

Business Methods In Farming.

BIG PROFITS FOR
TWENTIETH CENTURY
FARMERS.

No man is entitled to a serious hearing on the subject of farming unless he proves his faith by his works. "Do you run a farm yourself and do you make it pay?" are the questions to be put to every man who has any advice to offer about farming, writes Mr. S. W. Allerton in Saturday Evening Post. If he can't answer yes to both these questions his talk is mere theory and not worth listening to. If theorizing would raise crops we should have to go to college class-rooms instead of to the fields for grain on which to feed the world; but it won't, and there is no use in giving serious attention to any talk on this subject that is not backed up by sound results, of a broad, practical sort, which have been personally obtained by the man making the suggestions.

First, then, I shall give a reason for the faith that is in me, and shall state something of my experience as a farmer, before I ask any reader to accept my statement and give them any weight or practical consideration. My system of farms contains something more than 40,000 acres under careful cultivation and an equal amount in grass. These it should be clearly understood, are not ranches, but farms. The farm-houses covered by insurance number about seventy. While these farms are, in one sense, managed at long range, they are "personally conducted," as the tourists say. The entire system centres right here in my Chicago office, and every crop is as much under my personal direction as if I followed the plow, sowed the land and went into the harvest field myself.

So much for the question of practical personal experience in arming on a large scale.

FARMING THAT PAYS.

Now about the results. Does my farming pay? Yes. And well, too. For the sake of definiteness I can say that in one year, from a farm of 3600 acres, I have made a net profit of \$37,000. This tract of land cost me but \$70,000. It was bought at a time when faith in farm values was low, and when the young man of that region at least, were in a hurry to get away from the farms into the big cities, where they would have a fair chance to make their fortunes.

Whether there is a good, big future in farming—enough to satisfy any young man with a healthy ambition to get to the front and have a fortune—is well answered by the fact that quite recently three farmers in Central Illinois left, at their death fortunes of more than three million dollars each. This wealth was made in farming.

In the same general region I can find scores of farmers who are worth from \$100,000 to \$500,000. These are the straws which go to show that farming can be made to pay on a big as well as a small scale, and that it offers a satisfactory field of operation for the millionaire as well as the thrifty immigrant.

How can a large system of farms, scattered over three States, be managed from an office in a big city? By system. Lack of system is the curse of the average farmer. He may, and generally does, practice all manner of petty and exacting economies, but he will never do things on a large scale until he systematizes his entire scheme of operation. This means that he puts his economies and his activities on an automatic basis. Once established, they go on with their work in a mechanical way, leaving the man at the head free to do the thinking for the enterprise in a big way—if he is capable of it.

One of the most important things in running a string of farms is the long-distance telephone. It would be almost impossible to do farming on the syndicate plan without this means of quick communication. Suppose there is a sudden bulge in the market for corn, wheat, hogs, sheep, or cattle. By the telephone I can instantly discuss shipments with the foreman of every one of the farms. This ability to move produce into the market on quick notice and thus get the benefit of a high figure means thousands of dollars in additional profits each year to the man who has a large number of farms under his control.

Chicago is the centre of the grain and live-stock trade of this country, and the advantage of being situated right here where the world's prices are made is great. Of course we have a man who is at the stockyards all the time, keeping a close eye on the prices, and buying or selling as our needs and advantage dictate.

ANOTHER END SERVED

by this quick communication from one central metropolitan office is that of having a means of meeting crop exigencies due to the sudden and radical changes of weather. The man in Chicago, only a block or two distant from the Auditorium tower, is closer to the source of the weather supply than the man out on the farm. The latter knows only whether it is locally foul or fair for the moment; but here there is a chance to chat with Old Probabilities and

thus to secure a better guess as to the future conditions of drought or rain, wind or calm. The difference of a day in putting in a crop sometimes determines the success or failure of the yield. So as to the time for harvesting.

Then this centralization of control in an office in a big market city gives a distinct advantage in securing quick shipping facilities. When it becomes necessary to get a large amount of produce into the market on short notice, in order to secure the benefit of temporary high prices, things can be accomplished by the large shipper that could not be done by the small farmer. He can go, without the loss of a moment's time, to the general freight agent or other railroad official, and negotiate directly and personally for special facilities out of reach of the man on the farm. All these things count when the balance is struck.

Again, the system I have outlined makes possible large economies in buying. It stands to reason that the man who buys binding twine for the harvesting machines on fifty farms can secure a lower figure than one purchasing for a single farm. This applies to every kind of supply used in farm operations.

One of the biggest problems of farm management is, of course, the distribution of crops. Whenever this question comes up among farmers there is always a great deal of wise talk about "crop rotation." Sift this down to the bottom and it will be found, in most cases, that farmers understand this term to mean sowing a field for oats one year and wheat the next—alternating these crops indefinitely year after year. Here is where the chief mistake is made. They do not make provision for giving their ground a chance for rest and enrichment. They do not plan to return anything to the soil. Every field used for wheat, corn and oats should have a season's rest once every three or four years. Give each field a chance to serve as pasture land as frequently as this, and it will pay big returns in rich and heavy yields. Managed on this plan, by a man who has any knack as a corn raiser, any average Illinois or Nebraska field should yield from seventy-five to one hundred bushels of corn to the acre.

About thirty years ago I began farming on a tract of one hundred acres on the banks of Seneca Lake, in New York. In three years I saved \$3,200 from the farm and had a good living besides. It was there that I demonstrated the principle of the rotation plan which I have since followed on a larger scale. From that time until the present I have been constantly buying farms and operating them, and have yet to make the first unprofitable investment. This is why I have little patience with the man who, under average conditions, declares that there is "nothing in farming." Men who talk in this strain are those who are satisfied to get a yield of thirty-five bushels of corn or oats to the acre, when they should know that their management is at fault if they fail to produce an average of less than seventy bushels of either to the acre.

THE PROPER ALLOTMENT.

Here is my allotment for a farm of 160 acres: Ten acres for buildings, garden patch and a field of mangel-wurzel beets; sixty acres for pasture; sixty acres for corn; thirty acres for oats. In the second year these crops should be shifted, pasture and grass lands being turned over for cereals. The beets should be fed to sheep and hogs, and as much will be realized from the sale of wool, lambs and hogs, under this system, as would otherwise be secured from the entire product of the farm.

The showing made by an intelligent following of this plan should be fully as good as this:

From sale of wool.....	\$ 100
" " " lambs.....	500
" " " hogs.....	500
" " " corn.....	900
" " " oats.....	200
	\$2200

This allows for feeding 1500 bushels of corn out of a crop of 4500 bushels; the corn being figured at thirty cents a bushel, and the yield at seventy-five bushels an acre. The number of lambs in this estimate is one hundred, and hogs fifty. Placing the farmer's outlay for expenses at \$700, this leaves him \$1500 clear. I believe this to be a very conservative estimate of what any good farm may be made to pay, for I have generally exceeded this figure in the net results of my farming.

On the 3600-acre farm to which I have alluded, the allotment followed is this: 1800 acres in corn, 900 acres in rye or oats, and the remainder in pasture. We keep 350 cattle, and sell from \$8000 to \$10,000 worth of hogs.

Each farm has its foreman, whose duty consists in seeing that the central office is always intelligently informed of all local conditions and affairs and that orders are promptly and efficiently carried out. All

the expenses are paid by draft through the local bank. This transfers the detail book-keeping to the central office and relieves the head farmer of clerical burdens. His only care in this particular is to see that he had a proper voucher for every item of expense and that this voucher is forwarded in the regular routine of business.

HOW TO GET WORKERS.

There is no difficulty in getting good foremen and good hands so long as they are given the right kind of a chance to make something for themselves and to live in comfort. The foreman of my largest farm is worth \$16,000, and lives in a degree of comfort that some city men who make almost that amount every year can't provide from their incomes.

First of all, the houses are kept in good repair and especial attention is paid to the kitchens. Everything within human reason that can be done to make the houses convenient for the wives of the farmers is done. Then each family is furnished with a certain number of cows. If these yield more butter than is required for the household the farmer is free to sell the surplus. The wives and children of the men who run these farms are given all the poultry they raise. These privileges are appreciated, and go to make the foreman, the hands and the tenants, together with their families, contented with their lot and eager to keep their places.

Orchards are planted on these farms, together with small fruits, and there is every encouragement to have large gardens and to keep them in good condition. Men who are well fed, having a tempting variety of the delicacies of the season, will thrive and work well where a plain and monotonous bill of fare would produce grumbling, discontent and a constant change of help.

There is not a farm in the whole system, that hasn't in its equipment an extension-top buggy, and some have more than one, according to the number of young men employed. The horses which are driven behind these carriages are equal to the ones owned by the sons of neighboring farmers who work their places instead of being in the employ of a "Chicago capitalist." Here is another instance in which small expense and little thoughtfulness work large results in loyalty and contentment.

Quite as important to the welfare of the employees and the tenants of the farms as orchards, gardens, dairies, poultry and top buggies, are good district schools. If there is not a "little red schoolhouse" on or very near a farm that comes into my possession I see to it that the authorities are offered a gift of ample ground on which to build one. On one occasion, after repeatedly pressing an offer of this kind, my foreman was asked:

"Why is that capitalist boss of yours so anxious to build a brick schoolhouse? It will simply increase his own taxes, and he will get no benefit from the improvement, having no children here to attend school."

As the foreman was a bright Irishman he had a ready answer: "Because he thinks more of your children and their chances in life than you do yourself!"

The schoolhouse was put up on the strength of that argument, and is now well filled and helping to make good, intelligent citizens of the children who live in that region. There isn't a more important building on any farm than the little red schoolhouse! Better get along with one less barn or corn-crib than leave this bit of architecture out of the landscape.

The district school is the salvation of this country. It gives the children of the common people a chance for a good education, and that country which takes care of this class will keep at the front among the nations.

PERFUMES AND THE VOICE.

French scientists have been making experiments in regard to the effect of certain perfumes upon the voice. Many of the most successful teachers in singing have cautioned their pupils stringently against the use of perfumes or the proximity of odorous flowers. Mme. Richard goes so far as to forbid her pupils the use of any perfumes at all, and if one of them is detected wearing a bunch of violets the lesson is postponed. The perfume of the violet has been found by the use of the laryngoscope to be particularly injurious, producing in sensitive subjects a tumefaction of the vocal cords.

LEST YOU FORGET.

Never put off till tomorrow cooking the fish that you bought yesterday.

Distance lends enchantment to the view; but not when you see the last train leaving, and you are thirty miles from home.

Count not your cheques before they are cashed, especially if they are forged ones.

OF TWO EVILS THE LESSER.

Papa—Didn't I tell you, Willie, if I caught you playing with Tommy Jink again I would whip you?

Willie—Yes, sir.

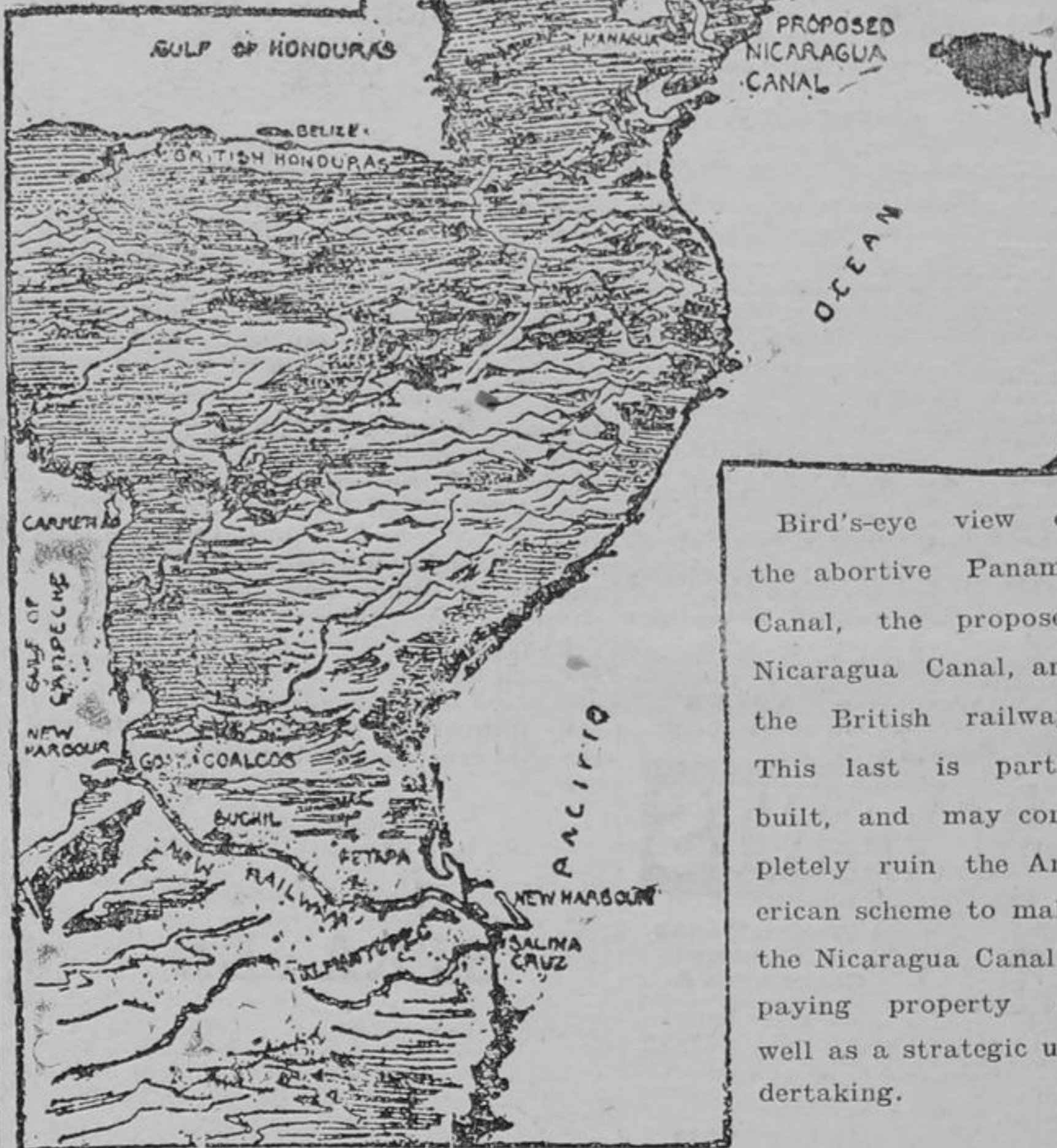
Papa—Then why were you playing with him?

Willie—Well, I got lonesome so I thought a lickin' would hurt, so I just went over and played with him, that's why.

FOILING THE UNITED STATES NICARAGUA CANAL SCHEME.

A British Undertaking Which May Mean Ruin and Disaster to the Great American Scheme.

BRITISH RAILWAY Is Under Construction and May Outdo the Canal of America's Pride.



Bird's-eye view of the abortive Panama Canal, the proposed Nicaragua Canal, and the British railway. This last is partly built, and may completely ruin the American scheme to make the Nicaragua Canal a paying property as well as a strategic undertaking.

The people of the United States are most pertinacious in their efforts to build up the Nicaragua Canal, with or without the consent of England. They will probably get their canal, and with it a fine property from the strategic point of view, but their blissful idea of combining strategy with money profits is likely to be exploded. For British enterprise is taking care that whatever money there is to be made in that part of the world shall fall into British pockets.

The world has heard a great deal about the Panama and Nicaragua canal schemes, but little about a third undertaking which is being quietly pushed forward by an English firm interested in the development of Mexico.

There are now three competitors in the race to connect the Atlantic and the Pacific. The Panama project is hampered by various causes, and Nicaragua is more or less in the air. But what may be described as the English scheme is well on the way towards fulfilment, and will, it is anticipated, be ready for work years before either of the canals.

The scheme consists of the building, or rather the rebuilding, of a railway across the narrowest part of Mexico, from Santa Cruz to Coahuacalcos. At both termini great harbors will be constructed. The town of Salina Cruz will be removed to make room for a harbor capable of affording anchorage for the largest vessels. The whole undertaking is being carried out by Messrs. S. Pearson, of Victoria St., London. Some 2,000 men are at present employed on the work under the personal direction of Sir Weetman Pearson, Bart.

The idea is to render the Nicaragua and Panama Canal schemes practically useless. Indeed, if it were not for the fact that the United States wishes to secure safe and speedy sea communication with her new colonies, the Nicaragua project would now probably be abandoned.

Mr. J. Meldrum, the foreign representative of Messrs. Pearson, who has just returned to London from Mexico, explained to a representative of the press the advantages claimed for the new scheme over the two canals.

"By our route," he said, "we shall save over a thousand miles in the carrying of passengers or cargo from the Gulf of Mexico to the west coast. In other words, our route will be the shortest by four days. We shall be prepared to put cargo from a vessel on the east coast alongside a vessel on the west coast within twelve hours at a cost not exceeding \$5 a ton.

"Each of the two canal schemes will cost not far from \$200,000,000. To get a fair return of 4 per cent. on that amount would mean a net revenue of \$8,000,000 and gross revenue of probably over \$15,000,000. To obtain that return a charge of about \$7.50 a ton would have to be made. All told, our scheme will not cost more than \$25,000,000; therefore we shall be able to carry cargo at a much cheaper rate than either canal."

The existing railway is more or less of a temporary nature, and Sir Weetman Pearson has leased the line from the Mexican Government for fifty years. The new line will be strong enough to bear the heaviest traffic. Although the "road" is only 192 miles long, it crosses 920 bridges, all of which have been or will be rebuilt. This work, together with the building of the harbours, will be completed in less than three years time.

It is characteristic of Japan's newborn enterprise that immediately her merchants heard of the scheme they arranged to put on a line of steamers from Japan to Salina Cruz. Messrs. Pearson's concession includes permission to start a special line of steamers in connection with the railway.

Nearly the whole of the land on both sides of the railway has been bought up.

"The scheme itself," said Mr. Meldrum, "is essentially a British one. The machinery, the bridges, and the locomotives are, with a few exceptions, coming from this country."

Strangely ignorant though the average Englishman is of the resources and possibilities of Mexico, the country is developing rapidly. In the opening up of Mexico Messrs. Pearson have lent a very practical hand, for they have executed work to the value of \$20,000,000, exclusive of the present great scheme.

BIRDLAND'S EARLY RISERS.

An English ornithologist, who has apparently given studious nights and mornings to the question of the hours in the summer at which the commonest song-birds wake up and sing, states that the greenfinch is the earliest riser. It pipes, for what purpose cheery Nature knows, as early as half-past one in the morning. The blackcap begins at half-past two. It is nearly four o'clock when the robin begins about the same length of time before that of the wren." The house-sparrow and the tom-tit take the last stage of the list.

SAYS THE CABMAN, SEZ HE.

It is more blessed to give than to receive, remarked the unfortunate youth, when his mother insisted upon his taking castor-oil.

Circumstances alter cases and cases alter circumstances, remarked the lawyer, as he smilingly made out his bill of costs.

Speech is silver, silence is golden, as the cabman said when the old lady gave him a five-dollar gold piece instead of a quarter.

FOR THOSE IN LOVE.

Cupid's darts make many Mrs. Love laughs at locksmiths; but the bulldog or a barbed wire fence is another matter.

Man was made to mourn, and woman to see that he does so.