

Government Should Start the Work.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

I have read with much interest the letter of Richard Hampson, re drainage, in your issue of April 13th, and wish to express my entire accord with the views he expresses. I cannot see any chance of much being accomplished unless it is first taken in hand by the Department of Agriculture, and given a start. There are two main reasons for this. One is pointed out very clearly by Mr. Hampson: it is absolutely impossible for us to get the work done without a ditching machine, and private enterprise will not take hold until there is assurance of plenty of work ahead. The other reason is that our farmers, as a whole, do not realize the enormous advantage of a thorough system of underdrainage. It is impossible that they should realize it, because, outside of a few who have farmed in the Old Countries, not one in a hundred has ever seen a thoroughly-drained farm. Everyone appreciates the necessity for and the advantages of draining what we call wet land and low spots, but only those who have seen it can understand what underdraining would do for a great deal of land that is considered fairly dry. This is largely the reason why the Government should take it in hand first. Let them start with half a dozen machines, distributed over the Province, and commence, not on the wettest farms they can find, but on some considered fairly dry, whose owners are willing to have a complete job done. If possible, select farms where some record has been kept of previous yields, and that are conveniently located, so that they could be used for a kind of demonstration farms. There would then be some definite results to talk about, and I venture to say that it would be only a very short time until there will be such a demand for these machines that the Government would be able to step out and leave it entirely to private enterprise. The cost would, in the end, be only trifling, as the work should be paid for at same rate as if done by a privately-owned machine. The only loss would be in having at first to cover a good deal of territory to get work. In view of the enormous benefits to be derived from drainage, I do not think the cost should be considered. This would, however, be considerably reduced if the Dominion Government would put ditching machines on the free list. What do other readers think of the scheme?

ALFRED HUTCHINSON.

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POULTRY.

Egg Eating.

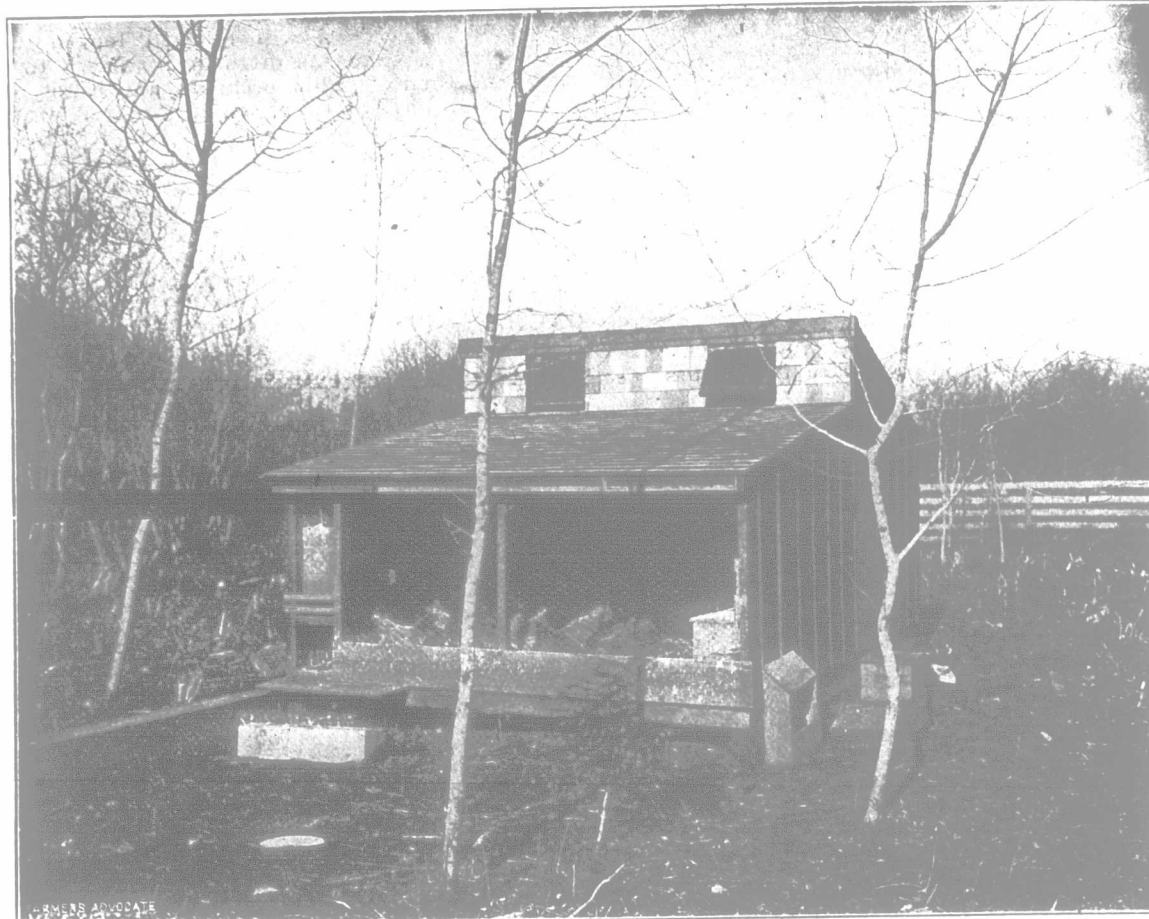
1. Kindly tell me what causes hens to eat their eggs and how to stop them?

They are fed oats and buckwheat morning and evening, in the proportions of one part buckwheat to four parts of oats, and a mash of ground oats and vegetable scraps at noon, and have skim milk and water to drink, and plenty of exercise.

2. I also have a number of geese, which get out every day, and are fed oats and buckwheat in the same proportion as the hens, and are eating their eggs in the same way. I would like to know how to prevent them.

L. W.

Ans.—1. Egg-eating, when practiced for a considerable time, becomes a vice—a habit which is hard to break up. It may be begun by a hen discovering an egg that has been frozen and has



Cheap Fresh-air Poultry House in British Columbia.

begun to thaw, from which oozes liquid which is peculiarly palatable to fowls, particularly if they have not been getting any meat food. Many flocks are not supplied with lime in winter, and a craving for that exists, which causes the shell to be eaten greedily. A start once made, the rest (even to the watching for eggs to be laid), follows naturally. No measures short of killing the egg-eating birds may avail to stop the trouble. However, other means are worth trying. Feed lime in some form, and meat, also. Feed the flock away from where the nests are. Darken the nests. See article by W. E. Williams in April 6th issue, in which sulphur is recommended as a curative for feather-eating. It might be well to try it for egg-eating also.

2. In regard to egg-eating by geese, we would suggest that you exercise your ingenuity, making use of hints given above, and if you succeed in getting habit overcome, let us know how you did it. If any readers have experience in this matter, we would esteem it a favor if they would, through us, give our readers in general the benefit of it.

Trap-nests, or Poultry Pedigree.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Heredity, we are told in one dictionary, is "that tendency which there is in each animal or plant to resemble its parents in all essential characters." By another authority it is more concisely stated as "the transmission of parental characteristics to the offspring"—the term offspring not being by any means limited to the first generation. The latter we much prefer, for, as

Darwin states, "Certain characters, capacities and instincts may lie latent in an individual, and even in a succession of individuals, without our being able to detect the least sign of their presence," and yet these are as truly due to inheritance as the "essential characters" of the first definition.

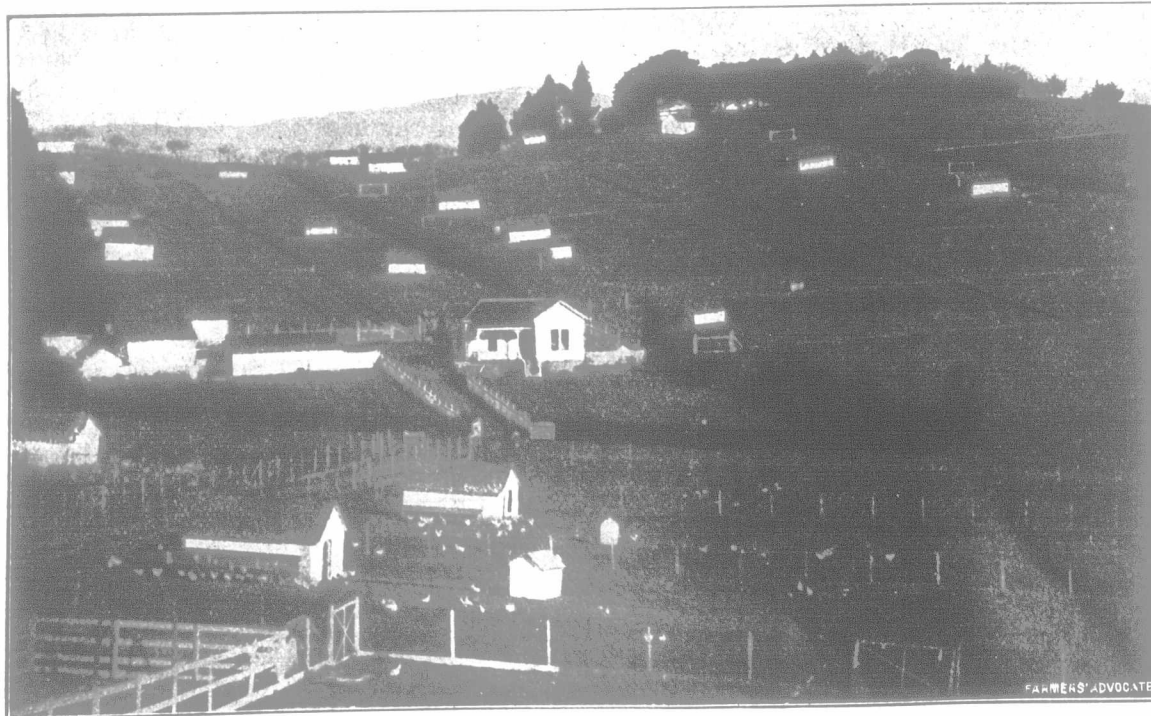
The laws of inheritance are being sought after more and more every day. Even though slowly, they, like those of electricity, are coming into man's hand to increase the world's productivity. To carry the similarity still farther, the blood streams of heredity are awaiting the breeder as the multitudinous waterfalls do the electrical engineer. Burbank's name thrills the mind of the student of plant life with the same enthusiasm as comes to that of the student of electricity when Edison's is mentioned. However, to those of us who are neither Burbanks nor Edisons, some little spot worthy of investigation may be found within our reach, and, to do our part bravely, we must "at it," even if the sower's hands do not always partake of the harvest.

To the earnest poultryman, this "prepotency in transmitting their likeness" is a particularly rich field for investigation. No mere poultry-keeper can with certainty say this or that hen is a good layer, and it is just for that reason that he never really becomes anything else than a poultry-keeper. The up-to-date poultryman, however, is able to identify the egg, as well as the hen which laid it, and would no more think of depending on the hit-or-miss system of breeding than the down-to-date dairyman would think of adding to his herd without the assistance of the Babcock test.

The dairy and poultry industries are peculiarly related, in that it is the daily output of our living factory that goes to pay the dividend after the yearly summing up, and only everlasting attention to details makes the success. Even an annual classing with the sheep-breeders is sufficient to make a fairly even clip. The buyers do not fail to recognize the fact that the intelligent owner has been weeding out the poor ones, and not only gives him the preference, but also a better price than his less painstaking neighbor. The same may be said of the other branches of the great farming industry.

We propose, in this article, to say something about the trap-nest and its uses to the poultryman. How long trap-nests have been used, it is, of course, impossible to state definitely. Suffice it to say that fifteen years ago trap-nesting must have been in its infancy. At that time there was considerable said and written about trap-nests, and some twenty-odd patents have been taken out for contrivances of various sorts, the chief aim of each being the identification of the hen that laid the egg. The really good trap-nests can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Although the trap-nest has been in use for these eighteen years or more, it is surprising to find how few there are amongst poultry-keepers who understand the working of a trap-nest, let alone the use of it. Some months ago, in conversation with the secretary of a poultry association which even has an annual show, we happened to mention trap-nests. He admitted he had never seen one. Upon further inquiry, we found there



A Well-kept Poultry Plant and Attractive Surroundings.