the cotton crop through its ravages, a study of the relations of our native birds to the pest is of increasing importance. Investigation of the problem during several seasons has shown that while birds can not be depended upon to stay its progress, much less to exterminate it, yet the service they render in controlling it is of great importance. It has been discovered that several species of birds eat great numbers of the pest and among the weevil-eating kinds are a few whose numbers it is believed can be greatly augmented through careful protection and by providing them with safe nesting places.

The relation of birds to the boll weevil has been studied by the Biological Survey during portions of four seasons, and by the Bureau of Entomology during portions of two seasons. Seventeen species of birds were examined during the seasons of 1903 and 1904 by the Bureau of Entomology, with the result that 11 species were found to feed on the weevil. In November and December, 1904, Vernon Bailey of the Biological Survey took up the study of the problem, and as a result of the examination of 354 stomachs collected by him, 9 additional species of birds were added to the list of boll weevil destroyers. The work was carried on in the summer and fall of 1905 by the present writer, 62 species of birds being collected and examined and 8 additional species found to feed on the weevil. The investigation was continued, also by the writer, in August and September, 1906, and from February 11 to May 3, 1907. Fifteen species were added to the list of weevil-eating birds by the investigations in the past two seasons, details of which will be given later.

As a result of investigations carried on intermittently during five seasons, 43 species of our native birds have been found to feed on the weevil, as follows: Upland plover, killdeer, quail, nighthawk, scissor-tailed flycatcher, kingbird, crested flycatcher, Phoebe, old flycatcher, olive-sided flycatcher, least flycatcher, cowbird, red-winged blackbird, meadow lark, Western meadow lark, orchard oriole, Baltimore oriole, bullock oriole, brewer blackbird, bronzed grackle, great-tailed grackle, Savanna sparrow, lark sparrow, white-throated sparrow, field sparrow, wovee, cardinal, pyrrhuloxia, painted bunting, dickcissel, purple martin, cliff swallow, bank swallow, barn swallow, white-rumped shrike, yellow warbler, yellow-breasted chat, American pipit, mockingbird, brown thrasher, Carolina wren, tufted titmouse, black-crowned titmouse.

Twenty-three of the foregoing species feed on the weevil principally in summer and twenty species principally in winter. The greatest destruction of weevils in summer is wrought by swallows and orioles; in winter, by blackbirds and meadow larks. It is not to be supposed that the foregoing list includes all the birds which feed upon the boll weevil. Further investigation will doubtless add a number of species to the list, and will show that birds which ordinarily eat, but few weevils will, under certain conditions, destroy a good many. The funds at the command of the Biological Survey for this investigation have been very limited, but it is hoped that means will be forthcoming not only for continuing the work, but for widening its scope so as to include the regions recently invaded by the boll weevil.—Arthur H. Howell, Assistant Biologist, Biological Survey.

Farmyard Scrapings.
Manure made from animals fed on clover hay is worth twice as much as manure from animals fed on timothy hay.
A certain farmer spent a whole season growing a big crop of sunflower seed and then began to inquire where he could sell it. Look for the market first.

The next time a tool handle bothers about coming loose, fill it with powdered rosin, then heat the tang of the tool enough to melt the rosin easily and drive it into the handle.
Old tin cans do not burn very well on the brush heap. Bury them. Most of the rubbish and trash that collects during the winter will burn. The roadside is not a proper place for it.

Where the boll weevil is present late planting of cotton should never be practiced. Louisiana experiments show clearly that nothing is to be gained from late planting, while on the contrary, the crop is sure to be much more seriously injured than early planted cotton and the yield greatly reduced.

The Golden Rule of Threes.
Three things to be—pure, just and honest.
Three things to govern—temper, tongue and conduct.
Three things to live—courage, affection and gentleness.
Three things to love—the wise, the virtuous and the innocent.
Three things to commend—thrift, industry and promptness.
Three things about which to think—life, death and eternity.
Three things to despise—cruelty, arrogance and ingratitude.
Three things to admire—dignity, gracefulness and intellectual power.
Three things to cherish—the true, the beautiful and the good.
Three things for which to wish—health, friends and contentment.
Three things to give—alms to the needy, comfort to the sad and appreciation to the worthy.
Three things to desire—the blessing of God, an approving conscience, and the fellowship of the good.

Keep Your Best Stock.

Many farmers are in the habit of selling their best animals because they will bring the highest prices. A greater mistake can not be made. A difference of 10 or even 25 per cent in the price of a single animal is a small matter compared to this difference in a whole herd. By keeping the very best to propagate from, the whole may be made of equal excellence, and in the course of a few years numerous animals might be produced having the excellent qualities that now distinguish some few of the best.

What would you say of a farmer who sold his valuable varieties of potatoes and planted other kinds that were inferior? In consequence of this imprudent measure, his next crop would fall short. Everyone will condemn this course, and few if any are so wanting in discretion as to pursue it. Yet many take a similar course in selling their best animals and propagating from the poor. Not only is this true of animals for breeding purposes, but those for work as well. Who does not know in his own experience of farmers who sell their best work horses and keep the poorest ones? Well, the consequence is that the poorer one costs a great deal more to keep each year and does less work, and in the end is the most expensive animal. The policy should have been to keep the better one and to have sold the inferior.

And doubly so, we believe, when the farmer has animals for breeding purposes. There is a vast difference in our cattle in sections where much attention has been given to improvements by selecting the best, when contrasted with those where little or no attention has been paid to the subject, and as a matter of course, the best have been sold or eaten because they are the fattest. Every man who raises stock has it in his power to make improvements, and he should avoid himself of all the advantages around him to turn his power to the benefit of himself and posterity.—C. W. Burkett, in Journal of Agriculture.

Around the Farm.
Have nothing to do with Belgian hares. Leave the ginseng out. There is nothing in them for the everyday farmer. Same way about frog culture, raising skunks, and all that sort of thing. Be enterprising, but let it be along lines of legitimate farming.

There is a lot of talk all the time about the best ways of keeping up the fertility of our lands. The best way that anybody has ever thought out is to keep stock. Good, old-fashioned barnyard manure is the most natural fertilizer in the world. The more we can get of it the better off we will be.

Keep a steady hand on the wheat crop. Do not be influenced very greatly by the fluctuations in the market. Plan to grow a good piece next year. It will all be needed and will bring a fair price.

Prices for pork have been high and will be again. That means that we should get in large crops of corn this spring. Plan for it, work for it. How? By making your soil rich, by plowing the very best you can, by thorough cultivation, by using first-class seed and by caring for the crop after it is on the way.

Some men never think of bringing in a pall of water at their own homes. They will go away to somebody else's home and do lots of such little chores and smile all the time. Isn't your wife just as thankful for these little attentions as your friend Jones' wife is?

I see our friend Jones never fails to go to town twice a week to help save the country at the grocery store congress. Meanwhile his sheep crawl through the bottom wire fence and have a good time among the corn-stalks he is too busy to husk out.

Don't Breed Plugs.
A bulletin of the department of agriculture prepared by George M. Rome, the horse and mule expert of the department, discourages the breeding of small and inferior mares to jacks. In breeding mules, he says, the first point is to see that the mule's sire is a large jack, recorded in the American Jack Stud Book. He should stand 15.9 or even 16 hands high and weigh up to 1100 or 1200 pounds. If mares sired by light stallions, standards, coaches, etc., are bred to such a jack mules of good quality and fair weight may be expected. For small, indifferent 800 pound mares without breeding, nothing better can be expected than the production of inferior cotton mules or pit and pack mules. It is useless to try to breed good mules from poor mares, and this is one reason why so much attention has been given to the discussion of the importance of horse breeding in the South. There will probably always be more demand in the South for mules than for work horses, which can be supplied by locally raised animals, but it is necessary farm brood mares. It is doubtful if any jack is good enough to sire a good mule from a small, coarse, plug mare.

Neither a hen nor an incubator can hatch good chicks from poor eggs, nor raise thoroughbreds from poor stock. Nor will chicks do any good from good eggs unless they are well brooded. Almost any old hen or machine will hatch them, but it takes a good mother hen or a good foster mother to raise them.

Musty or dusty hay is undesirable always; and if a horse has the heaves, it should be sprinkled enough to lay the rust. It would be better still to feed better hay.

For bumble foot in poultry paint the corn liberally with tincture of iodine daily for a week. If this is done in the early stages the corn can be spread.

Manure is simply materials that have been softened and decomposed (digested) within the body of an animal. To apply such raw materials as bran and linseed meal directly to the soil would be of no advantage, notwithstanding that they are excellent fertilizers, their value being increased by feeding stock.

HOSPITALITY REWARDED

God Gives a Son to Shunammite Woman.
SCRIPTURE BY THE "HIGHWAY AND BYWAY" PREACHER.
(Copyright, 1904, by the Author, W. B. Edson.)

Scripture Authority—2 Kings, 4:8-17.

SERMONETTE.

True piety finds its expression in genuine hospitality. Doors opened to admit the faithful servants of the Lord let in the blessing of God as well.

To give to supply the need of one who is engaged in God's work is to give to the Lord and such giving never goes without its reward.

God can find shelter and food for his servants in most unexpected places.

The entertainment of this plain, unassuming prophet, poor and despised, except to the few in Israel who were faithful to God, was not going to bring social prestige to this Shunammite woman, in fact her hospitality perhaps was going to cost her the regard of many of the "swell set" of Shunem. But enough of the light of righteousness and truth had shined into her heart to make her understand that there was more honor in entertaining one of the humble servants of God than in filling her house with a choice company of her rich neighbors.

To-day we need to learn the joy and blessing of true hospitality. "When thou makest a dinner or supper," said Jesus, "call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors, lest they also bid thee again and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

The good heart is sensitive to goodness in others. This Shunammite woman "perceived that Elisha was a holy man."

The good heart also delights in fellowship with goodness. It was a real joy and privilege for this Shunammite woman to receive the spiritual blessing which Elisha the prophet was able to bring to her and her husband.

If this Shunammite woman had been absorbed in the latest fashion plates, or been gadding about to afternoon card parties and social teas, or the matinee, she never would have had eyes to see this man of God as he passed to and fro by her home.

This Shunammite woman never dreamed that her kindly service was to bring to her the treasure for which her heart longed most. And yet it is not a literal fulfillment of the declaration of Scripture that if we "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us?"

THE STORY.

THERE was a certain woman of Shunem in the land of Israel who, as Scripture says, was great—great as concerned the possession of this world's goods; great as to abilities, for she was a wise woman and ordered the affairs of her husband's home after the most careful manner of the eastern housewife; great as to her womanly virtues, and the kindly deeds which she was constantly performing for her neighbors and friends; great as to her piety; but, above all, great in the burden of sorrow which rested upon her heart—a sorrow which she hid from her husband and the world, a sorrow which when it strikes deep a woman's heart is greater than any sorrow which a woman may know—the sorrow of a childless home.

When as a bride she had come to take her place in the splendid home which her husband had provided for her it had been with the joyful thought that children would come to bless and make bright the home. To her, as with all women in that eastern land, the childless home was a reproach and the crowning honor of wifehood was motherhood. But all through the long years of her wedded life this joy and blessing had been denied her, and it seemed as though her heart must break with the burden of its grief.

Her husband, conscious of the yearning of her heart—for bravely as she tried she could not hide it altogether from his fond, loving eyes—sought tenderly to be not only husband but son to her, and tried to fill her life with activities and pleasures which would take her mind from her grief. And she being too true a woman to be swallowed up of her sorrow, found relief in the performance of kindly deeds which endeared her to neighbors and friends and made her name great in Shunem.

Now it chanced one day as she went about her gentle ministrations that an errand of mercy took her to the other side of town, where a widow woman and her three children dwelt in poverty. In passing through the market place she observed a solitary figure sitting in a secluded spot. His cloak or mantle was drawn closely around him, but from without the folds of the garment which enveloped his head there looked a strong face, whose penetrating eye seemed to take in every detail and movement of the busy place. Knots of people gathered here and there talked in low tones and the furtive glances which were cast in the direction of the silent figure indicated plainly that it was the stranger who was the subject of conversation. But no one, moved by kindly impulse, seemed inclined to speak a kindly word of greeting to the

stranger or bid him welcome. All this the woman noted and then, as she passed along on her way, she saw a man emerge from one of the booths of the market place bearing in his hands some of the barley cakes he had purchased there. These he placed in the hands of the silent figure who rose to receive them.

"Evidently the servant of the stranger," the woman thought to herself as she watched the two pass on their way, eating their frugal repast as they went.

"Have they no friends?" she asked herself, "that they thus come to Shunem and depart without anyone asking, 'whence comest thou?' or 'whither goest thou?'" It was a goodly face which the stranger had, she continued to herself as she went on her way. "Who can he be?"

To this last question which arose in her mind came a partial answer that day as she visited the widow, for she found that the latter, while out picking up sticks with which to make a fire over which to cook the little cakes of oil and meal for herself and her children had met this stranger and his servant, and he had spoken such words of encouragement and blessing to her that she had been greatly helped, and finding that she was of a branch of the tribe of Levi, he had promised to see that her son was entered in one of the schools of the prophets, where he could prepare for the priestly service.

From that time on the Shunammite woman watched for tidings of this stranger, and over the pathway which he had passed she found many a poor and humble one to tell of the deeds of kindness which he had shown them as he had passed by.

So it came to pass one day that as she beheld the man and his servant passing by her own home she went forth to meet him and constrained him to tarry and refresh himself after his long and wearisome journey. This he did and, as many an one has found since then, she came to know that the entertaining of one of God's servants brought blessing upon her household.

She had a great yearning for goodness and her greatest delight was to sit under the teaching of the prophet Elisha and receive from his hands that spiritual teaching which she needed. This feeling her husband came to share with her, and there was no more welcome guest in any home in all the land of Israel, not even the king himself, than was the prophet Elisha in the home of this Shunammite woman and her husband.

But goodness and kindly service never go unrewarded by God, and it came to pass as the prophet came and went the longing grew upon him to pour some special blessing into the life of this home whose hospitality he had enjoyed.

"What shall it be?" he asked his servant Gehazi, with whom one day he talked the matter over. "Would they that I should speak to the king that he show them kindness, or to the captain of the hosts of Israel?"

"Nay, not that, my master," exclaimed Gehazi, "for they dwell in security and plenty in their own land in Shunem. But verily she hath no child."

"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward," exclaimed the prophet, quoting the words of the Psalmist. "It shall indeed be so in this case."

A full year has passed since Elisha's last visit to Shunem, for service in other parts of the kingdom have kept him busy, but one day he turns his steps thither, accompanied by his servant, Gehazi.

"Let us go up, for this Shunammite woman rejoiceth in a son," he exclaimed. "She hath shown great kindness unto others, and God hath rewarded her in accordance with his word. Let us carry God's blessing up to the child."

And Elisha found it even in accordance with the word he had spoken, and the mother greeted him with words of rejoicing, saying: "The Lord hath made me to rejoice, for he hath taken away my reproach and hath given me a son."

"May the Lord ever keep thee faithful to the sacred mission of motherhood," responded the prophet, fervently.

The Beardless Man.
There is a so-called "smooth-shaven" millionaire in New York who never used a razor on his face. Twenty-five years ago he was a monomaniac on the subject of saving time, and among other short cuts to fortune made up his mind to cut out shaving, a matter of five cents a day and about 20 minutes of precious time if the barber made good. After a trial of various cosmetics and delipatories he decided that electrolysis was a far better, though a more tedious, process. In five months the root of every hair in both beard and mustache was utterly destroyed by an electric current from a constant battery. The man suffered considerably, but ever since the operation his face has been as smooth as a bald head. No power on earth could restore his beard now.

How He Did the Trick.
A driver on the Avonmore railway, South Africa, while staying at the Gamtoos, caught a large cobra de capello alive. The cool way in which he did the trick (says a local paper) saw a cold shiver through every one who saw it. He simply caught hold of the point of its tail, gave it a sudden jerk toward him and caught it by the back of the head. He then placed it in a biscuit tin. The snake was three inches in diameter and about four feet long.

Evil Speaking.
If you must speak ill of your neighbor, do it where only a mean man will hear it—that is, when nobody is around but yourself.

Short-Sighted Policy.
Locking the heart against the drafts of sympathy is the swiftest way of impoverishing the whole life.

Do Good.
When in Rome do as Rome does not want you to do. Do as Rome ought to do, or as right requires.

Pray Without Ceasing.
Prayer continues in the desire of the heart, though the mind be busied with outward things.

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