

### A City Chap's Experience with Hens.

It was on the occasion of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the wedding of Giles and Hannah Baker that Sile Andrews told about the poultry experience of his city cousin, Lon Snow.

The "women folks" were visiting with sweet old Mrs. Baker in the south parlor, and the men were all assembled with Giles in the north parlor, before a good old-fashioned open fire, for it was a frosty November night.

The talk had fallen on the knack that some people have with hens, while others, try as they may, never seem to be able to do anything with them.

"I never bothered with 'em myself," said Giles. "Mother's had 'em an' got tired of 'em, and had 'em ag'in, but never seemed to me as if they was wuth their keep. When eggs are high they won't lay."

"That's the trouble 'Lon Snow had," said Sile Andrews, throwing the core of an apple he had been eating into the fire. "Never hear 'bout my cousin 'Lon?" said he, turning to me.

I was glad to be able to say I had not, for it meant a new story from Mr. Andrews, and I knew from experience that he had what the critics call "good sense of selection."

He leaned forward and rested his chin on his hand and said:

"Well, 'Lon Snow was born an' brought up in the city, which was a misfortune to start with, an' besides that he hadn't no more sense of humor 'an a hen—"

"An' he was all-fired pig-headed, too," put in Sam Barlow.

"Well, I'm comin' to that. When he got 'baout forty year old the doctor told him he'd got to stop workin' in an office an' go into the country to live or he'd peg out in a short time. So he wrote to ask ef he could visit us fer a spell, an' I wrote back 'Come on, an' he come."

"When he got to the haouse he was the whites', mos' pindlin' lookin' man I ever see. Looked as if he'd slump into himself ef the wind changed sudden. He moped around the haouse a few days an' talked crops ter me at meal times an' in the evenin' until I wisht I'd never took up farmin'. Gosht, it was awful to hear his views. Finally he said that the idleness was killin' him an' he wanted to take up farmin'. I choked daown my feelin' an' said he warn't built fer heavy farmin', but mebbe he might do a little hen business. Then Mis' Andrews, she got talkin' to him. I kep' my maouth shet fer I knew he couldn't l'arn from me, but Ma filled him up good on the proper food an' he nodded his head, very wise, 'sif he knew it all but was glad to have her freshen up his memory. He wanted to go right about an' buy some hens that night. Thought a hundred would do fer a starter. But Ma tol' him that fifteen to twenty was all he could manage at the start an' he finally agreed. 'What sort'll you keep, Plymouth Rocks or Braown Legg'ns?' says she, an' I could see by the way he hesitated an' at last said, 'Braown Legg'ns,' very distinct, that he didn't know anything whatever 'baout hens.

"Nex' mornin' we went over to Deacon Foster's to buy the hens. He had purt' near five hundred walkin' 'raound his farm on Redtop. They did look mighty slick an' 'Lon was tickled to death with 'em. He asks the old deacon haow much he'd charge apiece and the deacon says, 'Seventy-five cents.' That's reasonable," said 'Lon, though he didn't know if it was or not. Then he looked 'raound with a critterkal eye an' he says:

"By the way, I only want the ones with fine feathers. I never cared fer the little sober ones."

"What do you mean?" said the deacon.

"I mean," says 'Lon with all the dignity that a city man could git on to him, "that I want the big variety, the ones with the large combs and the big tail feather; not those sober ones with no tails at all. I'm go'n' about this thing the right way an' I might as well have good hens as poor ones."

"Well, the deacon, he stepped behind the barn door to conceal his feelin's, which was powerful at the time, an' when he comes about he was as sober lookin' as 'Lon. 'All right,' says he, 'but I'll tell you honest, it's the little ones 'at'll lay the most eggs."

"But 'Lon couldn't be changed. He was go'n' in fer looks, he said, an' anyhow he guessed he'd make 'em lay if anyone could. 'I don't daoubt it,' says the deacon with a cheerful smile, 'but ef you're go'n' to take the pick of the flock I'll hev to charge ye a dollar apiece.' 'Lon warn't no way small, an' he agreed to the terms an' arranged to come at night an' git 'em."

"I remember 'em," said Barlow. As purty a flock as I ever see with their high-steppin' ways. I used to go up an' tell your cousin that he ought to exhibit 'em at Merwinton Fair, an' he said he guessed he would. On'y fault he found with 'em was they was quar'lsome an' slow to get to layin'. I says: 'Ef the redness of the comb is any sign you oughter hev eggs purty soon."

"Well," resumed Sile, "he never suspected nothin', but went to feedin' 'em fer eggs accordin' as Ma had told him the first night. She said it was a shame not to tell him what kind of hens they was, but I argied that it kep' him busy about er doors an' that's what he needed. He didn't need eggs any more'n a hen needs teeth."

"Didn't he ever find out?" I asked, seeing that there was a move in the other room that suggested a breaking up of the gathering.

"Well, matters went on fer 'baout three or four weeks, an' then one mornin' in May, when eggs was

so plentiful that they was usin' 'em to stone cats with, he comes into the barn where I was sharpenin' my ax on the grin'stun an' he says: 'Funny my hens don't ever go near their nests. An' they're quar'lin' all the time.'

"Then I says: 'Lon,' says I, 'some folks never can l'arn anythin' arter they're growed up, an' your're one of 'em. You was dead set on gittin' that breed, although the deacon told ye the small ones was the best fer eggs. Naow the city's a good place ter live in fer a few things, but you don't l'arn everything ther'. Some country folks hev one rooster to a flock an' some don't hev any, but your city notion of hev'in' every one a rooster ain't conducive to eggs!'"

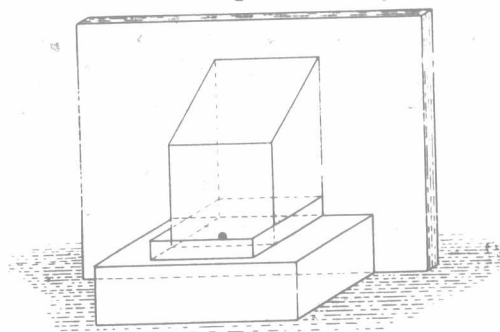
### Poultry-House Furnishings.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—I send you sketches of some convenient poultry utensils.

Fig. 1 represents an automatic drinking-fountain, which will be found useful for chickens of any age or size. This fountain is composed of two parts, which we will designate as tank and pan. It is represented in sketch as sitting on a block of wood, close to a board fence or partition of some kind, ready for service. The dimensions of tank are 6 by 5 inches, and 12 inches high in rear, with sloping top of 45 degrees, or one-half pitch. The pan is 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  by 6 inches, and 1 inch high. The black dot in front of tank represents a small hole,  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in diameter, the top of which should not exceed three-quarters of an inch from lower edge of tank, thus allowing the same depth of water in that part of

Fig 1



pan which extends out from tank in front. To fill the tank it is necessary to invert it, after which place the cover or pan on; then, holding the pan in place with one hand, and lifting the tank with the other hand, giving all a gentle upward movement, and at the same time turning the fountain over, carefully place it in position ready for use. A little practice will enable one to perform this movement without any perceptible waste. A fountain of the above size will hold a little over a gallon, and, if constructed from galvanized iron, may be made complete for about 25 cents, if a number were ordered.

Fig. 2 represents a feeding dish for half-grown chicks. I have two sizes. Small ones made from old tin pie dishes, and the larger (as shown) from worn-out milk pans, such as we sometimes find thrown over the garden wall and considered worthless. In constructing these little feed dishes, we simply procure a block of wood for each dish; cut them down to the proper diameter at the base to fit the dish in view. The height of the block or cone is of no great importance, say about 12 inches for a milk pan and a little less for a pie plate. The ring at top of cone (as shown) represents a wire handle. Fasten these dishes to cone with screws, so that they may be easily taken apart if required. Those who try them will find in them a very serviceable little vessel for feeding soft feed to growing chicks.

Fig 2

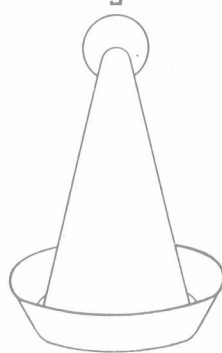


Fig 3

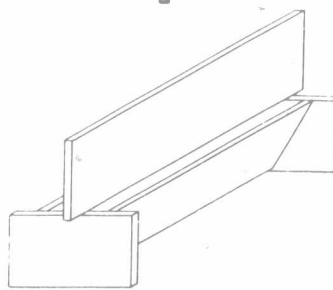


Fig. 3 represents an ordinary V-shaped wooden trough, with a board about 8 inches wide extending from end to end of same, as shown. Its purpose is merely to keep the fowl from getting into the trough when feeding, and it does this admirably. The board is held in position by two dowel-pins, one at each end of trough. These pins are made from 4-inch wire nails with heads off. The holes, of proper size, are first bored in each end of trough, then holes in the board to correspond, and pins put in to stay. After feeding, the board is removed and placed against a partition, out of the way, and trough turned up to keep dirt from entering the pin holes.

A. T. GILBERT.

Simcoe Co., Ont.

### Raising Chicks the Natural Way.

Raising chicks with hens as incubators and mothers is the most common and popular method. Nothing proves this so thoroughly as the success of the hen that steals "her nest." She lays her clutch of eggs and then becomes possessed of the brooding instinct.

Early in the morning she leaves her nest and seeks food, hunting through the grass, all wet with dew, and returning with wet feathers, bringing the necessary moisture to her eggs, and during her absence giving them the necessary "cooling off" and airing which incubator men (whose best ideas are all learned from the mother hen) insist upon.

The best possible management of sitting hens is to follow the natural inclination. When possible, let them sit in nests of their own choosing, and after putting in the eggs, leave them severely alone. Last spring I set two hens at the same time, one a Plymouth Rock, and the other a common white hen.

The Plymouth Rock would come out into the yard to eat every time I fed the rest of the flock; but as the old white hen would not get off her nest, I sometimes took a handful of grain and let her eat out of my hand. I soon found that she got out of the yard early in the morning and picked up what she needed, and went back to her nest with her wet plumage. She frequently staid off so long I thought her eggs would never hatch. She had thirteen eggs, and she brought out thirteen fine, healthy chicks; while the Plymouth Rock only had nine chicks out of her thirteen eggs.

From the time the hen is set, the battle against lice should be begun. Dust the nest thoroughly with insect powder, and as soon as the hen and brood are removed from the nest, dust the hen down to the skin as well. In hovering her chicks, she will transfer the powder to them, and thus kill any lice which may have taken hold on them. Provide the mother hen and brood with a good-sized coop, one which the chicks may occupy long after they are weaned. I use a box about three feet square, slatted in front to allow the chicks free passage, and tightly roofed. Clean the floor every few days, and sprinkle with clean sand. Keep the inside thoroughly whitewashed. With such a coop, and constant watching, the brood should do well. Especial care must be exercised in keeping the chicks dry until they are well feathered out. Young chicks which are allowed to range through the wet, dewy grass are subject to gapes. Have the front of the coop fitted with a board which may be used to confine the chicks to the dry coop during rainy periods and until the grass is dry in the morning. As soon as the chicks are well feathered, they are safe from dampness, and may be allowed freedom at all times.

For the first week, the feed should be warm, easily digested, and slightly stimulating. Stale bread soaked in milk and slightly seasoned with cayenne pepper is good. Always squeeze the feed as dry as possible. Sloppy food is injurious. Rolled oats are excellent for young chicks. Never feed corn meal unless it is thoroughly scalded. Corn meal wet in cold water swells in the crop and causes indigestion. The chicks are soon able to eat whole wheat, which is by far the best grain for them. A little common "Venetian red," which may be purchased at any drug or print store, may be added to the drinking water or mixed with the soft food with good results. It is cheap, and an excellent tonic for young and old fowls. The more good grass range the chicks enjoy, the better for their growth and health. When so provided, they pick up lots of animal food in the form of insects; but when confined, chopped meat should be provided. A variety of good, wholesome food should be furnished at all times. The exercise of common sense is necessary to success with fowls. Lice and gapes are the most destructive enemies of young chicks. Chicks raised on high land are less subject to gapes than those raised on low, wet lands.

Study nature in your poultry yards. Nature has her laws of health and growth; they must be learned and respected.

FARMER'S WIFE.

### An Effective Hawk Trap.

The poultry flock that is near a large grove or swamp, and not kept enclosed in yards or pens is, generally reduced during the summer by hawks, crows, etc. It is not an easy matter to capture these fellows with a shotgun, because they come around and secure their booty and get away with it in a very sly manner. A good means of catching them is to elevate a pole of considerable length in a field or near a fence, away from trees and not far from the buildings. This will form an attractive alighting point. After a few weeks the visiting hawks and crows that come around looking for spring chickens would consider this their reserved view point. On this pole should now be placed a common steel rat-trap, securely attached to the pole. When Mr. Hawk or Crow alights he will set off the trap and find himself captured. To leave him there would be cruel and is unnecessary. A shotgun will settle his pain; he can then be taken down and the trap re-set. One or two traps, well placed, will, during a season, catch most of the hawks and many crows within a radius of several miles, and thus save many chickens from a living death.