

## HINTS FOR THE FARMER.

### PICKING DUCKS.

Duck feathers always bring a fair price, especially white ones, and should be saved when dressing the ducks, if they are sold dressed; if not sold dressed do not pick just before selling. The amount received for the feathers ought to pay for the dressing.

The breeding ducks may be picked several times a year, generally four to six. Do not pick until the feathers are "ripe," which can be told by pulling a few from different parts of the bodies of several birds. If they come out easily, without any bloody fluid in the quill, they are all right and should be "picked" or many will be lost. In picking pull only a few feathers at a time by taking between the thumb and forefinger, and giving a quick, downward jerk. Do not pull the bunch of long, coarse feathers under each wing.

Before you begin picking, tie the duck's legs together with a bit of larding or other soft cloth and if the duck is inclined to object to the picking by thrashing with the bill, slip an old stocking or something of the sort over its head. Use no unnecessary harshness with any of the birds and be especially careful with laying ducks. Sitting ducks and those that are soon to be set should not be picked. In hot weather much of the down may be taken from the drakes. Do not take any in cold weather.

In handling ducks do not lift or carry them by the legs. Young ducklings should be kept out of the direct rays of the sun. Whether turned out young or when mature, ducks will yield a good profit if rightly managed, and the number raised need be limited only by the capacity of the premises and of the man; the latter has much more than the former to do with the success of the undertaking. Ducks usually lay early in the morning, but are inclined to drop their eggs anywhere, so it is best to keep them shut up until ten o'clock.

### KEEP ONLY THE BEST.

Only the best fowls should be retained, as there will be an improvement every year due to careful selection. Every poultry-raiser keeps, or ought to, a portion of his stock for his special purpose of breeding. These are the finest specimens of his flock, carefully selected for their good qualities, and set apart for the perpetuation of their race. Feeding the breeding stock is a problem in itself and somewhat different from that set by the production of the greatest number of eggs or the obtaining of the greatest amount of flesh and fat. What the poultry-raiser especially desires to care is not always the greatest number of the strongest, most vigorous, healthiest and most useful chickens. To secure the result the feeling must be of a character to keep the fowls in vigorous health, for sickly fowls will be the progenitors of sickly chickens. Eggs from such will produce weak chickens, many of which will die before reaching maturity.

### KEEP STRAW OUT OF MANURE.

When manure is banked in large heaps the air is largely excluded, but when exposed to rains the water carries air with it. Certain kinds of litter, such as straw, contain peculiar micro-organisms, known as denitrifying organisms, which are capable of converting available nitrogen into forms which are of little use to the plant when the manure is applied to the soil, but are not injurious except when applied in excessively large quantities. Manure should not become wet and dry alternately, but should be moist. One point which has been brought out by recent investigation is that the addition of straw very decidedly reduces the fertilizing value of manure—contrary to the views of all farmers—the injurious effects being greater the larger the amount of straw used. The excessive use of straw as a cover under animals should, therefore, be carefully avoided if the manure to be used is desired, for the reason given above—that straw contains organisms which convert the available nitrogen in manures, and in the soil, into forms that the plant cannot utilize. Kaini has been found effective in preventing the formation of ammonia, and superphosphate in preventing its escape. Caustic lime destroys the denitrifying power of manure, above referred to, but has a tendency to drive off ammonia. If lime is applied to fresh manure, however, the loss is small, the larger loss occurring only after fermentation begins. Lime should not be used with superphosphates, as it renders the free phosphoric acid insoluble, but it largely assists in promoting nitrification in the soil.

### BEST FERTILIZERS FOR VEGETABLES.

The chief ingredient in a good fertilizer for vegetables of which the leaves or stems are the edible portion is nitrogen. For root vegetables, phosphoric acid and potash are about as important as nitrogen. For vegetables of which the seed is the edible portion, especially such as are planted early, like the garden pea, phosphoric acid is the leading element. For vegetables like the tomato, egg plant, celery, melon, etc., potash is the most important.

### REST ONLY AS TO PEAS AND BEANS.

Vegetables are not very exhaustive to the soil. Peas and beans are able to take most of their nitrogen from the atmosphere. Potash is the element most drawn from the soil, next nitrogen, and lastly phosphoric acid. But nitrogen has a value for early

garden vegetables that chemical analysis does not show. Nitrogen forces early growth and gives large succulent leaves and stems. Potash gives solidity and crispness to stems and leaves and high color to the fruit. Phosphoric acid gives plumpness and increases the sugar and starchy parts of seeds and forces early maturity. A good general fertilizer for all garden vegetables, except beans and peas, would be the following mixture per acre, but intensive market gardeners use two or three times as much.

Sulphate of potash ..... 150 to 225  
Super phosphate ..... 250 to 375  
Nitrate of soda ..... 150 to 225

The fertilizer should be raked in just before the seed is sown. For peas and beans, the normal amount of potash and phosphoric acid may be doubled and the nitrate of soda reduced to 50 pounds per acre.

The sulphate is the best available form of potash for garden vegetables. It contains no chlorides or salts and does not make the soil cold. It also acts with especial favorableness upon the starchy portion of vegetables. Fresh or water-soluble lime is always beneficial to garden soil.

### CAN EXPERIMENT IN TURKEYS.

Four turkeys were confined in a pen and fed on meal, boiled potatoes and oats. Four others of the same breed were at the same time confined in another pen, and fed daily on the same article, but with one pint of very finely pulverized charcoal mixed with their food—meal and potatoes. They had also a plentiful supply of charcoal, broken, in their pen. The eight were killed on the same day and the difference of one and one-half pounds was noted between the fowls that had been supplied with charcoal, they being much the fatter, and the meat being much superior in point of tenderness and flavor.

### DUCKS AND GEESSE IN WINTER.

In wintering ducks and geese it is very important that their houses should be warm and dry, but of the two dryness is more important than warmth. They will consume more food if the house is not warm, and probably begin laying later in the season, but this is not as bad as a damp house, which gives them cramps and rheumatism or that which is enough like it to be called by that name. They should have plenty of dry straw in which to sit during the night, and it should be changed frequently, and certainly every day when they have been travelling in and out with muddy feet. On such a day as that clean out mud and straw before letting them in at night, and give a clean bed, and plenty of it, then shut them in until morning. They do not bear crowding any better than hens, and need plenty of room. Nor is it well to have too many in one house, as they will crowd together and be too warm when the entrance is closed.

### NINE THINGS BABY CAN DO.

It can beat any alarm clock ever invented in waking a family up in the morning.

In a given time it can smash more dishes than the most industrious servant girl in the country.

It can fall down oftener and with less provocation than the most expert tumbler in the circus-ring.

It can make more genuine fuss over a simple brass pin than its mother would over a broken back.

It can choke itself black in the face with greater ease than the most accomplished wretch that ever was executed.

It can keep a family in a constant turmoil from morning till night, and night till morning, without once varying its tune.

It can be relied on to sleep peacefully all day when its father is away, and cry persistently at night when he is particularly sleepy.

It may be the naughtiest, dirtiest, ugliest, and most fretful baby in all town, but you can never make its mother believe it, and you had better not try.

It can be a charming and model infant when no one is about, but when visitors are present it can exhibit more bad temper than both of its parents put together.

### ART AND NATURE.

The perfect blending of the real and ideal has recently been advertised by Paris milliners, who have come to use oats from the fields to trim the bonnets of their fair customers. The adventure which befell one such bonnet and its wearer is related by a foreign newspaper.

A lady, dressed beyond the reach of criticism, was crossing a broad boulevard. A cab bore down upon her, and she stepped hastily back and stopped in front of the curbstone, unmindful of a horse and cart standing immediately behind her. The horse quietly sniffed the oats and then, deciding that they were genuine, began to munch.

He was thus engaged when the lady, quite unaware of the pleasure she was affording the hungry animal, started forward. But the horse was far from satisfied, and planting his forefeet on the lady's skirt, continued his repast.

The lady, supposing the horse about to devour her head, promptly fainted and was removed to a druggist's shop near by, where happily she soon recovered.

The moral of the story is that every field of oats should have a fence about it.

### WILLING TO PAY.

Mrs. Newrich—I want a first-class passage to Dublin.

Agent—Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. Newrich—And I insist upon having a smooth passage, no matter what the cost.

## Young Folks.

### HOLLAND CHILDREN.

The dearest, funniest little country in the world is Holland, the home of the Dutch. As you have probably heard, the country is a perfect network of canals. In Amsterdam, the biggest city of Holland, there are so many of them running criss-cross that the city is divided into 90 small islands. But more interesting than anything else about this country, are the children. And such good times as they have!

These canals I have been speaking of run down the center of the streets, taking the place of a driveway, and leaving only a strip of brick pavement on each side. A row of trees grow on each side of the canal. Out here, under their shade, the children of Amsterdam play.

Have you ever seen a pair of shoes worn by these Dutch children? They are not like ours. They are made of blocks of wood, shaped like a shoe, and hollowed out to fit the foot. These shoes are called "sabots," and it is very funny to hear a lot of young people wearing this queer footwear go running down the street, clackety-clack!

Bless me! From a little distance it sounds as though a whole army of cavalry were coming up the street! As there are no stone walls or railings along the edge of the canals, it is not infrequent that a child falls in. But that doesn't seem to worry anybody. They can all swim like little ducks. If they bounce into the water they quickly bounce out again. Sometimes they scramble out to find that their little sabots are slowly sailing down the canal. Then there is much laughing and shouting till the truant shoes are landing by means of a long stick.

It is in the winter time, however, that the children of Holland most enjoy life. Then the canals are frozen over, and a person may travel all through the quiet country without taking off his skates. The Dutch skates have long runners, which curl up over the toe. With this kind they can do no fancy skating, but, then, everything the Dutch people do is plain and practical. The boys and girls when they skate together do not go side by side, as we do in this country. The boy stands right behind the girl, and puts his hand on her waist, keeping step with her just as soldiers do. In this way the boy can push the girl along if he does not think she is going fast enough.

The Dutch boys have a skate sail, which is almost diamond shaped, and is kept spread out by means of two sticks. The sail is held against his back. As Holland is such a low country there is generally a good, strong wind sweeping across it. With these sails the boys go skimming along over the water as close to the wind, too, as in a fine yacht.

Every one skates in Holland. The men go to work, the women to market and the children to school on skates. The Exchange in Amsterdam is called the Beurs. Once a year, at the end of August, the merchants and brokers sweep across it. With these sails the boys go skimming along over the water as close to the wind, too, as in a fine yacht.

The people of Holland are very good to poor little orphans. There is one orphanage for every five hundred orphans are taken care of. There they take children, mere babies, and keep them till they are of age. In the meantime they teach them any kind of trade they may wish to learn. The boys are taught to be carpenters, blacksmiths, cabinet makers, printers, bookbinders, etc. The girls are trained to do all kinds of household work. Then when they are of age they are ready to battle with the world. If sickness or misfortune overtakes any boy or girl they may go straight back to it and be sure of a welcome and a good home until an opportunity for another start is offered. Compared to the miserably poor of London, or even the poor of New York, these little Dutch orphans are much better off.

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### THE MONTHS.

All of our months were named by the Romans a great many years ago. One of the months looks back on the old year and it looks ahead to the young or new year, so it was named for a god whom the Romans worshipped. He was represented as having two faces, looking in opposite directions. One of his faces was old and the other was young. His name was Janus. Can you guess which month was named for him? Another month was named for the God of War. What was his name, and which month was named for him? May was named for Maia, a goddess who was the mother of the God Mercury, and June was named for Jupiter's wife, June.

Have you ever noticed that while most months alternate with 30 and 31 days, July and August come together

with 31 days? That is because these months were named for the two emperors, Julius and Augustus Caesar. It would not have done to give one a longer month than the other received, so both were given 31 days.

In early times the Romans had only 10 months, with names that meant first month, second month and so on. Four of those names are used now, for instance; December really means "tenth month," although it is now the twelfth month. Can you find the other three? A man named Numa added the two months of January and February, shortening the others in order to do so.

It is said that February is a name taken from a Latin word that means to purify, because during the month they held what they called the feast of purification, and that April is from a word that means to open, because at that season the buds begin to open.

## WORKING A SMALL CANADIAN FARM.

What Can be Produced on Fifty Acres When Well Worked and Well Managed.

JOHN MCLEOD IN "FARMING."

My farm consists of 49 1/2 acres here and 11 1/2 of new land lying five miles east. It was only broken up last season so that I will be getting the benefit from it from this on. My principal crop for feeding being corn, enables me to winter quite a large stock on a small place. I grow from fifteen to eighteen acres of corn and 1 1/2 to 2 of new land lying five miles east. It was only broken up last season so that I will be getting the benefit from it from this on. My principal crop for feeding being corn, enables me to winter quite a large stock on a small place. I grow from fifteen to eighteen acres of corn and 1 1/2 to 2 of new land lying five miles east. It was only broken up last season so that I will be getting the benefit from it from this on. My principal crop for feeding being corn, enables me to winter quite a large stock on a small place. I grow from fifteen to eighteen acres of corn and 1 1/2 to 2 of new land lying five miles east. 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