Do Poultry Pay?

This is a question concerning which much may be said on both sides. It is not often, however, that it is answered by the indisputable logic of facts and figures. Usually it is met by vague impressions. These sometimes array themselves on one side and sometimes on the other. We have met with people who were quite certain poultry are profitable, and others equally certain that they were a losing concern—neither of whom ever dreamt of keeping a balance-sheet. That enthusiastic agriculturist, Mr. J. J. Mechi, under date of Feb., 1868, gives the following interesting statement on this subject, which is very decisive in favour of poultry-keeping:—

"Having a conviction that poultry, like animals, consume according to their weight, I tested it by giving to a healthy, fine hen, weighing 6 lb., as much barley as she would eat. In seven days she consumed five half-pints. The very finest barley weighs 56 lb. per bushel; at that rate half a pint weighs 7 oz., so that the hen consumed 35 oz., or a trifle over 2 lb. in a week, having no other food. This is a third of her own weight weekly. A pig weighing 60 lb. (live weight), or ten times the weight of the fowl, would certainly consume quite 20 lb. of barley per week—or ten times as much as the hen; but see how great is the difference in value of the two for sale:—Pig, 4d. per lb. live weight; fowl, 9d. to 1s. per lb. live weight—wholesale price. But when the poultry are at large they consume many worms and insects, and therefore are produced at a smaller consumption of food than I have named. Altogether the advantage is so great, that the whole question of producing more poultry is a national and important one. If by a much larger supply the price were reduced one-half, they would still pay as well or better than sheep, bullocks, or pigs. Of course the same principle applies for poultry as for other farm animals. There must be good breeds, and no breeding in and in after the first cross. We import 500,000,000 of foreign eggs annually—to our disgrace be it said. It is a commonly received axiom that 56 lb. of barley will make 8 lb. of pork net dead weight, or 5 lb. will make 1 lb. live weight. Therefore 5 lb. of barley at 1d per lb. (or average 40s per quarter) will make 1 lb. live weight of poultry, worth 9d. per lb."

Care of Young Turkeys.

The first diet offered to turkey chicks should consist of eggs, boiled hard, and finely mixed, or curd with bread crumbs and the green part of onions, parsley, &c., chopped very small and mixed together so as to form a loose, crumby paste; oat meal with a little water may also be given. They will require water; but this should be put into a very shallow vessel, so as to insure against the danger of the chicks getting wet. Both the turkey hen and her chickens should be housed for a few days; they may then, if the weather be fine, be allowed a few hours' liberty during the day; but should a shower threaten, they must be put immediately under shelter. This system must be persevered in from three to four weeks. By this time they will have acquired considerable strength, and will know how to take care of themselves. As they get older, meal and grain may be given more freely. They now begin to search for insects, and to dust their growing plumage in the sand. At the age of about two months, or perhaps a little more, the males and females begin to develop their distinctive characteristics.

In the young males, the caruneulated skin of the neck and throat, and the horn-like contractile comb on the forehead, assume a marked character. This is a critical period. The system requires a good supply of nutriment, and good housing at night is essential. Some recommend that a few grains of cayenne pepper, or a little bruised hemp seed be mixed with their food. The time of danger is over, and they become independent, and every day stronger and more hardy. They now fare as the rest of the flock, on good and sufficient food.

With respect to the diseases of the turkey, with them as with all other poultry, prevention is better than cure. The most important rules are: let the chicks never get wet, and encourage them to eat heartily by giving a good variety of food: yet to beware of injuring the appetite by too much pampering. Taking a pride in them is the great secret of success in the rearing of domestic poultry.—*Ex.*

County and Township Grants.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—In a recent number of your journal you gave some explanations of the New Agricultural Bill, in answer to the queries of a Secretary; perhaps you would be kind enough to explain a difficulty in the Act that occurs to a Treasurer. In section 48, subsection 1st, it is provided (among other things) that no Township or Horticultural Society shall receive more than *one-fifth* of the entire grant to any Electoral Division Society. Now the case is this: Township A deposits $260, B $168, and C $66, and to divide the grant ($700) in proportion to the amount deposited, A ought to receive $221.05; B $142.84, and C $56.11; but as one-fifth of the grant is $140, no more than that sum can be paid to any Township Society.

Now, the question is, how are such balances to be disposed of? In the above case $83.88 would be left in hand, for which, as far as I see, there is no provision for dividing it according to Statute. Is it to be paid to the other Township Society till its share comes up to $140, or is the Electoral Division Society to retain and use it, or will it be a "casual advantage" for the benefit of the

TREASURER?

NOTE BY ED. C. F.—The distribution of the three-fifths of any Electoral Division Society's grant to the townships in such division, is to be, to each, in proportion to the amount subscribed by its members, as compared with the amounts subscribed by the other townships in the Division, and as shown by affidavits of their respective Treasurers.

The provision objected to by "Treasurer" will not, in the case he cites, injuriously affect townships B and C; for, with the one-fifth limitation B will receive within $2.84, and C the full amount, of what they would have received if townships A and B had not been subject to such limitation, but had received the whole amount that, in the absence of the one-fifth limitation, each would have been entitled to, viz.: $221.05 and $142.84.

The Electoral Division Society, however, owing to the limitation to which townships A and B are subject, will reap the "casual advantage" of the unappropriated sums of $83.88 and $2.84, which townships A and B would have otherwise received. We do not suppose that in framing the provisions this result was contemplated, the intention of the limitation being to prevent one or two Township Societies obtaining a larger share of the grant than the County Society. When there are more than three Township Societies in any Electoral Division, the probability is that the whole of the three-fifths share of the grant will be appropriated by them.

Grass in Orchards.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—It is only by discussion that truth can be arrived at; and there is a communication in a late number of the CANADA FARMER which seems to call for some remarks, as it is quite at variance with the doctrines held by the majority of Canadian Orchardists. I refer to the article headed "Orchard Culture." Now, sir, it is almost an axiom among us that grass is bad for fruit trees, and that the more an orchard is cultivated the better the returns will be. This opinion has been arrived at by years of patient experiment, and by a careful noting of the experience of our American brethren, than whom there are no better orchardists in the world.

In a note to the writer lately, the leading fruit culturist perhaps in the Dominion said: "If you plant plums you must cultivate your orchard." Surely, what is good for plums cannot be bad for apples, and when we hear advice from such a quarter we cannot but think it safe to follow it. A conversation with an old and experienced horticulturist sustained this opinion, he taking strong ground against grass in orchards, while an actual experiment of a large orchard producing nothing while in grass, and giving liberal returns when broken up (which experiment I saw made), would go far to convince the most sceptical. But, although I state some of the arguments against the plan proposed, I should be far from wishing to dogmatize. I should like to have the subject thoroughly discussed, and the facts and arguments on both sides fully set forth. If we can seed down our orchards as soon as we plant them, and while getting a crop of hay each year, have our trees grow and produce better than by cultivation, by all means let us know it; or, if we can, by letting all the grass rot or be consumed on the orchard, produce equal returns, he will be a public benefactor who will establish the fact.

May 18, 1868. HURON.

P. S.—Is there any good pea-cutting machine? How has Collard's done the past season? If any of those who have used it would communicate the results of its use through the CANADA FARMER they would oblige.

Thorn Tree for Hedges

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—I have seen so many charges preferred against my old friend the hawthorn, that I feel inclined to say a word or two in its behalf. But first let me say that when I left England to come here I was forty-six years of age, and twenty-five of those forty-six years I spent very much among the hedges. I have planted, plashed and trimmed hedges as much, perhaps, as any man in Canada, so that if I do not know a little about the business I must be a slow farmer indeed. The last three charges that I have seen against the thorn are by your correspondent, "R. W. S.," Woodstock. They are the following: First, the mice eat them; second, they are infected with wood-lice; and, thirdly, they do not grow thick at the bottom. Now, nearly one of the first things I wanted when I came to the farm on which I am now living was a thorn hedge. Having seen many young sprigs of Quick or Hawthorn in the bush, and having observed that they had plenty of prickles on them, and also that they were natives of this country, I could see no reason why they should not make a good hedge. So I gathered as much out of the bush as planted a hedge on each side of my garden. This is seven or eight years since. Now for the objections of "R. W. S." The mice during that time, I think, have eaten about six, that is all; but I rather think not even so many as that, and the few that were eaten shot out a number of young branches below the part where they were eaten; so that objection is not a very serious one. Perhaps about the same number have been infected with lice, but they were so little injured by them that I do not know now which they were. The last objection would be a great one if it were true; but as far as my hedge is concerned there is no force in it at all. For the benefit of your readers I will explain my plan of making hedges grow thick at the bottom. When you plant the hedge, set three roots in a foot, not further apart than that; cover the roots with good soil; let it grow two years or summers. The third spring cut it off, say the last week in April, to about an inch from the ground. Cut it off with a sharp knife, with an upward cut. Be careful in so doing not to loosen the root. In the Fall, after this, trim it down a little, not too much; take all the longer branches off, whether they be grown upwards or sideways; make it look snug and straight. But be sure you mind one thing; begin from this first trimming to form it into the shape of the letter A, sharp at top like a wedge; keep it in that form till you get it to the height you want it. One thing more; keep it clean of weeds, and you will have a hedge thick enough at the bottom. If any one doubts the truth of what I say, they can have an ocular demonstration if they will visit my farm.

STEPHEN NICHOLSON
Sylvan.