

Lice: Their Work, and Remedy.

Two years ago I made my first attempt at poultry-raising. I bought eight dozen pure-bred Brown Leghorn eggs, and set them under hens the last week in April. The hens were set in the barn, away from the other fowls, and food and water kept before them always. All the eggs hatched but nine. Imagine how proud I was of my chicks. But, lo, it was to have a terrible fall. When my chicks were not yet two weeks old, they began to die, not by ones and twos, but by the dozen. They seemed stupid, their little wings dropped, they would not eat, and soon died. I was at a loss to find the cause, and went to a neighbor and described the case. He immediately said: "Lice." I came home and applied lard and coal oil (mixed) to the chicks' heads, and, sure, the lice began to crawl out. I only managed to save twelve—five roosters and seven pullets. The following summer I raised fifty chickens from the eggs the seven laid, and have now a flock of thirty fine Leghorn hens, which have averaged twenty eggs a day for the past month. I have learned several lessons from experience on raising poultry, but the hardest was losing so many chicks from lice. It is two years ago that my hens were so lousy. I at once fixed a dust bath for them, putting in occasionally a handful of sulphur; greased their heads with coal oil and lard every two weeks; thoroughly cleaned the henhouse, burned brimstone in it, then whitewashed every crack and corner. The lice soon disappeared, and have not bothered since. I keep it as clean as I know how, and believe it is the secret of keeping away lice, and prevention far easier than cure. I write this thinking it may be a benefit to some new beginners.

VINA.

Selecting Good Layers.

That the majority of hens are capable of producing many more eggs than they usually do, is undoubted. The head of a good layer is finer and not so thick or coarse and heavy looking as the inferior layer. The eyes are brighter and bolder, and the combs, as a rule, are larger. It is considered that cocks that have been bred from a good laying strain can be distinguished. They are more precocious when cockerels, they begin to crow much sooner, and they do not grow very large. There are very few poultry-keepers, however, let their experience of fowls be ever so considerable, who could select their birds from such characteristics. A more satisfactory method is to take note of those hens that are busy ranging about the field or runs late in the evenings when most of the others have gone to roost, or those that are the first out in the morning. These are most invariably free layers. There is no doubt that the faculty of laying is to a large extent hereditary, and that pullets hatched from eggs laid by prolific layers will themselves be good layers. The eggs, again, of these pullets, particularly if they are mated with male birds bred from free layers, will produce chickens that should again inherit this tendency. The average number of eggs laid by the flock after two or three years of this selection will be largely increased. Poultry-keepers who wish to become possessed of hens that are really first-rate layers should take the trouble to notice those hens that pay most frequent visits to the nest. When these hens have laid, their eggs should be marked, and only those eggs retained for setting purposes. Another method by which the egg supply can be increased is to weed out annually all the old hens that have laid for two seasons. Where there are a large number of fowls, it is easy to recognize the age of the hens by marking all the young pullets by placing a ring on their legs. If these rings are varied every year, either in thickness or in some other way, the ages can be told at once on catching the bird when roosting. And if all hens not required for setting are removed from the rest directly they show signs of broodiness, and placed in a light coop, with some food and water, they will quickly commence laying again, instead of wasting many days, as they so often do.—E.R.

Profitable Poultry.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—In reading your paper with great interest, I have found many valuable lessons in regard to all kinds of stock and poultry. In the April 1st issue I read a very sensible article on feathers and eggs, by John B. Pettit, and I thought I would send you some account of my own success with Barred Plymouth Rocks. I have been breeding them for fifteen years, and think them the best fowl for the farmer. I have seventeen pullets which have been laying since November. They laid 208 eggs in January, and in February 450, and they are still laying. I keep them pure all the time. I had fifty last year that made me \$80, which I think is very good for the number of hens.

T. R.

Durham Co., Ont.

Mud and Eggs.

Farmers, would you in life succeed?
Don't fail the ADVOCATE to read.
Look sharp; your eyes wide open keep,
And shut them only when asleep.

Spring is here, and our feathered boarders are enjoying the lovely sunshine and outdoor exercise. Since I wrote last we have made an important discovery. A few weeks ago, when our men were hauling mussel mud, they shovelled off a load in the barnyard instead of taking it out to the field, as they always did before. Well, the roosters found it, and called their partners to come quickly. In a few minutes the mud was literally covered with busy workers.

Oh what a feast they had!

There is something in the mud that the poultry are particularly fond of—something they relish very much.

Now for the results.

In a few days we were carrying in eggs by the dozen. We found eggs lying around on the barn floor; some of the hens were in such a hurry to lay that they didn't wait to look for a nest. This was about the 10th of March, and they are laying just as well yet. They are out on the mud picking and scratching every day.

Now, farmers, jot this item down in your notebook lest you forget: "Mussel mud good to make hens lay." Of course, you are done hauling mud now, but next winter when you commence to haul again drive up to your henhouse and give your fowls a treat. Keep them well supplied with it. Mud is cheap. We know you are a little stingy when the women ask for some wheat for the hens, but you won't be stingy with your mud. Now don't run away with the idea that mud alone will make hens lay well, for it won't, but it is certainly a great help. It is a welcome change in the bill of fare, and that is what the fowls need. If we don't give them

that it always pays to try and please our customers and give them satisfaction. A. R.

Charlottetown, P. E. I.

[NOTE.—Mussel mud is a product taken from the beds of streams near the seacoast in the Maritime Provinces. It is a mixture of mud, decayed seaweed and sea-shells, and hauled by farmers in winter to manure their land for wheat; it answers a good purpose. We get none of it in the inland provinces, so our henwives will require to hunt up a substitute.—EDITOR F. A.]

Setting the Hen.

As a rule it is not wise to make a hen sit where she does not want to, because you may not only lose the eggs, but also a good deal of your patience. It is best to have the hens as tame as possible before setting. If the hen is in an out-of-the-way place when she becomes broody, it is well to allow her to hatch a clutch of chickens where she is. If it is necessary to move her, allow biddy to sit on the nest she chooses for a few days before moving her. Then move her to where she is to sit, at night, and she will not notice the change so much. A good nest for a sitting hen is a small or medium-sized box placed on end, with a narrow board nailed across the bottom of the front to keep the nesting material in. Then strips are nailed up and down across the front so the hen can be confined or released at will. In the bottom of the nest place a layer of earth or sod nicely hollowed out at the center. On this place a little chaff or cut straw. Do not have it (the straw) too short nor too long.

In selecting the eggs for hatching, use only those that are well shaped, rejecting all of abnormal size or with any deformity whatever. In order to secure a uniform hatch, endeavor to get the freshest eggs possible, those laid as near one date as convenient. In order to have them all come out about the same time, get those which are laid about the same time.

Many amateurs, in ordering eggs from a distance, do not seem to understand that in order to get a satisfactory hatch, such eggs should not be set immediately on their arrival. Turn the package topside down, and let them remain that way for at least 12 hours. An oversight on this point has been the cause of many a breeder being denounced as a swindler, when, in fact, the whole blame rested on the purchaser.

Give the hen and nest a thorough dusting with insect powder before she is given the eggs. At night, when she has become accustomed to the nest, give her about thirteen eggs, more or less, according to the hen. It is well to set her in a cool, quiet place, where she will not be disturbed. Keep fresh water before her at all times, and feed her on whole grain, peas or corn. S. H. W.

Huron Co.

APIARY.

Weak Colonies in Spring—When to Unite Them.

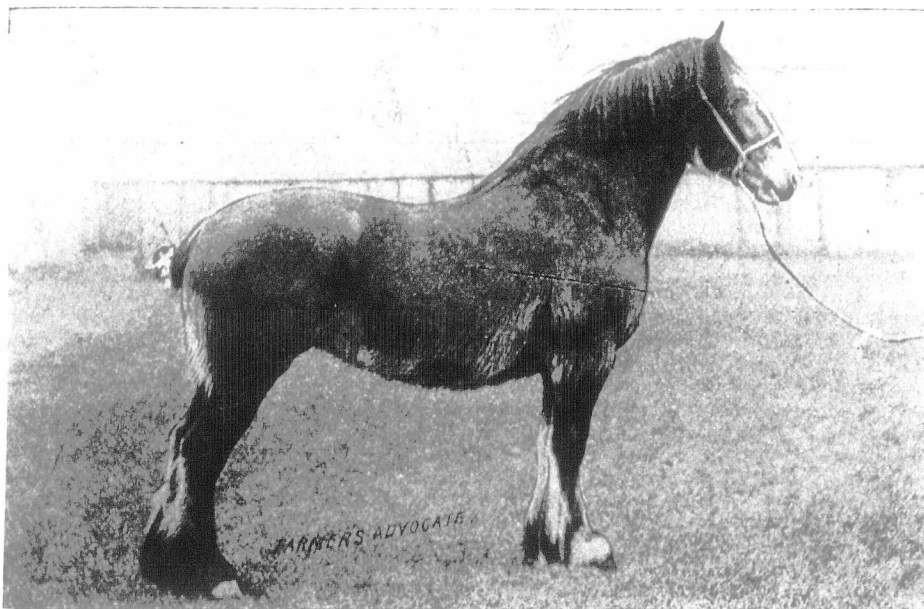
When colonies of bees come out weak in the spring, it may be beneficial to put two or more of these weak colonies together, so that one strong colony may be made from several weak ones. Some suppose that if any uniting of weak colonies is to be done, the earlier in the spring it is accomplished the better the results will be, but from years of experience along this line I am positive that such early uniting is a mistake. If these colonies are left to themselves, the best we can hope is that they will become strong enough in bees and honey for winter; while by uniting just before the honey harvest I secure a good yield of honey from the united colony and get the two in good condition for winter. My plan of work in uniting, and looking toward this end, is as follows:

As early in the spring as the bees can be looked over, all of the weaker colonies are shut on as few combs as they have brood, by using a division-board to contract the hive. They are now left till warm weather comes, being sure that all have stores enough where they can conveniently reach them to carry them until this period. They are now built up as rapidly as possible by reversing the brood, etc., so that by June 1st the best of them will have five frames of brood, others four, and so on down to one for the very weakest. As soon as the best has its five frames filled with brood, down to the very bottom corner, a frame of hatching brood is given to one having but four frames, and an empty comb put in its place.

In taking a frame of hatching brood in this way I generally take all the bees there are on it right along, only being sure that I do not get the queen, so that all the young bees on this comb help to give strength to the weaker, as the younger bees will not return to their old home.

In a few days a frame of brood and bees are taken from each of these two five-frame colonies, and given to the one having but three frames, and so I keep taking till all have five frames each.

Do not make the mistake some do and try to strengthen the very weakest first, for by so doing



MOSS ROSE.

A champion Clydesdale mare of Scotland, dam of imp. Montrave Matchless.
PROPERTY OF LEVI S. BOWLES, SPRINGVILLE, ONT. (SEE GOSSIP, PAGE 319.)

what they want, they won't give us what we want. Give them a variety. Here is where many persons make a mistake. They wonder why their hens don't lay, while they feed them all winter on oats and potatoes. One needs to study their poultry. It is surprising how much we can learn by close observation. This is women's work. Men, as a general rule, are not much interested in poultry. Well, women-folk, let me give you a bit of advice: If you have been feeding your hens on potatoes for a while, take notice how they eat them, or if they eat them at all. If they don't seem to care for them, stop feeding them at once. Don't say, "If the saucy things won't eat potatoes, they can starve," but go and get them something they will relish. Boil some barley or scald some corn meal for them, and see how greedily they will eat that. Look over your flock to see if all your hens are smart and lively. If you find one moping around the henhouse, that will scarcely move out of your way, kill the good-for-nothing. Like some human beings, the hen that has no activity or push about her, and refuses to scratch for a living, is merely a cumberer of the ground.

Now, I suppose many of you have hens set by this time, and some have chickens hatched. I am waiting yet for the hens to cluck. That is where the trouble lies. We can't persuade them to cluck, but must just wait until they are ready. The only sure way to have early chickens is to use an incubator. Setting hens is slow work. Our chickens should be all hatched in April if possible.

As eggs are cheap now, people can afford to use more of them. We take our eggs to market. I find it a good plan to pick out all the small eggs and keep them for our own use. I sell them readier, for people don't like to buy small eggs; they would rather give a little more money for large ones. Then there is a great deal in having them always looking nice and clean, and perfectly fresh. I find