

organic life in the topsoil, burned the humus, and set the stage for erosion.

Farmers placed too much livestock in their fields. Instead of putting three or four cows on a small piece of land, they pastured twenty or more. The cattle ate all the ground-cover, and packed the earth so hard that the rain could not sink in but ran off the surface, washing the dirt with it.

These were but a few causes of erosion, the teacher said. She wrote them down briefly on the blackboard, so that the children might put them in their notebooks.

1. Careless lumbering.
2. Fire.
3. Overgrazing of livestock.
4. Improper ploughing.
5. One-crop farming.

Dust Storms and Floods.

Erosion of a field here and a hillside there seldom caused much comment. The process was a gradual one that went on unnoticed except by the farmer, who found, sooner or later, that he

could no longer grow a paying crop on his land. But the newspapers carried stories of dust storms and great floods. This was big news, for it often meant the lives of many people. These catastrophes were called acts of God, over which man had no control. A few people knew otherwise. They could clearly trace these events to the eroded fields and hillsides. The rain fell, and instead of soaking into the ground, was carried away into the little brooks, whose banks could not always hold the unnatural rush of water. Erosion had set in there, too—and so on into the big rivers. Instead of wandering slowly towards the sea, the water rushed down in a hurry. Great floods were caused by too much water reaching the same place all at once. When the drier months came, the water was gone prematurely from the little brooks and streams. They became dry and the soil parched. On the great plains the powdery, exhausted soil was whipped into the air by hot summer winds and literally whole farms were blown away.

WINTER.

Winter approaches! That great tester of which creatures shall survive, and which shall succumb, owing to cold and shortage of food. Countless numbers of birds will die of starvation and cold, unless we help our feathered helpers in the contest against insect pests, rodents and disease. It has been amply demonstrated that those birds which have access to ample food supplies can easily survive.

Remember, then, as you snuggle between warm blankets, aided perhaps by a hot water bottle, that the birds are out in the cold, and many will be found dead beneath their perches in the morning, having been unable to resist the cold, owing to sufficient food being unprocurable in the daytime.

If, then, you do not already do so, supply their meagre needs. They will reward you by showing extreme trust in you, and will intensely interest you and your children by their antics and bickerings while feeding. In the Spring they will again gladden the hearts of all by their songs and presence, besides

“crushing the beetle in his coat of mail,
and crying havoc on the slug and snail.”

Suet, dilute honey, well sweetened porridge and milk, and almost all usually wasted scraps

of food, will be acceptable. But place your food receptacles where the ever-prowling cat can do no harm, otherwise you may be merely feeding cats on birds.

“There is a *very* short list of birds that are seriously injurious to the interests of the farmer and gardener: of a considerable number it must be said that while they do harm, they also do good: of the *vast majority* it may safely be said that they are beneficial.”—Professor Sir J. Arthur Thomson.



FOREST AND BIRD SOCIETY BADGES.

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The stock of albums depicting 24 forest-inhabiting birds in colour is now nearing exhaustion. Those wishing to secure copies should therefore make immediate application. Each picture is 9in. by 6in. and is accompanied by an adequate description or lecturette of the birds depicted—Price 12/6 per copy.