

A CLEVER WOOD-DUCK.

A Remarkable Instance of Courage, Perseverance and Intelligence on the part of a Duck to save her Young from Destruction.

A Texas writer in the Forest and Stream tells the following singular story of the almost human strategy of a wild duck to save her young ones from falling a prey to a hunting-dog:

Eli is a thoroughbred pointer, a native Texan, and resides in Burleson County of the Lone Star State, and justly enjoys the honor and distinction in his locality of being an expert in never failing to point out the woodcock, quail and jack-snipe. From the beginning of November to the end of February he is on duty in the sporting field, and the remainder of the year responds in the shade about the house, or slumbers in the fresh-plowed earth about the farm, apparently oblivious to the exciting sport of the past or that which awaits him in the future. He is always courteous, and when loitering about the farm seems to keep a "ceaseless vigil" toward his master, in testimony whereof he is ever ready to bring back the rolling hat when carried away by a puff of wind. But the most deceptive and exciting episode in Eli's history now begins.

A few days ago, just after I had passed through the farm gate on my way to dinner, I heard Eli spring some game to my left. I looked and saw something decidedly larger than a quail just ahead of him and coming directly toward me. I stood perfectly still and they came within two feet of me. It was a wood-duck, down on a level with Eli's head, and the tip of its short tail feathers were nearly or quiet between his open lips, and I saw it turn its head and look round to one side, to see if it was far enough from its mouth. Its wing stroke was graceful yet feeble, and I thought it would fall and be crushed to death by the dog in a moment, when the thought occurred to me that it had left young ones behind. But I witnessed the close race between duck and dog 300 or 400 yards, till they passed out of sight, and, knowing the dog would come back to see if there were any more, I waited to keep him from killing the young ones, if possible. Going to where he had flushed the old one, I heard the young ones crying about in the weeds and grass. I waited for the dog's return. I had scarcely a minute to wait till the dog came, tongue out, panting.

Just as he stood or pointed on the first young one, the old duck seemed to fall paralyzed on the top of his head; and of course that claimed all his attention;

and away they went again, and, if possible the duck was this time closer to his nose than before. I had nothing to do but to laugh and await the return of the dog, for I knew he would come back. The mother had evidently led him a great way off that time, for they were gone about fifteen minutes, when I saw Eli coming apparently much exhausted, and in her soft, feeble, noiseless way, the duck some fifteen or twenty feet behind him. I was within ten feet of the dog, when he arrived at the spot where the young ones were; and just at that moment the matron gave him a flap on the head with her wings and seemed to fall on the ground under his nose again.

This insult, linked with his ambition to catch her, gave him new courage, and out they pulled for the third heat. They came toward the house this time, and for 200 yards I could see duck and dog as if fastened nose and tail. The impression left was that the dog had the tips of the duck's tail pinched in his front teeth, knowing that if he relaxed his hold for a better one he would lose the bird; and that a slender mouthful was better than none; and that he would hold to it if he had to run to do it. Again I waited a long time for Eli to come back. At the end of perhaps twenty minutes I started to the house, and about 300 yards I met him, completely exhausted and willing enough to go to the house with me.

This was the most laughable incident of my whole life, and had I not witnessed it I never should have believed in the existence of such courage, perseverance and intelligence in a duck to save her young ones from destruction.

The Biggest Apple Tree.

The largest apple tree in New England, and probably in the world, is in the north-western part of Cheshire, Conn., standing in Mr. Delos Hotchkiss' door-yard. Its age can be traced by a family tradition to 140 years at least, and it may be 20 to 25 years older. It is at the present time of symmetrical shape; the trunk is nearly round, without a scar or blemish on it; there are 8 large branches; five of them have been in the habit of bearing one year and remaining 3 the next. Mr. Hotchkiss has gathered in 1 year from the five branches 85 bushels of fruit, and his predecessor had harvested a crop of 110 bushels from the same 5 branches. By careful measurement the circumference of the trunk 1 foot above the ground, above the enlargement of the roots, is 13 feet 8 inches. The height of the tree has been carefully measured and found to be 60 feet, and the spread of the branches as the apples fall is 100 feet, or 6 rods. The fruit is rather small, sweet, and of moderate excellence.—Boston Journal.

Cheddar Cheese.

It was over two years ago that a correspondent called attention to "the Cheddar cheese of the world"—a phrase which was both attacked and defended. It was pointed out that from the small district in Somerset and Wilts, which was the original home of this "make," the system had spread over the whole world—to Scotland, America, Canada, Australasia, Holland, and even to the banks of the Volga. Not only were these countries imitators, but some were very successful imitators, and were producing cheese which ran all but the very finest sorts of West of England make out of the market. The lesson was that the cheese-makers of Somerset and Wilts should look the situation square in the face and try to improve the quality of the bulk of their manufacture. It has been evident that this lesson has now been learnt, although at the time it was not altogether palatable. If any evidence were wanted as to its urgency it was to be found at the recent dairy show; where all the first and second prizes and the championship were won from West of England makers by the Scotch-made Cheddars. The result is that in a few weeks a movement will be initiated at Frome, in the very heart of the finest Cheddar district, which is very similar to that which the Duke of Westminster so warmly recommends to the Cheshire farmers. The Bath and West of England Society has opened butter-making schools in many parts of the West of England and Wales, and a short time ago commenced a cheese school at Wells. The Frome cheese-makers have approached the society with the unanimous request that this school of instruction for cheese-makers should be taken to Frome. To this request—which is the highest tribute the old established society can possibly receive with regard to the usefulness and necessity of its dairy propaganda—a favourable answer has been received, and in the course of the next few weeks the school will open on the picturesque farm overhanging the Vallis Vale. The spot is rich in archaeological associations but in the future it will be additionally interesting as the place from which the makers of Somersetshire Cheddars went forth armed with a better knowledge of their craft in order to compete with, and defeat, the hordes of makers of "the Cheddar cheese of the world."—London Times.

Because oats bring a good price, do not sell all you have, and try to keep horses, and raise young colts and calves, without them. There is nothing equal to a little crushed oats, for the young, growing animal. Oats, will give them bone and muscle.