The Poultry Yard.

The Egyptian Goose.

The Egyptian goose, or Bargander, is sometimes made the type of a distinct genus, *Chenalopex*, upon account of the longer bill, a short spur with which the bend of the wing is curved, and the anatomical peculiarity of a hollow, bony enlargement at the bottom of the trachea of the male. It has long been kept in parks and pleasure grounds in Britain, chiefly on account of the beauty of its plumage, and has become partially naturalized. It is a little smaller than the common goose; its voice more resembles that of a wild duck. The prevailing color of the plumage is light chesnut brown, minutely rayed with darker lines; the neck and part of the wings are white. Large chesnut patches surround the eyes. It is very abundant on the Nile, and is frequently figured in Egyptian sculptures. It is much esteemed for the table and was kept and fattened for it by the ancient Egyptians. It is the chenalopex of Herodotus.

Mr. Wright in the *Illustrated Book of Poultry* says of this bird: "The Egyptian goose, also called the Nile goose, *(Chenalopex Ægyptiacus)* is a most beautiful bird, and is often seen at shows, whenever a class for any other variety of geese gives it an opening. It is perhaps the most ornamental of all the geese, its tall and somewhat slender form giving it an elegance of appearance no other variety can boast of; and it has the merit, not very common in waterfowl, of breeding pretty freely in confinement. Notwithstanding these advantages, it has one great drawback: the truth must be told, that the male at least is a most quarrelsome bird. With other males of the same species he will fight to the death, and is generally a dreadful tyrant and persecutor even to the other inmates of the pond. Some individuals, however, manifest somewhat better morals, and it is possible that more perfect domestication might modify this inconvenient disposition.

The general color of the Egyptian goose is grey and black under the upper parts of the body, and pale buff or yellow, beautifully pencilled with black lines underneath, a patch round the eye and another on the centre of the breast being of a chesnut color; the shoulders of the wings white, with a narrow, black stripe or bar of beautiful metallic lustre; and the wing quills and tail feathers glossy black. The eye is orange color, the bill purple or blush red, the feet and legs reddish yellow. The wings of this goose, like those of the Gambian or spur-winged goose, have on the bend of the wing, or wrist joint, a strong, white, horny spur about five-eighths of an inch long instead of the hard knob which belongs to most of the goose tribe.

The female closely resembles the male, but is somewhat smaller. The number of eggs varies from six to twelve, more than six being rarely obtained in captivity, though ten or twelve is believed to be the usual number laid by the wild bird.

The Egyptian goose, like the other principal tribes, has a wide range. It is known to extend from Alexandria to the Cape of Good Cape, and has been frequently shot in England. In some cases, no doubt, such specimens may have been escaped birds from parks or menageries; but this could hardly be the case with a flock of nine seen at the Isle of Man in 1838, and another flock, estimated at no less than eighty, seen in Hampshire after a tremendous gale. In the southern parts of Europe it is common enough, no doubt crossing the Mediterranean from Africa, its native home. Its place in history is well marked, perhaps more so than any other variety. It is clearly alluded to by Aristotle, Aristophanes, Athenæus and other writers; and Herodotus makes special mention of it among the sacred birds of Egypt; while Mr. Salt states that wherever the goose is represented on the walls of temples, this variety is clearly recognizable.

In the Regent's Park Gardens, in 1838, Mr. Yarrell states a female Egyptian goose paired with a male of the Penguin variety of ducks, and the eggs were fertile. This occured during two successive seasons. The Penguin being a mere artificial variety of the common duck, this would appear to give the Nile goose a somewhat intermediate position between the duck and goose tribes, and its affinity to the sheldrakes is indeed evident to any observer."

Thinning Out.

Reality and imagination are two different things. We draw largely on the latter when we look at the broods as they come off in February, March, April and May. We can see many winners, and all good ones. While we rock ourselves in these blissful anticipations, and determine to avoid the errors that had so often made shipwreck of our hopes, and introduced us to grave disappointment, the time creeps on, and the little balls of fluff grow into awkward and lanky chickens.

Still the time goes on, and different temperature, shortened days, and lengthened nights demand a change of treatment. But the change is a startling one from thirteen "new comers" amply cared for under the hen, and the same number of great staring fowls that ask for board and lodging. If there were but one thirteen, something might be done; no amount of writing or talking will enlarge a roosting house.

It is known that Henry V., of white flag notoriety, is slightly lame. When living in Frohsdorf, his admirers were allowed to walk through the apartment as he sat at dinner, or to follow him at a distance when he took his constitutional. Two old marquises of the *ancient régime* were doing so, when one exclaimed to his companion:—"My dear marquis, our prince has one leg shorter than the other." "*Maladroit*," said the other, "they are uneven only, because one is longer than the other." So we will insist the house is not too small but the stock is too large. No difficulty now. How is it to be done? By eating or selling; by selling alive as stock birds, or as ordinary food.

The good London wife who retired into the country was asked, when her first hog was killed how she would have it cut up? She said "all hams." And so our friend and poultry breeder would have all his chickens prize birds. But it may not be. Whatever is done should be done at once. Procrastination in this instance is not only the thief of time, it is the thief of food. These birds are eating that for which they will make no return. You must decide how you will dispose of them.

All we can tell you is, they must be sold. There is a pleasure in putting off a thing; it shows we are not compelled to do it. But Nemesis comes in the shape of the private Catch Quotem. He says, "If you please sir, you must increase my allowance" these growing fowls eat terribly. Now you must steel your heart. And after all, if you had room, many of them are not worth keeping—four-toed Dorkings, single-combed Hamburghs, crooked fowls of every breed; those that somehow never seemed to do any good, the extra cocks, the faulty feathered; all these should now be got rid of. Their food and their room should be given to those that will make a better return for them. If you are told your fowls are all too good to kill, do not believe it. We lately went into such a yard, and the two first selected birds put in our hands were both humpbacked. If you do not thin your stock now, if it is to be thinned at all, the inevitable loss will be your own choice.—*Journal of Horticulture.*

Gapes in Chickens.—From thirty-five years' experience, I have come to the conclusion that gapes in chickens are produced by eggs deposited on the ground where dirty water or suds is thrown out and lies some time without drying. The chickens eat it, and some of it lodges on the root of the tongue, and hatches and goes down into the windpipe, producing red worms, which grow until they kill the chicken. My remedy is to get a head of blue grass (best when young), take off the seed, turn the end down, and twist to make it lie close together; hold the chicken's feet between the knees; take the bill and tongue in one hand, put the blue grass down as low as you can, without pressing it, with the other hand giving it a twist and withdraw it quickly; then let them suffle. When the blue grass is older, it requires more care. Sometimes blowing in a chicken's mouth saves its life. I generally can save them when they are too weak to travel around. Feeding young chickens with corn, as large as they can swallow, is very good.—*Cor. Country Gentleman.*

Lice on Fowls.—Nearly all the mortality among young chickens is caused by lice. The long period of incubation required is aggravated by using nests for sitting which have been constantly employed during the early season by laying hens. If these nests are under ground or in close, filthy houses, lice are almost inevitable. Sulphur or carbolic powder are the best preventives. Before setting a hen, clean the nest carefully, sprinkle it with sulphur, and dust some occasionally over the hen when sitting. A correspondent of the *Pacific Rural Press* recommends an ointment made as follows for young chicks:—Mercurial ointment and lard, each one ounce; one and a half ounces each of flour of sulphur and crude petroleum. This is to be mixed and applied very sparingly along the back of the neck and head and a little under the throat, as it is here that lice are first found, probably from the chick nestling its head among the feathers of its mother. One light application will be sufficient for five or six weeks. At the end of that time anoint again. Care should be taken to use this ointment very sparingly as a large quantity might result fatally to tender birds.

To Preserve Eggs.—On the day they are laid, dip them into Waterglass (Silicate of Soda in Solution), then wrap them in paper and pack them in jars or boxes, keep them in a cool cellar and they will be as good as new laid eggs for six months. I have proved this by many the experiment. J. F. W.

Red Pepper and Poultry.—A lady correspondent of the *Poultry Bulletin* says:—"I don not know if other persons who raise poultry and pet birds are as much dependent as I am on red pepper; but I have found so much benefit from its use in my poultry yards and bird cages, that it may not be amiss to call the attention of others to its good properties. I do not speak of the article that is sold in the drug stores (and sometimes not remarkably fresh) but of the capsicum that grows in our gardens. I have tried all the different varieties, and the most pungent and efficacious is the small kind usually known by the name of 'bird's pepper.' The plant in itself is a beautiful object; it grows about two feet high, and in autumn its bright little scarlet berries look like coral beads peeping from under the dark, green foliage. Indeed, one plant in a pot forms a very pretty ornament for a flower stand. The seeds possess a stimulating and reviving property, and I find that two or three given to newly-hatched chickens, especially if they are weakly, have a most happy effect. If a hen looks feeble after moulting, six of those berries or pods, given daily in some corn meal and sweet milk, improve her wonderfully.

The Apiary.

Wintering Bees in Nova Scotia.

Editor Canada Farmer.—Beekeepers should know in time about how to winter their bees; and this is a good time to make a place for them.

Last December, I put a hive outside, and in March they were all frozen or dead.

I put another in a cellar, the out-door being open all winter. I found the cellar to be too warm. In March there were only about 50 bees and the queen alive. A cellar is only fit for spiders and mice. For my part, I would be feeling bad in a cellar in twenty minutes.

On December 1st, I put another hive in the new place I made. In March, I opened the door to see if there were any alive. It was a great sight to see the combs as clean as the day they were put there, and all black with bees. I took a bottle-full of bees out of this hive and put them with the fifty bees and the queen, and they are doing well.

You see, there are places made for horses, cows, sheep and hens to winter in, but none for the poor little bees.

Robert Stewart.

West River Station, Pictou, N. S.

Bee Veils.—A correspondent says every one—no matter who, whether he leads what is called a charmed life or not—requires the person protected while at work among his bees. To those who are commencing, and until familiarity causes the loss of fear, a pair of good gauntlet gloves and a veil are necessary, but after the fear and trembling occasioned by the thought of opening a hive full of bees has ceased to have its horrors, all protection except the veil will be dispensed with. A good bee veil is made by taking a yard of black netting—costing usually about twenty cents—and sewing the ends together, thus making a bag, open at top and bottom. Then with a half yard of good strong rubber cord, run through the meshes at the ends, and you have a veil which will slip on over the crown of an old hat, and by drawing up and tying at the neck, you have all the protection required, for, if properly made and adjusted, no bee can touch your face or neck, consequently there can be no fear of stings, and besides it it is light, one can see through it nearly as well as if not worn.

Uses of Wool in the Apiary.—For the last four years we have used *wool* quite largely for various purposes in our apiary. We use nothing else for stopping up our queen cages, rolling it for this purpose into a tight wad. The bees cannot gnaw it away, and seldom propolise it. We shut up all our nuclei, when first formed, with wool. It can be crowded into place in a moment, admits air, and is easily removed. If we wish for any purpose to shut up a hive, we use wool. In the working season, we keep one "pocket full of wool," and know nothing of the vexations we experienced when using wire-cloth. Occasionally a few bees are caught in the fibres of the wool, but they are for the most part very shy of it, and are quite indisposed to commit *felo de se*, by hanging themselves in its meshes. Robbers will very quickly retreat from a hive well wooled. If we use the words *to wool* and *wooled* a hive or nucleus, instead of to shut up or open the entrance, our readers will understand what we mean.—*L. L. Langstroth in Practical Farmer.*