

POULTRY.

Poultry on the Farm.

BY IDA E. TILSON, WEST SALEM, WIS.

I went out among my neighbors lately, and, by a sort of natural selection, the topic of poultry culture everywhere came up. Two of the daughters of the land were found pounding up old dishes for their hopeful biddies, wherein I commended them, adding my usual cautions about such dangerous work. A very rough and wasteful woman, however, would be required to furnish useless crockery enough for any kind of a flock, hence I have had recourse to chips from the marble works: they break about as easily as crockery does, and are much relished, being both grit and lime. Of course, a solid hard-wood block, a thick, flat stone, or some like base must be secured for our pounding operations. In New England are regular manufactories of grit, which works up some surplus rock. Unless biddy has gravel to separate and grind her food, this latter may easily become a clotted, compact mass, sealing the openings from crop and gizzard. Leg weakness, though sometimes caused by accidents and injuries, usually results from indigestion: so I have cured cases both of bound crop and of leg weakness by simply placing afflicted fowls in a little pen containing nothing but gravel and water. Gentle kneading also helps such a crop, which, if gassy and bloated, can be reduced with a small soda pill. I was asked whether bran packed and produced such conditions. If it constitutes not more than one-third of any pudding there can be no danger.

Let nothing be an exclusive diet, but everything tried if you would meet each fowl's appetite and case. For instance, the other day I fed a pudding composed of bran, shorts, oil meal, corn meal, ground oats and barley, a little of Pratt's poultry food, salt, red pepper, a few table scraps, and a lot of refuse honey (since hens like sweets), which together proved the most "fetching" dish I had presented. It gathered my whole flock. Every hen could find something within that suited her, and was pleased. I am often asked about poultry "foods" and condition powders. Probably any standard kind is good, used carefully, but I think they are primarily designed for lazy folks, who rather buy than invent variety. Some have an impression that the abattoir lard-scrap I recommend may be too greasy. Heavy presses make such hard cakes of them, they must be chopped with an axe into available pieces again. I cook with considerable water, and when soft and separated stir in meal till thick, and feed only twice or thrice a week. Home-made scraps are, of course, much richer, because subjected to less power. Crumble the latter fine, and mix a little in each pudding. One lady desired a remedy for soft-shelled eggs, which answer in a nut-shell, (or more properly egg-shell this time) is less grain and more diversity of food. Lime water made about the color of rice will cleanse biddy's interior, and furnish every second material: give for a while only, and but every second or third day. Lime water is another of those things so good I got to overdoing it, till I found, according to homeopathic belief, that persistent use brought back again the very bowl and other complaints which it at first cured. Milk is full of the soluble salts of lime, which scientists have claimed is not the case with bone meal. Whether I feed the latter or not, my hens get so much variety I am rarely troubled by soft eggs, but, after repeated tests, am convinced the use of ground bone secures more eggs in number.

Another lady visited had accidentally raised early pullets last spring, and received, to her surprise and pleasure, plenty of eggs this winter, which experience might be entitled "A Lucky Accident," like a more ambitious story. Summer chickens may get the size, but do not compass the maturity. To show, however, what judicious feeding can accomplish for these late pullets, I will add that a few July chickens of my own, raised laid as soon this winter, or even sooner, than those purchased of May hatches. Early pullets, built upon bone meal, milk and all kinds of food, but not stuffed with corn, will prove an irresistible combination, and show the old rooster something worth while to crow about. Mr. Gregory, the Mass. seedsman, whose nine hens averaged 174 eggs a piece in a year, secured the best egg record I have met. His fowls were mixed Brown Leghorn, Brahma and Plymouth Rock. Fanciers think too much of symmetry, and not enough of laying qualities. They have inbred for form at the expense of vigor, and the story is told of a Java hen, marked perfect at an English show, whose owner would give no egg record till taunted that his beauty was barren, when he hastily replied, "Oh, no! she has laid one egg." When laying days are over, however, a mixed flock is not so saleable as a uniform lot. An old poultry woman told me she made her money by cross-breeding for eggs, then dressed her surplus fowls before sale, because in that condition, minus top-knots, pantalets, etc., their remaining differences were slight and almost unnoticeable. It must be admitted that fanciers are now turning more attention to laying qualities, and cross-breeding, which requires judgment too, has different degrees of success.

Because I am writing about poultry on the farm, instead of a poultry farm, I will again describe my simple method of setting hens, premising that "Farm Poultry" briefly answers a subscriber by saying he must have an incubator to raise a large number of chicks, but an incubator is not recommended to anyone, and a brooder is not all bliss. The platform on which my movable nests rest is wider than the nests themselves, and provides biddy a lighting place. When she sets, an upright shingle, wider than nest entrance, is held in place before it by a brick resting on this platform, and thus forms a door which a setter can push outward, but nobody can push in. Hens fastened so they cannot get off at all will, from sheer contrivances, stand up, as two chicks put on choice eggs once served me. My temporary doors prevent outsiders laying with them, unless the setters themselves come off and out, which is seldom, and careful watching the first few days succeeds better than too much "bossin'."

Poultry as a Branch of Canadian Farming.

BY GEO. NICOL, A. O. A. C.

The breeding of domestic fowls commenced at a very early date, and wherever the art of farming has been introduced there we find in some way associated with it the breeding of poultry. Yet it seems that the majority of farmers keep fowls chiefly because of the satisfaction they afford by furnishing supplies of excellent food for home consumption, while but comparatively few have studied poultry breeding and raising as a special branch of husbandry.

It is quite evident that we, the farmers of Ontario, have not fully availed ourselves of the benefits that might be derived from this important branch of agriculture.

The annual poultry products of France are estimated at \$200,000,000, twelve million dollars' worth of which is exported to England, while in the United States we find that the poultry products exceed in value the entire cotton, corn, wheat and hay crops, and are estimated at over \$500,000,000 annually. Yet, notwithstanding this large production and high tariff, that country imports from Canada a large quantity of poultry and eggs.

At the present time in some of our markets good beef is being sold by the carcass as low as four cents per pound, while all kinds of poultry find a ready sale at from eight to ten cents per pound. State eggs are not and cannot be worth much in any market, but fresh eggs are always in demand. I know of farmers who have no difficulty obtaining contracts for the supply of fresh eggs at thirty cents per dozen.

Eggs to the amount of 2,000,000 were exported from Canada to the British markets. I have not heard the results, which would doubtless depend very much on the temperature of the storage, as eggs and slaughtered fowls can be kept in cold storage for almost any length of time, but if kept in a temperature much above the freezing point they soon become unfit for human food. There is much difference of opinion in regard to the value of different breeds of fowls. It has not as yet, and doubtless never will be, decided which of the many varieties is the most profitable under all circumstances; there seems to be a prevailing desire for a general purpose fowl, and with that object in view the Plymouth Rock, Wyandotte, Langshan, and other breeds have been produced by crossing.

As a fancier, although discountenancing cock fighting, I would prefer the Game on account of their noble carriage, graceful appearance, and the excellent quality of their flesh and eggs.

If the production of eggs were among the leading objects I would prefer the Leghorns, the Spanish or the Hamburgs, because they lay a greater number of eggs than the Asiatic breeds. When the raising of chickens for market is the chief object, it is not by any means a fact that the largest kinds are the most profitable, because the amount of food consumed by them is about in proportion to their size. The Brahma and the Cochins, where the chief bulk consists of neck and legs, are not worth as much in any market as plump birds of more moderate size.

Aside from direct profit which may be derived from the sale of poultry products, the use of fowls on the farm, and especially in the orchard, now that insects injurious to fruit have increased to such an alarming extent, is of great importance.

During some months of the year the food of turkeys, when allowed a large range, is chiefly insects, and on them they grow faster and thrive better than when fed and kept on grain in limited space, hence on many farms turkeys are profitable stock.

In all large cities the increased demand for geese and ducks has caused a considerable advance in price, and although all farms may not be adapted for raising this class of fowls, still wherever there is a constant supply of water they can be produced with profit, and the supply is not likely to exceed the demand.

Taking all things into consideration I doubt that there in any department of the farm which gives more satisfactory results than the production of poultry and eggs.

Poultry Question.

To the Editor of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE.

DEAR SIR,—Can you tell me through the ADVOCATE what will stop our hens eating their eggs? I believe they eat more than we do.

Yours, etc.,

SAMUEL WHITLOCK,

Glen Adelaide.

[This is a bad habit, and once formed is difficult to break off. It is generally caused by a want of lime or of gravel, or from fowls being kept in ill-health, with open nests left in their feeding quarters. To prevent the habit from being formed, remove the cause—provide a plentiful supply of gravel and sand and lime, vary the food, and while the fowls are kept indoors, cover the floor with chaff, scattering grain among it, which will give them good exercise and keep them out of mischief. Provide nests in a darker place and apart from the feeding room.]

APIARY.

The Apiary.

BY ALLEN PRINGLE, SELBY, ONT.

WHAT TO DO WITH HIS HONEY.

The Glengarry correspondent mentioned in this department of last issue, who had lost most of his bees during the protracted cold weather, and had a lot of honey left in the hives, wished to know how to handle the honey to the best advantage. One thing is certain, such honey taken from the hives of dead colonies is never number one in quality, no matter whether it be clover, basswood, buckwheat, or other. The placing of such honey on the market is one of the chief causes of lowering not only the reputation but the character of honey among consumers. Before the days of the honey extractor, not much more than a quarter of a century ago, neither the "strained" honey nor the comb honey was at all equal to the honey of to-day. Not that the nectar of the flowers was different, but the manner of its getting from the flowers to the time it reached the table was so different that while the one was in those days passable, the scientific output in these days is simply superb. True, the comb honey, secured in "cups" in those days (and still so secured among the old-fashioned bee-keepers) was, and is, in some cases where the queen does not choose to turn the "cap" into a brood nest, a good article, which, however, is the exception. But the "strained" honey! From it "Good Lord deliver us" from the eating, who have had our palates tickled by the "pure quill"! Of course, "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise;" and that "strained" honey was enjoyed by our grandfathers with the keenest kind of relish! How was the stuff made? Why, when the bees died in the winter or spring the honey was cut out of the hives—that is the combs were all cut out, honey, bee-bread, dead bees in the cells, dead larvae and all—and this conglomeration was duly mixed up and cut up and squeezed, and put into a linen sack and hung up by the fire place to drain and "strain." Every now and then the aforesaid sack would get another squeeze, till all the juice (here we have "bee-juice" if not "bug-juice," sure enough) had oozed out through the pores of the sack. That was "strained" honey; that was the delectable dish fit for the gods and men or angels and women of those days! Sometimes a little better article of the strained honey would be obtained, when in the fall a certain number of the weaker "skips" would be "taken up"—that is, doctored with fire and brimstone (what did the poor bees do to deserve this), and as the honey combs thus obtained were usually free from brood, being late in the season, the strained honey (therefrom would at least lack the one flavoring element of "bee-juice").

But, in contrast to all this, how is our present day liquid honey obtained? From clean combs in top stories, from which the queen with her brood is excluded, and from which the bee-bread is excluded, and everything foreign to the pure honey. Then the combs, instead of being mashed up and squeezed, are simply uncapped with a sharp knife made for the purpose, and a few revolutions of the basket of the honey extractor, in which they are placed, suffice in obedience to the centrifugal force to throw the honey out of the combs, clear, pure and nice. The comb honey, too, being secured in supers above the brood nest, from which the queen is excluded by a honey-board of perforated zinc, is much superior in quality as well as appearance to that from the brood chamber of box hives, travel-stained and mixed up with the brood comb. The question of our correspondent, what to do with the honey from his dead hives is easier asked than answered satisfactorily to him. As already intimated such honey ought not to be placed on the market at all, especially in the hands of dealers. What you cannot use yourself, sell directly to the consumer as a second class article, telling him, unequivocally, how it was obtained. Never mind "straining" it; give it out just as it is in the comb, so that the buyer may see just what he is getting. If he chooses to strain it, let him strain it. If he should happen to be fond of bee-bread and bee-juice mixed up liberally with his honey, a sort of hash, let him suit himself, and nobody will be to blame.