



GOOSE BREEDING.

BY CHAS. O. FLAGG.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—We are indebted to Mr. A. A. Brigham, Ph.D., director of the Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station, for advanced proofs of this most valuable and comprehensive article on Goose Culture, and also for procuring for us duplicates of some of the engravings to be used in connection with the Report. The copies of REVIEW containing this series of articles should be carefully preserved for future guidance.

AT WHAT time in the world's history the goose became a domestic animal literature fails to inform us; but, that together with the waymarks of sculpture, art and science, which indicate the progressive march of humanity through the centuries past, shows us that, in common with the barnyard fowl, the goose has been a servant of man from the earliest times. Ancient literature ought, rightly, to tell us more about our subject than it does, for, since sometime in the fourth century, the goose has provided the scribes with quills wherewith to record, for our instruction, the great and small events of history the noble and the base in the manhood of all times since then, the rise and fall of kings and empires, the constant struggle of truth with error, and to picture for us the customs and manners, the loves and sorrows, and the faults and foibles of our ancestors. Though

a feather seems a "trifle, light as air," yet the feathers of the goose have had much to do with the physical and mental comfort of mankind, even far back in the centuries; and, although no marble monument has been raised to do her honor, yet the service she has rendered will live so long as written language shall endure.

If we inquire as to the origin of our breeds of geese, we find that there are one or two writers who contend that the wild prototype of the domestic goose does not now exist, and cite the camel as an analogous case. They give as a reason therefor the fact that the domestic goose is the only bird of its tribe systematically polygamous, all the known wild varieties mating in pairs for breeding, and this applies even to the wild Canada goose now in domestication. The large majority of authorities, however, is united in the belief that the common domestic goose is descended from the indigenous wild goose of the British Islands known as the Graylag goose. The name is sometimes given as "gray-leg" or "grey-legged goose," but lacks point, as the bird is gray in plumage, while the legs are yellowish in color; at the same time the term 'lag' had no reasonable explanation until, in 1870, Professor Skeat suggested that the appellation was given because this goose lagged behind when other varieties of wild geese migrated, which was the case in early times.