

1,000 Birds to Square Mile.

Nottinghamshire, as every fisherman knows, is the best county in England for worms, and it is near Nottingham that there lives an enthusiast who has made a special study of earth worms. He has recently published it as his opinion that the average cultivated land of these islands contains 53,800 worms to the acre, and he calculates the weight of this number at 356 pounds. Their tubes go down frequently as much as four feet, and sometimes to a depth of six feet; and it is computed that they raise to the surface no less than fifteen tons of soil yearly on every acre.

Few people except naturalists ever consider the enormous amount of life other than human which exists all over the country, even in those parts which are most populous. The plague of rats which recently infested London has led to a rough calculation that there are more than 20,000,000 of these rodents within the area of Greater London, or more than three times as many rats as people.

Sparrows come next in point of number among London's warm blooded population. They must also be counted by the million, for they average at least twenty to the acre, which would make the county of London hold 1,508,040 of these little birds.

Cultivated country districts are said, by a well known ornithologist, to contain from 700 to 1,000 birds to the square mile. Put the average for the whole of the United Kingdom, including woods, waters, moors and mountains, at 800, and we have the astonishing total of nearly 97 millions for the whole Kingdom—that is to say, our

The Parker Song.



"If my opinions you would know, ask of August, Dave and Joe!"

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bird population outnumbers the human by more than two to one.

As for the insect population, that is quite beyond any statistician to figure out; but the fact that each bird certainly consumes, on an average, fifty insects a day, may give the person who tries to imagine it some faint idea of the terrific figures needed to express it. At this rate our birds eat more than 16,000 million insects in a year. Yet such an estimate as this is absolutely futile when we consider that the insect population of a single cherry tree infested with aphides was calculated by no less an authority than Miss Omerod, at 12 millions.

Lord Avebury once calculated that a single ants' nest might contain as many as 400,000 individual insects. Recent researches have shown that these figures were too high, yet the actual facts are astonishing enough. Monsieur Yung, a French entomologist, has killed the ants in five hills by means of a poisonous gas, and undertaken the prodigious labor of counting the dead. The results, beginning from the smallest hill, were respectively as follows: 17,828, 19,333, 53,018, 64,740 and 93,964.

The real figures probably averaged 5,000 higher in each case, as no allowance was made by Monsieur Yung for absent and escaped ants.

The United Kingdom has of horses 2,028,099; of cattle, 11,344,881; of sheep, more than 31,500,000, and rather over 4,000,000 of pigs. From these figures it is plain that the domestic animals of this country far outnumber the human beings who inhabit it.

This calculation takes no account of cats or of dogs. Of the latter we have fairly good statistics, for we know how many licenses are taken out for dogs in a year. Last year the number was just under 1,500,000. Add to this amount shepherds' dogs, which are untaxed, and puppies under taxable age, and the total figures will be fully 2,-

000,000. Cats are commonly supposed to outnumber dogs about two and half to one. Thus there are 7,000,000 cats and dogs in these islands.

One other important domestic creature has not yet been mentioned. The

poultry owned in this Kingdom are decidedly more numerous than the people to whom they belong. Including chickens, ducks, turkeys, and geese, the number is nearly 50,000,000.—London Answers.

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