

Winter-laying Hens.

At the meeting of the Canadian Fairs Association last week, Professor Graham, of the Ontario Agricultural College, told the delegates that he had a pen of hens that were laying right along, with the thermometer registering several degrees below zero in their compartments. The secret of getting hens to lay, and of preventing their combs from freezing, lies in always keeping them in airy, well-ventilated quarters, where the temperature rises but little above that outside. The house in which these particular hens are kept is well lighted; cotton is nailed over the windows to prevent drafts when the windows are open; the wall is just double-boarded, and when the water freezes in the pen before the birds have a chance to drink it, snow is thrown to them instead of water. The floor is covered to a depth of about a foot with cut straw, which the hens keep scratching over in search of grain, and so incidentally take exercise and keep themselves warm. These hens are in the best of health, and their combs have never frozen yet this winter. Next year Prof. Graham hopes to be able to say whether this method of keeping poultry in such open quarters is more economical than keeping them in warm pens.

Problems in Hatching Chicks.

As the season for hatching chickens will soon be with us again, I think the following facts found out by actual test in 1902-3, may be of interest to your readers:

I found I had some hens the eggs of which were not very good, so in order to locate them I used trap nests, and with four hens experimented, with the following result:

No. 1—Eggs proved all fertile, and reproduced strong chicks.

No. 2—About half were good. With this hen I found, although she was the best layer, one egg would hatch a strong chick and the next egg would be infertile, or a very weak germ, and so on.

No. 3—About two-thirds of her eggs hatched, and the chicks were generally weak compared with the first two.

No. 4—Did not lay many eggs, and in two years she never laid an egg that I got a chick from.

Now, as to setting hens: I set on May 13th four hens in a pen by themselves, where they could go off and on at pleasure, with nothing to disturb them. They had plenty to eat and drink, and a dust bath, and being well-tested sitters and mothers, I gave each 12 eggs, got from my several yards, none of which were picked, or the layers of them known. On June 2nd (the 20th day) I heard peeping in the pen, and on investigation found one hen (the second from the end) had got twelve chicks; the next day one and three hatched out seven and ten chicks respectively, and number four not a chick. How was this? I cannot tell, as every one had the same chance. A further test made with two hens proved that one day's eggs were ahead of another as far as fertility went.

In shipping eggs for hatching, I had reports from some of good hatches, as high as 13 from a setting; others reported very poor hatches. If such was satisfactory to the latter, I duplicated the order free. One customer told me of a poor hatch of nine. Shortly after my business took me near his place, so I thought I would drop in and see his chicks. His wife said the eggs hatched well; got 14 chicks, 10 from one hen and 4 from another, but the latter killed hers. I said nothing but thought the more about the difference between 9 and 14. The egg trade in some cases is unsatisfactory; the dissatisfaction arises from conditions for which neither buyer nor seller may be responsible—the eggs may be good when shipped, but may be injured in shipping. As there is a risk in shipping eggs, each party should assume part of the risk. The buyer objects to carry it all, and the seller complains that the buyer expects practically every egg to hatch. After the eggs are hatched the seller complains that the buyer expected that every chick should develop into a prizewinner. They will not all hatch out prizewinners for him at home, and he knows no way by which the quality can be improved by shipping them.

The seller of eggs should make a sincere effort to satisfy his customers. It is not always possible to do this, but the effort should be made nevertheless. A satisfied customer is a valuable asset; it will pay to strain a point to satisfy him, unless he be unreasonable in his demands. As for the seller of eggs who is plainly dishonest, he deserves no consideration whatever, and he should be driven out of the business. The buyer is often unreasonable, without any intention of being so. I am in the position of having been both buyer and seller. I have bought eggs and have had fair success with some; with others none. Notably, from a setting of Wvandotte eggs, five chicks hatched, every one single combs, so every one was disqualified; in other cases, though small hatches, have got some good ones.

Some breeders will tell you if you get one good chick it is all you should expect; not so the bulk of farmers, or fanciers either, for that matter. I think it best in the early part of the season not to just stick at 13 or 15 eggs to a setting, but to put a few extra in until after, say, the middle of April; after that the eggs should have a high percentage of fertility if conditions are favorable, but when eggs are shipped I firmly believe, although packed to the best of the seller's ability, that they get jarred and shaken, and some eggs are injured thereby.

In conclusion, ship the best in the best way you know how, and the buyer on his part should employ the best means at his command to ensure success, when I believe the friction that sometimes occurs will be obliterated. ED. BROWN.

EVENTS OF THE WORLD.

William Butler Yeats, the noted Irish poet, is making a lecturing tour through Canada.

It is estimated that Japan now has 300,000 troops ready for the field, independently of those required for the national defences.

Disturbances due to labor troubles have broken out at Reval, Finland. Four companies of Russian soldiers have been sent to suppress the riots.

China does not believe in half-way measures. Having declared neutrality, she now decrees that all offenders against it will be immediately decapitated.

Marcus A. Hanna, Senator from Ohio, after Theodore Roosevelt the most prominent political figure in the United States, is dead. He was 67 years of age.

Professor Markwald, a German scientist, has announced the discovery in pitchblende of particles of an extremely active substance, to which he has given the name of radiotellurium.

The large mill operated by the American Cereal Co., in Peterborough, Ont., has been badly damaged by fire. The loss is estimated at \$100,000, and 200 men are put out of employment.

Hon. R. W. Scott, Secretary of State at Ottawa, has cabled to the British Consul at Seoul, a request that the Canadian missionaries in Corea be given protection during the war.

Lord Roberts has retired from the War Office, but, at the special request of Premier Balfour, has consented to place his services at the disposal of the Committee for Imperial Defence.

A \$10,000 fire occurred in Ottawa recently. The headquarters of L'Institut Canadien, the French-Canadian literary organization of the capital, was destroyed, its fine library being a sacrifice to the flames. There is a small insurance.

A revolt has broken out in the Astrabad Provinces of Persia, where the Turcomans are in conflict with the Persians. They declare they will win their independence or become Russian subjects. The disturbance originated in a clash between the Turcomans and the customs officials of a Persian Customs House recently established on the Russo-Persian frontier.

All the powers are watching, with keenest interest, the progress of the British military expedition in Thibet. It is suspected that the idea behind it looks forward to the building of a great southern railway from Calcutta to Canton, or some other port on the China Sea. Such a road would prove a formidable rival to the Great Siberian Railway in the north.

Riots are reported from Moscow, Russia, where mobs of rebellious citizens attacked and damaged the Kremlin, being dispersed only on the arrival of the troops, who killed and wounded many of the rioters. Russia may be filled with patriotic demonstrations and excitations, but it seems there are still those within its borders who cannot forget old grudges against an over-despotic government.

The Russians are finding it a hard matter to concentrate their battleships. Owing to the intense cold, the Baltic fleet is frozen in, and will likely remain so for some time yet. The fleet in the Black Sea, on the other hand, cannot pass out of it through the Dardanelles, without violation of certain treaty obligations to which Russia

was a consenting party. Russia is most certainly confronted with the very provoking realization of having without having.

The Bulgarian States are never at rest. At Dchumbala, a Bulgarian band numbering 100 was attacked by Turkish troops, and forced to fly in the night, leaving twelve of their number dead on the field. In retaliation the Bulgarians dynamited a bridge, killing seven workmen and two soldiers. The Bulgarians are most eager to join the Macedonians in their struggle for liberty. They say that, owing to the occupation of Russian forces in the Far East, this year is particularly favorable for the Macedonian revolt, which is expected in the spring.

The mobilization of the Cossack forces of Siberia for service in the Russian army is going on rapidly. It is estimated that 80,000 of these men are now ready to be pushed into the field. They are intrepid, used to hardships, and marvelous riders, and are likely to prove a powerful factor for Russia in battles on land. Russia's chief problem now seems to be the forwarding of supplies. It is said that the Great Siberian Railway is utterly inadequate for the strain brought upon it in conveyance of men, stores and munitions of war. Trouble is also being experienced at Lake Baikal, where cracking of the ice is interfering with the laying of rails.

A writer who is familiar with the Japanese "Tommy Atkins," says that in the crack regiments of the Mikado, five feet seven, eight and nine inches are common heights, and that the average Japanese soldier is quite sturdy in build, and extremely well proportioned. He is described as bright, alert, clean and neat. The cavalry is the weakest part of the army, as the Japanese are but indifferent riders, but the infantry, artillery and engineers are well equipped and well organized. The color of the infantry uniform is blue; that of the cavalry yellow. Many of the officers, as well as the Vice-Admiral of the fleet and several captains of war ships, have embraced Christianity.

A report that over 400 Japanese were sabred in a hand-to-hand land encounter with a body of Cossacks has received no confirmation. On the other hand, it is known that Japan is rapidly occupying Corea, where the Koreans are now enthusiastically in her favor, and that, while Russia's navy is becoming steadily depleted, that of Japan is gaining in strength. Her new cruisers, the Nisshin and Kasaga, from Genoa, have arrived safely, and she has purchased several new ones. Whatever successes Russia may score will evidently have to be made on land. A dreadful report, which, however, has not yet been confirmed, states that 600 Russian soldiers have been frozen to death while crossing Lake Baikal. Whether this can be true or not, Lake Baikal is certainly the bete-noir of the road. Its immense size, the fury of its storms, and the severity of its wintry weather, combine to render it truly formidable. Russia can supply a tremendous host of men. Whether she can succeed in transporting them with sufficient rapidity, whether she can feed them and keep them supplied with ammunition when arrived at the seat of action, is the question. In Manchuria, in winter, not even forage for the horses can be obtained. With only one road, not a first-class one at that, it is little wonder that St. Petersburg trembles to think how her troops shall be maintained.

Seldom has a war opened with such a series of disasters as have befallen the Russian army in the short period since the first shots of the Russo-Japanese war were fired; and seldom, too, has such a mass of unconfirmed and exaggerated nonsense appeared in regard to any campaign. Eager only for sensation, despatches have been sent, reports have been circulated, only to be discredited and finally disposed of as utterly foundationless. Of such were the wild rumors that three of the four Russian battleships at Vladivostok had been blown up. That this story was by no means founded upon fact, has been proved by the later intelligence that these vessels have been seen cruising in the Sea of Japan; that they have sunk a Japanese cruiser and bombarded the town of Fukuyama, on the Island of Yezo. These battleships, consisting of three armored cruisers, the Rossia, Gromboi and Rurik, and a protected schooner, the Bogatyr, are described as being splendid modern war vessels, able to do much for Russia if well handled. Their isolated situation, however, would seem to be unfortunate, and the skill of the Russians at sea is by no means assured. An instance of the almost pitiful incapacity of management of the latter is afforded in the accidental sinking of their torpedo transport, the Yenisei. While trying to pick up a floating submarine mine in the harbor at Port Arthur, she came in collision with another which exploded under her bows, causing her to sink instantly with