

BEES AND POULTRY.**ARE POULTRY PROFITABLE?**

EDITOR RURAL CANADIAN.

SIR,—I am in receipt of the second number of the RURAL CANADIAN, have read it, and like it first-rate. Knowing by whose hand it is guided, I am satisfied that it will be a success. The first two numbers are so full of real useful knowledge to many others as well as the farmer, that they cannot fail to be appreciated by the rural people of Canada.

In looking over No. 1, I see in the Poultry Department that you doubt the profitableness of keeping poultry where all feed has to be purchased from the market to maintain them. Just so. I know that the profits should be rather meagre to do so; but take into consideration any other stock that is reared and made use of either on or off the farm. Will it secure the amount of profit compared to capital invested that will be secured by poultry? Well, sir, I do not believe there is anything that can equal this kind of stock, except bees, and that is because "they work for nothing and board themselves."

Take a cow, for instance, at three years old. If a man had to buy everything she fed upon from calfhood until of that age, I presume her sale "at even a good round price" would not cover the cost, or anything near it. Or, even after first giving milk, not one in a hundred can make it pay to keep a cow and buy all the provender she consumes annually, taking one year with another. The year before last, I heard many farmers say that the prices realized for butter did not pay.

What better is the average horse, sheep or swine? Hundreds of farmers will tell you, time and again, that "they eat their heads off."

Now, sir, I hold that the real profits derived from farm stock cannot be enumerated in the dollars and cents expended in purchasing market feed, but by marketing feed in and through farm stock by feeding it to them; thus retaining the droppings or excrements made from such stock while being fed with such products as are raised on the farm.

I have been paying considerable attention to the rearing and marketing of poultry, both for slaughtering and breeding purposes. It has paid me better than I expected, notwithstanding the many dollars' worth of feed purchased on the market, but the greatest profits are derived from feeding my own produce. Notwithstanding the good prices derived from butter this year, our poultry has paid us better than cows, or anything else handled on the farm. Our greatest profits have been from selling stock as breeders, but it is enormously expensive to run this line and be successful.

I see that you have been through the mill; very probably you were like many others. The hen fever got hold pretty strong, and you tried to run half-a-dozen varieties at the start, when you had not mastered even the first principles of breeding. Hence the reaction. I started with but one variety, but it was hard work to confine myself to it. I purchased ever so many books, and read and observed whenever an opportunity for so doing presented itself. The past year we had twenty varieties, and every one paid a handsome profit.

But advertising is the main source of it. This pays, even considering the great outlay it involves.

R. A. BROWN.

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PREPARE FOR SPRING WORK IN THE APIARY.

Right now is the time to get ready for our season's work in the apiary. By-and-by our bees will be coming out from their winter quarters, and we shall then be so busy attending to their wants that the little items, which have a vast bearing on the success or failure of the honey crop, will be neglected or entirely omitted. And say what we will about the pleasures of bee-keeping, the stubborn facts of the case are, that we are after the dollars and cents of the business, with very few exceptions, and they who expect to make a success of bee-keeping, to get large yields of honey, or increase of swarms, without attending to the little things of the business, need expect naught else but a failure in their efforts. Let us begin to get our "house in order," these long winter evenings; let us spend a part of the time in discussing what we need to do to help our little pets when the time comes for them to work. Most of us have but little to do during the winter season, and the busiest ones can spare now and then a day to the bees. Last fall, in the hurry of getting our honey ready for market, and the bees packed away nice and snug for winter, many of our tools and fixtures were set to one side, tucked away into the handiest place at hand "for now," meaning to clean them up by-and-by. That by-and-by has come now; here we go at it with a vim. First is that pile of unfinished sections that we extracted the honey from last fall, and put away in a hurry. We get them all together, and with an old broken stub knife we will scrape off every bit of propolis smooth and nice, so that they will go together like new ones without any bother. There, see what a nice lot of them we have. Won't the bees fairly laugh to get at them? The mice have got at a few of them; we cut out their nibbling, unless soiled too much; if so, cut out all of it, and replace with a good piece of comb foundation. Now we will estimate about how many cases of sections we will need to use this season, and use our partly-filled sections accordingly. We ought to put in one or two of them to each row of sections to give the bees something to climb up on, which seems to help them very much. Then there are the honey boards, or cases, to hold the sections on the hive; we must clean them all up too, then put in the sections, tin separators, and wedge all up firmly, and set up on the shelf ready for use. It is not always best to put on a full complement of sections at the first, so when the time comes we can only put on so many as we judge the stock can take care of best. Now for the hives and extra combs. We look them all over; dig out a mud dauber's nest here, a patch of propolis there; clean them all out. Our frames of empty combs need pruning some—a bit of draw comb here, another spot where the moth may have spoiled it—and fill up the vacancies with a piece of foundation. This work you will need to do in a warm room, for foundation and comb are brittle things in cold weather, but propolis comes off the best where

it is cool. Then there is our old smoker; look how it is "stuck up," not with pride, but honey and soot. Don't forget to clean that up too, and set the old shop to rights generally, and we will find plenty to do, I will warrant you. Now let's see—have we got as many sections and as much comb foundation as we will need this season? I don't believe we have. And now we have been pretty busy, and got rather tired; to-night we will write out an order to send off to-morrow to the dealer for the needed supplies. If we order now, he can get our goods ready at his leisure, but after a while he will be so busy filling orders that we may have to wait, and lose precious time, for when the honey is coming in fast, time is honey, and honey is money. "In times of peace, prepare for war." Go now, get ye ready for spring work!"—*Cor. Prairie Farmer.*

SOILING POULTRY.

Mr. George May Powell cites the case of a family who, on a village lot, raised two kinds of fancy fowls, for which they have gained a reputation in the community, and for which, and for whose eggs, there is ready market for breeding purposes at moderate, but paying rates. He also mentions a poor widow who, on premises equally contracted, raised eggs, the sale of which was the principal source of support of herself and two children. A leading feature of her successful management was "soiling the poultry," especially in winter. The ingenious method of accomplishing this is described in the *Christian Union*, and, looking in the same direction, a plan is suggested which is otherwise advantageous in two or three ways:

"She kept the south windows of her house full of trays about eighteen inches wide, three feet long, and three inches deep. These trays were filled with earth and sowed with wheat. The earth was kept well watered, and the grain grew with remarkable thriftiness. As often as the spires or foliage grew to be two or three inches long, she clipped it with her shears and fed it to the laying hens. This soiling method may be enlarged on and supplemented by a system of grazing. Few sights are more desolate than most gardens in late autumn, during the winter and in early spring. Much of this may be changed. As late even as the sunshiny days of the last of November, and which extend often into December, the whole surface of the garden may be raked over and sown with winter wheat or winter rye. Of course it is better to be done in October. It will do often, however, as late as November or December. This winter grain comes up, and during the late fall, at open times in the winter and in the early spring, it furnishes first-class grazing for the hens, increasing their laying qualities to a remarkable degree. At least a bushel of seed should be sown on a quarter of an acre. This is more than double the seed used when sowing for a crop of grain. It makes the ground look even and green, instead of rough, disorderly and desert-like. It therefore pays abundantly for the trouble and expense, simply as an element of beautifying the premises and making the home surroundings look cheerful. Last, but not least, the heavy growth of green, when turned under in the spring, more than pays for itself by fertilizing for the next season's garden growths. The chief gain on the whole operation, however, is the grazing it supplies to the laying hens."