

Poultry on the Farm.

(Continued.)

Editor Review,

As I have before remarked, the farmer is disposed to question the statements made by fanciers respecting the number of eggs a well-fed hen will lay. In my last I took the number at 120, which will be thought by many, no doubt, to be still too high. Now, I purpose giving what I think are the reasons for this difference of opinion between fanciers and farmers. But I must state at the commencement that I am not willing to endorse every statement which fanciers have made under this head. I have, too, read some statements which seemed to me at least as if they needed a little qualification in order that they might be receivable. Still I am not willing to accuse writers of falsehood. One or two hens in a large flock, or where only a few are kept, may do something extraordinary in this line. But it would be very unsafe to judge a whole farm by the products of one acre of it which has been cultivated as a garden. Of course a farmer's own flock is the standard by which he compares others. But as he undervalues his own, generally, he will be likely to do the same to others. There are two reasons, it seems to me, why farmers differ so widely with fanciers on this subject, and they are these: The farmer receives far more than he is aware of from his poultry—and not nearly so much as he might—and his poultry are not alone, his cows come in for their full share. Under these two heads we will consider the egg question for this month.

Now, sir, have you ever noticed how cheaply a farmer can support a large family? How many rent their farms for \$400 or \$500 with the mistaken idea that that sum will support their family in its accustomed style, and that a nice little sum can be put by every year; but when the current expenses of the year are all paid, the balance is not unfrequently on the wrong side. If a man who is depending upon a salary of \$400 or \$500 with which to support a family inform a farmer that he finds strict economy necessary in order that his expenditure be kept within his income, he is astounded, and exclaims, "Why all the grain I raise does not amount to much over that, and I support my family and save a little." This is all very true, but if nothing else had contributed to the support of that family than the grain crop a different story would be the result. And farmers who grow wealthy farming are mostly men who understand that though the grain crop is the most important, and therefore demands the first attention, yet if the other apparently insignificant matters be neglected altogether, failure will be the result. Hence we are very likely to find a fine herd and also a fine

flock of fowls about, a very successful farmer's yards. As a case in point, I have before my mind at this time a farm-yard in which is to be found a large, well fed, and well kept flock—and the owner informed me not long ago that he has always been aware of the largeness of the returns obtainable from a properly managed flock—and this gentleman does not think it too small an office to feed and care for these himself. He commenced life with energy and intelligence as a stock in trade, and has accumulated the nice little sum of between \$25,000 and \$30,000.

But to come back more directly to the subject. If a family is kept so cheaply of course very few groceries, &c., are needed, and therefore the number of eggs sold are necessarily very limited. We can easily understand how it is, the egg mistake is only a part of a great mistake, and the great mistake arises from the cheapness at which a farmer is able to produce these things, so that one naturally begets the other. Let a farmer pay cash, or better still, run an account for these few groceries which basket after basket of eggs have heretofore purchased, and he will soon be made aware that it costs a little to support a family. And this is the manner in which they are sold: a dollar's worth sugar is needed, a basket of eggs is sent off, and in this way it is utterly impossible to form any just estimate of what have been sold. But it is just like a grocer's or butcher's bill, a great deal larger than we expected it to be. Some of my city friends will recognize this part of the picture. Another reason for this undervaluation is that more are used at home than he is aware of. I have often heard the complaint in summer, and which is partly correct, "We do not get any more eggs than is sufficient for our own use;" and in a farm house this is not a few. Still they are not always observable, and therefore not taken into account; they must appear as veritable ham-and-eggs—not a bad thing either for persons who are practising economy, yet, when they have to be bought, cost something—or else they are not being used. This is a very reasonable mistake to make, as we cannot expect the farmer to institute a formal enquiry into the composition of every dish the good lady prepares; but if he did, he would, no doubt, soon be convinced that more eggs were being consumed at home than he had formerly been aware of. But, after all, this taking and asking no questions leads to errors. In conversation with a lady, who has a large family, upon this subject a short time ago, I inquired how many eggs she considered she used daily? "From one to six dozen," was the answer. Now, this accounts for the interest which farmers' ladies in general take in the poultry. I have known many instances in which she had to raise and keep them nearly against the will of her husband—at least he