

Miscellaneous.

Meehi on Rats.

Has any one ever estimated the number of rats that prey upon the farmer's property? Allowing one to each acre, we should then have about sixty millions in the United Kingdom. As animals consume according to their weight, a full-grown rat would consume much grain in a year. But, unfortunately, it is not only what they consume, but what they destroy, that concerns us. Said an old labourer's wife to me, "A rat has taken away in one night eight of my brood of young ducks, worth \$d. a piece. My neighbour, Mrs. B—, a small farmer's widow, cannot raise any poultry, for under her house is a honeycomb of rat-runs. She took them in a hamper into her sleeping room last night, and even there they tried to get them out."

I can testify to their destructive powers from experience. When they have young they will carry away and store up scores of young chickens, ducks, or turkeys in a single night, much the same as a cat having kittens. A friend of mine who had a little rabbit warren opposite his windows, saw his cat catch a young rabbit. He followed her, and found that she already had laid up thirty-six that morning near her kittens. I have known of a brace of foxes taking thirty-seven turkeys in a single night, and burying many of them up in some dung-heaps which were upon an adjoining field ready for spreading.

When hard pressed for food themselves or their young, rats are very daring, and will attack large chickens or good-sized rabbits. I know a case where a youth was awake in the night by a rat beginning upon his ear. Wherever stock are fed with meal or grain, there the rats will surely come, to share, with the pigs especially, their barley-meal and pollard.

When dining at Vintners' Hall with the late excellent Mr. Green, the great shipowner, he said to me:—"Mr. Meehi, I can beat you in pigs; I make a thousand a year by my pigs." I expressed my surprise, and said if I got their mature free of cost I thought myself a lucky fellow. "Well," said he, "I have only 60 pigs; before I kept these pigs the rats used to damage the sails of my ships to the extent of a thousand a year, eating every greasy portion. They now dine with or after the pigs, and never touch the sails." This hint may be useful to shipowners as well as to housekeepers, who find that the mice destroy the greased or stained portions of table-cloths.

Rats migrate, and travel a long way in a night, in search of food. A neighbour of mine told me that he one night met a small army of them, some hundreds together. The carelessness of some farmers or their false economy causes serious loss to their neighbours. They may be called rat-preservers or rat-breeders. I used to pass frequently by two wheat stacks which were completely honey-combed by the rats, whose paths into and up the stacks were visible from the road. Having consumed nearly all the grain, they left the stack for better quarters. When threshed there was plenty of straw, but the corn was nearly "nil." Those who keep their corn in stack for seven years (and I know of some who do so) had need have an eye to the rats. I have used a dozen iron stack frames (Garrett's patent) for the last twenty years, without any rats. The fact is, they cannot do without water, so if one gets into the stack, he must come down to drink, and cannot re-ascend. It is too common a practice to leave carts, ladders, or anything close to the stacks, thus affording access. As soon as these are removed, Mr. Rat must come down for water and cannot return. We always trim or shave our stacks (cost 1s. per stack) to cut off access from below, as well for economy of corn and neatness.

Mice are more difficult to expel than rats, for they get into the sheaves at harvest time, and are thus carried on to the stack. Unless poisoned by liquid immediately after putting up the stack they soon find out that they can exist by the 12 per cent. of water contained in straw and 11 per cent. in the grain. They also learn to avail themselves of dew and rain. In the spring and summer they will so multiply as to destroy or damage a large quantity of the grain, especially if left over-year. To show how the animals can exist by the water contained in what is called dry grain and its straw. I will relate the case of a horse at Cressing Temple, a few miles from me, where a horse used for treading or consolidating the barley in the barn, being left there all night, slipped down between the closely packed barley and the boarded sides of the barn. In vain was search made for him in the morning, and it was concluded that he had been stolen. On Christmas Day, as the ploughmen came to attend to their horses, they heard the neighing of a horse in the barn, and after removing the barley, they found the lost horse as fat and as

sleep as a mole. Thinking he must be very thirsty they ignorantly allowed him to go to the pond and drink his fill, and in consequence he died. This is well known to many persons now living. The horse had gradually eaten his way into a comfortable space. But to return to our rats. They are most industrious and destructive burrowers: as they cannot destroy a solid brick wall they will burrow under it, unless the foundation is well concreted; where beams enter the wall, they gnaw. It requires a watchful eye to keep them under. Every hole should be noted, and plugged at once with a piece of tile or brick fixed with cement, or a piece of hard wood dipped in gas tar. Their runs should be tarred, and thus they will soon get disgusted with their quarters. Wherever a small heap of earth is thrown up near a wall, the run should be traced and at once stopped; lime and stones as a concrete conquers them. Loose lime they cannot work in, it blinds and disgusts them. In every barn and shed door there should be a round hole, about eight inches in diameter, so that the cats can have free access in search of the rats. It is at night they work, and they do so as much as possible under cover. They may be easily poisoned by strychnine, mixed with ground barley or oats; but before trying this they must be fed for several nights with the meal unmixed with poison.

Rats are very sagacious, and had I space I could relate many instances of their cunning. It is a most dangerous thing to spread poison on bread and butter, for they carry it away; and I know of too many instances where valuable dogs, fowls, &c., have perished. Another inconvenience is, that when poisoned they die in their burrows, which are too frequently under your drawing or dining-room, or in the walls. Their decomposition causes a most detestable and too durable stench. There is nothing like plenty of cats. I find male cats, castrated when young, by far the best rat-catchers, and by blocking the holes you give the cats a better chance of catching them. Traps may also be set, but they are very wary of them. Hollow walls are objectionable, so is thatch on buildings.

Water rats undermined the banks of my pond until I turned in a few pike, which soon converted rats into fish. A pike of three pounds will take a rat and swallow him at once. Beware of pike where you have young ducks, for they enjoy them quite as much as they do rats. I had imagined that there was a chance of the rat biting the stomach of Mr. Pike; but, as an old angler, and examining the condition of the pike's stomach with a bait in it, I found that there is no fear of that, for instantly the stomach collapses like an elastic pitch-plaster, and not a single breath could the rat or any living thing draw. Pike always swallow their prey alive, and head foremost. They are very fond of eels, and swallow them alive, and head foremost. They also seize their prey across the middle, and, unless very hungry, hold them so for some time.

Rats find abundant accommodation and concealment under the old-fashioned wooden barn floors and dilapidated or thatched farm buildings. The modern system of asphaltting upon concrete is an effectual barrier; they cannot gnaw it; their only chance is to burrow under between the ground and the concrete, and this, by a careful examination, may be easily prevented. A very destructive, cunning old rat, that could never be trapped, was taken as follows:—Every hole except one was carefully stopped with gas-tar substances, and the trap set at the remaining hole. For two days and nights he declined coming out, but hunger and thirst at last compelled him to face the trap, and he was taken.

I very much commend asphalted floors to my agricultural brethren. It is so cheap and clean, and, above all, prevents any damage to corn, &c., by preventing damp arising from the earth beneath it. Cats such as I have will not only kill rats, but also weazels. The latter will destroy a brood of poultry in a night, if they have access to them. Of course every one knows the value of ferrets and a good rat dog.

Advertisements.

FOR SALE.

ONE of the most Desirable Farms in Ontario, adjoining the Town of Woodstock, on the Great Western Railway (part of the property of the Hon. George Alexander), consisting in all of 200 acres, with the river Thames running through the centre, in a high state of cultivation, with commodious frame buildings, orchard, &c., and ninety acres of valuable timber. This property is admirably adapted for a Cheese Factory, from its extensive river flats and springs of water. For further particulars apply (letters postpaid) to

GEORGE ALEXANDER, Woodstock.

SECOND ANNUAL SALE OF THOROUGH-BRED STOCK!

Will take place at the residence of the proprietor, M. H. COCHRANE, Esq., Compton, On THURSDAY, 3rd OCTOBER next, the day following the Compton County Agricultural Show, at 11 o'clock, at 10 o'clock, at 11 o'clock, at 12 o'clock, at 1 o'clock, at 2 o'clock, at 3 o'clock, at 4 o'clock, at 5 o'clock, at 6 o'clock, at 7 o'clock, at 8 o'clock, at 9 o'clock, at 10 o'clock, at 11 o'clock, at 12 o'clock.

HERFORDS: 1 BULL CALF, 1 YEARLING HEIFER, and 1 HEIFER CALF. AYRSHIRES: 1 YEARLING BULL, 1 BULL CALF, 2 COWS, and 2 TWO YEAR OLD HEIFERS and 4 YEARLING HEIFERS.

One of the Ayrshire cows was imported from Scotland. The best of the Ayrshire imported stock, both sires and dams. Also 20 SUPERIOR DAIRY COWS, all bred to thorough bred Short Horn Bulls.

COTSWOLD, LINCOLN and LICEESTERSHIRE RAMS, imported from England this season.

PURE BRED YORKSHIRES, and CHESTER COUNTY WHITES, the former imported this season.

Compton Station is forty miles from Island Pond, on the Grand Trunk Railway, and about 100 miles from Montreal.

Rail Stages will run from the station, on arrival of trains, to the place of sale.

HIGHLY IMPORTANT AND UNRESERVED SALE OF PURE BRED STOCK.

MORETON LODGE, GUELPH, Ontario, Dominion of Canada.

ANNUAL SALE.

MR. W. S. G. KNOWLES begs to announce that he has received instructions from FRIDRICK Wm. SPORR, to offer for sale without reserve, at Moreton Lodge, Guelph, ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16th, 1867.

Twenty-five very SUPERIOR PURE BRED SHORT-HORNED and HEREFORD CATTLE, male and female; upwards of one hundred fine COTSWOLD and SOUTHDOWN SHEEP—rams, ewes, and lambs of superior size, wool and quality, together with a number of fine Berkshire pigs, Aylesbury ducks, and Dorking fowls, all of which are in a healthy breeding condition, and well worth the notice of Breeders of full-blooded Stock.

Catalogues, with full particulars, will be ready for issue on the 23rd of September, and may be had on application to Mr Knowles and Mr. Stone, Guelph, or Mr. Henry Arkell Moreton Lodge, Guelph, Sept. 1, 1867.

THE CANADIAN LAND & EMIGRATION COMPY

CONTINUES TO SELL

GOOD FARM LOTS

IN THE TOWNSHIP OF DYSART, IN THE COUNTY OF PETERBOROUGH,

AT FURTHER LOW RATES.

Good Settlement, Grist and Saw Mills, Post-Office, Stores, &c.

For particulars, apply to the Secretary, CHAS. JAS. BLONFIELD,

BANK OF TORONTO BUILDING, TORONTO.

500 STOCKS OF BEES WANTED!

To any person sending to Whitby Station a good stock of bees free of charge, safe arrival guaranteed, I will in return send free of charge, one of my First Prize Double boarded Bee-hives, including right to make. Price \$6. I will also take in exchange for Territory, good Stocks of Bees for a good Horse and Buggy, and will not refuse Money.

ITALIAN STOCKS.

If you have received all the orders for Italian Stocks that I am able to fill, I will at extra expense, the price after this date will be as follows:—In the Single boarded hive, including right to make, \$18. In the Double boarded hive, including the same, \$20.

ITALIAN QUEENS.

My Italian Queen, imported from Lake Maggiore, Italy, has arrived. She is a large, fine queen breeding beautiful light coloured queens even to the third generation.

—This is the only queen in Canada imported from Italy, persons who desire to secure queens bred from her this season, would do well to send in their orders at once. Price of queens bred from her, and ordered to be shipped in July, \$7; after that \$5. Queens bred from last year's importations and guaranteed pure. Send Orders for Stocks, Queens, Hives, Books, &c., will receive prompt and careful attention, addressed to

J. H. THOMAS, Apthian, Brockville, C. W.