

BEES AND POULTRY.

BEE-KEEPING.

This is an industry that should find a place on every farm. Bees properly rank among the live stock, and, small though they are, may be made more profitable than the poultry. They do not exactly work for nothing and board themselves, but they come very near doing so. The great hindrance to bee-keeping is ignorance, first, of its profitability; and, secondly, of the way to do it. A high authority has estimated that not less than \$10,000 is lost in every township throughout Canada for want of bees to gather the honey that goes to waste. What a vast aggregate this makes when added up! If people would only inform themselves concerning the wonders of bee-life, this branch of rural industry would not be so generally neglected. The habits of bees form quite a study, and no one should embark in bee-keeping without mastering the principles of it. It is a very interesting study. A manual of bee-keeping reads like a novel to one who is not familiar with the subject. Few people can read such a book without wanting to keep bees. Generally speaking, beginners should commence with a single hive. The bees will probably increase faster than their skill and experience in managing them, for bee-keeping is an art as well as a science. It is not claimed that there is a fortune in bees, but that it is as profitable as any other department of rural industry, and therefore worthy to be pursued. It has risks and difficulties about it. So have wheat growing, dairying, cattle-breeding. The chief difficulty about bee-keeping in this country is our severe winters. As yet no infallible method of wintering has been discovered. Occasionally a winter like the last, is very destructive to bee-life. But the same is true of other lines of business. The past winter was very hard on fruit, as well as bees. Nevertheless, fruit-growers will persevere; and so will bee-keepers. Honey is an article of commerce which is in brisk demand. As with our grain and meat, there is a good foreign market for it. There is therefore ample encouragement for extending this industry, and the prospect at present is, that it will largely increase. This journal will do its best, to keep its readers well informed on a subject which is attracting wide and well-deserved attention, and is especially worthy the notice of the farming community.

A CHAPTER ON FOWLS.

THE RURAL CANADIAN will not dabble much in fancy farming of any kind, and will maintain practical views on poultry matters. Its editor has been in his time a fowl fancier, and like Burnham, could write a book entitled "The Hen Fever, by one who has been there." Not that he proposes to do it, however. "By no means." There are far worse money-sinks and time-killers than poultry fancying. When carried to excess, it usually cures itself before very serious results ensue. But the most enthusiastic fowl-fancier is a wise man compared with the farmer who does not think poultry worthy of the least care and attention; who allows his barn-yard to be disfigured by hideous, mongrel, feathered bipeds; who leaves them to roost on vehicles, implements, or fences, and defile every clean thing with their droppings; and finally is barbarous enough to provide no shelter for them against the rigours of a Canadian winter. Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well. Poultry should have a place on every farm. Like everything else, they should be put under skilled management. A choice breed or breeds should be selected, and care taken to mate them properly, and preserve the best specimens for future increase. Fowls enough should be kept on a farm to pick up the

waste of barn-yard and fields. This is where the profit of poultry keeping is found—fowls are scavengers and gleaners. It is questionable if it pays to keep them when all their food must be bought, unless a considerable proportion of their cost is balanced by the interest and pleasure of looking after them. To those who delight in the care of poultry, it is a sort of recreation to keep fowls, but as the saying is, they will eat their heads off in most cases when all their food has to be bought. On the farm they are doubtless profitable, though owing to the lowness of the price usually obtained in our markets for eggs and poultry, the margin of profit is not a very wide one.

BEES ON A SMALL SCALE.

We have seen a great many small farmers and suburban city folks who do not keep bees. In fact, in many sections of Canada it is a rarity to find such persons giving any attention to bee culture. Some may plead that they cannot afford the money for the purchase of a good colony; and after having purchased them cannot afford the time to attend to them. Now, they will not draw very heavily upon your pocket-book or upon your time.

Bees, like other stock, require pasturage; but unlike horses, cattle and sheep, they are free commoners, ranging at will in search of stores, nor can they be arrested and punished for intrusion upon premises other than those of their owners. A single colony of bees in good condition in the spring may be counted upon to double or triple their number in a single season, securing ample stores for winter consumption, while supplying a gratifying surplus for household use. This accumulation will prove most acceptable in families, especially when the price of butter rules so high as to place it beyond the reach of those not blessed with fat pocket-books.

THE FRENCH WAY WITH POULTRY.

La Basse-Cour, a French journal specially devoted to the interests of the poultry yard, gives the following directions for insuring white, plump and tender poultry for the table, as obtained from a celebrated cook in the south of France. To get good weight and a delicate colour, only meal from grain of last year's growth should be used in the fattening process, and the water employed for the mixing of the food should be mixed with salt in the proportion of ten grammes to the litre (three-eighths of an ounce avoirdupois, to a quart of meal). Further, a small quantity of coarse gravel should be added to the paste thus made, so as to assist the bird's digestive functions. Special care should be taken not to give them any heavy meal for at least twelve hours before they are killed, so that the intestines may be empty at the time of death, and the acid fermentation of their contents which would otherwise ensue, and which facilitates decomposition, may be avoided. Nor should we be in too great a hurry to pluck them; if feathers are pulled out while the blood is fluid, the vesicle at the root of each of them becomes engorged and the skin gets spotted. A fowl killed while digestion is going on will hardly keep for a week. By attention to the above directions they may be preserved for a fortnight in mild, wet weather, and for three weeks or more when it is dry and cold. A few pieces of charcoal put inside will assist in preservation.

THE EFFECTS OF FOOD ON EGGS.

It does not require much, if any, extra understanding on the part of any one to really see how the flesh of a fowl fed on wholesome food and water should be better to the taste than those fed at random, and upon all manner of unwholesome food.

This applies equally to the eggs also. Anyone can test this, if he so wishes, quite easily, by feeding on slop food, or food of an unclean kind, such as swill and decaying garbage. The flesh of such fowls will quickly taint, and eggs will taste unsavoury, at least to anyone with an ordinary palate. Fresh air has much also to do with this matter. No flesh is fit for the table which is not allowed an unlimited quantity of pure air. If any person of ordinary discernment would consider the actual condition of highly stall-fed animals of Christmas and other similar times of rejoicing, he would be quite easily satisfied that although to look at, the stall-fed animal which always lacks pure air, is the fattest, yet its flesh does not agree with the stomach as does that of the healthy, ordinarily-fed animal. Some may say that the extra fat does this. I say not, for I have quite often kept account, and though I do not touch a morsel of fat I was troubled afterwards with a disordered stomach, which never appeared when I partook heartily of ordinary fine beef, both fat and lean.

FOWLS seldom tire of milk. They may eat too much grain or meat for health, but milk in any form is more palatable and healthy.

NEVER keep an old hen. After the second year, hens, as a rule, diminish in laying power. Of course, the quantity of eggs a fowl will lay, as well as the season of laying, can be regulated to a certain extent by care and feeding; but unless a hen is of a valuable breed or especially useful as a setter or mother, it does not pay to keep her after she is three years old.

PROFESSOR ALEXANDER WILSON, of Dublin, has calculated the amount of sugar contained in the calyces of different kinds of flowers, and the proportion of honey which insects can extract from it. He calculates that 125 clover blossoms contain one gramme of sugar. As each blossom consists of about sixty calyces, at least 125,000 by 60, or 7,500,000 calyces, must be rifled to afford a kilogramme of sugar, and as honey contains 75 per cent. of sugar, it requires 5,600,000 calyces of clover to yield a kilogramme of the former. Hence we may imagine the countless numbers of flowers that bees must visit to be able to stock their hives.

CANADIAN CATTLE FAIRS.

The following list of Canadian cattle fairs, and the days on which they are held will be found useful:

- Acton—The Thursday after the first Wednesday in each month.
- Berlin—First Thursday in each month.
- Brampton—First Thursday in each month.
- Drayton—Saturday preceding the first Wednesday in each month.
- Durham—Tuesday preceding the third Wednesday in each month.
- Eden Grove, Pinkerton Station, county Bruce—The last Tuesday in each month.
- Elmira—Second Monday in each month.
- Elora—Tuesday preceding the first Wednesday in each month.
- Erin—First Monday in January, April, and October.
- Fergus—Thursday after the third Wednesday in each month.
- Galt—Wednesday after the second Tuesday in each month.
- Guelph—First Wednesday in each month.
- Hamilton—Thursday after the first Wednesday in each month.
- Hanover—Monday preceding the third Wednesday in each month.
- Harriston—Friday preceding first Wednesday in each month.
- Kerrwood Union—Third Wednesday in March, June, and September, and the second Wednesday in December.
- Listowel—First Friday in each month.
- Marshville—Second Wednesday in each month.
- Masonville—First Tuesday in February, May, August and November.
- Mono Mills—Third Wednesday in January, April, July, and October.
- Moorfield—Monday preceding the first Wednesday in each month.
- Mount Forest—Third Wednesday in each month.
- New Hamburg—First Tuesday in each month.
- Orangeville—Second Tuesday in each month.
- Waterloo—Second Tuesday in each month.
- Woodstock—Second Thursday in each month.
- Thorndale—Second Wednesday in each month.