

age fee has not yet been decided on, but will be made as low as is reasonable, probably 3 or 4 cents per sack of 75 pounds for the season.

"Farmer's Advocate" readers will join in wishing success to this latest agricultural co-operative concern.

Ventilation of Apple Barrels.

With the shipping season upon us, it will be well to draw pointed attention to an article that appeared in these columns on June 24th, summarizing some recent experience with ventilation of apple barrels. Such a barrel is already in use in many fruit-growing sections of the United States, and is of special advantage in the shipment of early apples, but apparently beneficial in the case of any apples subjected to transportation in the hold of a vessel. The best way to accomplish it with barrels as ordinarily made is to make an opening about an inch deep and several inches long, cut out of each of four staves at the bilge of the barrel. It may be done at small cost, and the benefit reported has been in some cases very marked.

POULTRY.

"Do Ducks Eat Their Heads Off?"

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Little Davey is forever asking questions. "You had better keep still, or something will happen to you," said his mother; "curiosity once killed a cat, you know." Davey was so impressed with this that he kept quiet for three minutes, then, "Say, mother, what was it the cat wanted to know?" We are born questioners. To a child the world seems full of secrets, and he considers it his business to learn all he can. How can he gain the information he wants? There are two methods open to every child: First, as Davey did, ask questions; second, keep quiet, and investigate. Personally, I usually adopted the latter, because, like the Irishman, I never liked to display my ignorance.

A boy is bound to hear some expressions that puzzle him. On one occasion I heard a man say that "Ducks will eat their heads off." Now, that was something I couldn't understand. How could a couple of ducks eat one another's heads off? I tried to imagine some at that work, and could picture to myself two ducks with necks erect, minus their heads. But then, if both heads were off, what was it ate them off. Never had I seen live ducks thus mutilated, and, to convince myself of the verity of the man's statement, I bought nine duck eggs, and 27 days later had seven ducks, which I raised to maturity without one losing its head. However, I found that they ate a great deal of food, and then it dawned upon me that the gentleman's language was not intended to be taken literally, and that by eating their heads off he simply meant that they would eat more than they were worth. However, I was of the impression that there was a profit in raising ducks; but as I had not kept account of the food consumed, my experiment could prove nothing.

Having a liking for poultry, and no aversion to money, and thinking there was some to be made from ducks, I determined last spring to raise a flock, and, by keeping an account of the cost, determine whether or not "Ducks eat their heads off."

There was no place around where they could swim. For this reason, many thought they would not do well, but my previous experience had convinced me that growing ducks do not require water for that purpose. Indeed, large duck-growers claim that they do better without it. All they need is plenty to drink.

Well, I had no old ducks, so could not get duck eggs at home; neither had I any sitting hens at that time, but I gathered up four cluckers and forty-six duck eggs from the neighborhood on a Saturday. A couple of the hens were not very much disposed to sit; in fact, one of them laid an egg the day after I brought them home, but I was very patient with them, and the following day, Monday, gave them the eggs. The two largest I gave twelve each, and the other two eleven apiece.

During incubation I dipped the eggs three times in warm water (about 103 degrees F.), the first time after they had been set two weeks, again at the end of the third week, and the last time just as they were pipped, which was the 25th day. At the end of the second day I tested them, and threw out five eggs, four non-fertile ones and one bad one, leaving forty-one.

They commenced hatching the 25th day. The next morning one hen had all hers hatched, and by the following morning, the 27th day, there were thirty-nine lively little fellows out. One egg had got so badly cracked that the germ died; the other one had nearly a fully-developed duckling in it, dead.

For several days I kept these in the barn. Young ducks cannot stand rains or dew. The first few feeds were of breadcrumbs and bread and

milk. They must have plenty of water to drink. A very good water fountain can be made with an old salmon can and a saucer. Take a can with the top cut out; with a nail or punch make a small hole in the side of the can, about a quarter or half an inch from the top. Fill the can with water. Now put the saucer over the top, face downward. Put your thumbs on the bottom of the can, and with your fingers hold the saucer tight to the can. Now quickly invert the can and saucer. The water will rise in the saucer to the level of the hole in the side of the can. This fountain does not let the birds get into the saucer; besides, it is not easily upset.

Well, to come back to the ducks: They drank a lot from the first, but did not eat a great deal the first couple of weeks. Bread and milk is rather expensive feed, so we soon changed to corn meal and milk, but they did not like that very well; they preferred oatmeal. After the first week, we made a kind of bread for them of chop (oat, wheat and corn), with a little white flour stirred in. This we soaked in skim milk. They did well on it, but the older they got, the more they ate, so we gradually stopped the ration. We were feeding them five times per day at the end of four weeks; we changed to four feeds per day, and then they were getting a mash made from oat, wheat and corn chop. At first we mixed this in cold water or milk, but they did not care much for it. We soon found, however, that, by scalding it with boiling water and letting it steam, afterward stirring in sufficient cold water or milk to make it thin enough to feed, that they ate it very greedily, as ducks should. So we continued that practice. It is not much more bother, as you can scald enough in the morning to last all day.

We raised the 39 ducks until seven weeks old. Then, one night, one got its wings fast in a slat coop, and could not get loose. A storm came up that night, and it drowned. The remaining 38 were raised to maturity, at least till we sold them, which was when they were a few days over eight weeks old. A couple of the largest then weighed six pounds each. We shipped them alive to Hamilton, and received \$1.00 per pair, net. Their food had cost \$8.00, and the eggs \$1.55, so that had we marketed the 38 there would have been a profit of \$9.45. We kept three for home consumption.

So I am convinced there is money to be made in ducks. The important thing is to keep them growing, and get them on the market as soon as possible. When they are about ten weeks old, they start to moult; then you cannot sell them till they get their new feathers. To keep them that long, they might "eat their heads off."

To anyone intending to start duck-raising, my advice is get them hatched and on the market as soon as possible. Mine were sold 1st of August. Had they been ready a couple of weeks sooner, I would have got a much higher price.

Lincoln Co., Ont. FARMER'S SON.

THE FARM BULLETIN.

What was Missed at the Fair.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

The Western Fair of 1909 has passed into history, duly accredited with being "greater and grander than ever," but before these echoing peans of praise have all died away, it might be well to enquire, as a reminder, if we did not have just as well attended and creditable exhibitions years ago, on the old Richmond Street grounds? I believe many of your readers will bear me out in the affirmative, for there were magnificent displays of agricultural machinery, live stock and the products of field, garden and orchard in those days. That there are many fine features in the show now is true, but the impression, unfortunately, gains ground that the management steadily drifts in the direction of a money-making entertainment, detracting just so much energy and effort from the development of what we may style legitimate exhibits, and diverting the attention of visitors proportionately from the latter to the detriment of the exhibitors. It means outlay and work, but I am sure the public would appreciate more such splendid displays as that made in the main building of the confectionery and other products of the McCormick Manufacturing Co., which would have done credit to any world's fair.

The association, in order to safeguard the public from jostling each other in obtaining any long-distance free glimpse of the grand-stand performances, have erected a close board fence, so that all will find their way into the proper place, at 25 cents per head, or 50 cents for a special seat, which, with the original gate fee, makes up a total of 75c. Not much, perhaps, for a single individual, but it counts up when the family group is on the rounds of the show. The heavy horses are judged on an open area west of the Midway, where the public can witness the placing of the awards, but when we come to the lighter horse classes, in which London and Western Ontario have so much at stake, the judging is done within the

race ring, and if one desires to study the types under review by the judges, the action, handling, etc., he must invest \$1.00 for the privilege of a ring badge. Now, surely, a state-aided fair for educational purposes can do better than this? Why not clear out some of the side-shows and peanut vendors, and provide westward from the grand-stand a decent ring, with comfortable seats, where the classes in question can be adjudged for the interest and instruction of the people? I fully endorse the suggestion of "The Farmer's Advocate" in favor of a complete live-stock catalogue, and trust the directors will give it effect.

More and more the public are complaining, and justly so, of the absence of any adequate display of agricultural machinery, even fencing and wind-mills dwindling down to one or two exhibits. The reasons for the withdrawal of the leading implement firms from the shows need not be repeated, but it ought not to be beyond the resources of exhibition management and public-spirited manufacturers to affect an arrangement by which representative exhibits of the most modern lines of machinery for use in farm operations will again be on view at the Western Fair. In its allotment of prize moneys for improved live stock, the board is on the right track. They will do well to initiate a vigorous reform in the directions above indicated if the character of the fair is to be preserved and its real purposes achieved.

VISITOR.

A Farmer's Holiday.

Dwellers in town and city are sometimes inclined to lay the charge against rural communities, that life in the country must be very monotonous. I resent the imputation. Of course, I will admit that, for such sordid souls as can find no interest in anything more elevating than the din and roar of a city's streets, or can find no instruction in anything more profound than the common, vulgar gossip of a city street corner, the life of the farm will be very monotonous. But for the finer, sensitive souls, with hearts attuned to catch the music and read the message of the gods, there is no place so crowded with excitement, so full of interest, so fraught with messages of instruction and inspiration, as the farm.

A short time ago I was feeling somewhat down-hearted and perplexed with various cares. Having a little spare time, I thought I would take a holiday. Oh! no, I didn't go away to the Toronto Exhibition, or to Muskoka, or the Thousand Islands, but as has often happened before in similar circumstances, my steps tended in the direction of the bush, where I wandered around for some time, enjoying fellowship with the wild things of nature, in all their native innocence; listening to the song of the bird, the hum of the bee, the chatter of the squirrel, the sighing of the trees overhead.

On my way home again, I came to the stream that bears the water from our lake to the river. Methinks I will sit me down on this bank, one of my favorite retreats when I want to think, when perplexed with various cares, when somewhat down-hearted, perhaps, the perl of the stream, as it meanders its way onward to the sea; the murmur of the breeze, as it sifts its way through among those innumerable pine-needles overhead; the song of the bird; the hum of the bee, all tend to produce an exhilarating, yet soothing effect on the wearied muscles and jaded nerves, until one is led to thank God he was born a farmer, and has his lot cast amid such influences as these.

I no sooner got seated than a red squirrel dashes out on a limb of that tree over there, and peremptorily orders me off. When I decline to obey his summons, he proceeds to heap abuse on my head, in a way that only a red squirrel can. He sputters and swears. He stamps his feet; he switches his tail; he makes a dash down the limb towards me, and suddenly stops, as though it is with the greatest difficulty he restrains himself from jumping right onto me. He appears the very embodiment of concentrated energy and bottled fury. After, possibly, five or ten minutes of this performance, he suddenly turns and makes a dash away back the limb, when remembering that there is still a piece of his mind that he has forgotten to give me, he returns to finish his lecture, until finally growing disgusted with that obstinate "animal" down there, with one last vociferous exclamation, he turns and "hikes" him off through the bush, performing acrobatic "stunts" that would make any human acrobat appear tame in comparison.

Never mind, little fellow, you didn't disturb me in the least. I rather enjoyed your swearing, which was not profane, and I highly respect anyone who will give me his honest opinion of myself in plain, unvarnished language.

After again inhaling the quiet, serene influences of the woods for some little time, I proceeded homewards. I have had a good holiday; the blues have been dispelled as a fog before the morning sun. The antics of that squirrel provided me entertainment. My physical and mental and nervous energies have been reinvigorated, and I am again prepared to take up the stern realities of living.

LUSUS NATURÆ.