



A Child's Letter about Poultry.

DEAR MR. EDITOR.—It has long been my intention to write to your interesting and instructive paper—THE CANADA FARMER, I now sit down to avail myself of the privilege in the following letter. I feed my little chicks and ducks on meal and water. I take a large bowl, fill it with meal, and then slake it with water, and mix it with my hands. I feed them about four times every day, giving a saucerful to each nest. I have a good deal of trouble keeping the other hens away from the nest to eat the food. It is not, I am sure you, dear Mr. Editor, that they do not get lots to eat, for they get well fed every day. About the age of three weeks, I let my little ducks out of the box or pen in which I put them after hatching, and let them roam about in freedom. My little chickens I do not keep shut up at all, even for a day after they are hatched, but of their own free will they remain, generally speaking, in the hen house for about the space of two days after, till they gather a little strength, and then they go out and make themselves at home in the yard and drying green. We have great advantages in the way of raising poultry, our hens having a good run in two meadows, a small orchard, a drying green, yard, and a fine wood. The wood, however, is rather objectionable, as it is rather frequented with foxes, who have more than once made inroads on my hen house, to my great grief and indignation. I hope my little chickens and ducks will go on and succeed as well as they have begun. Pray, Mr. Editor, how much do you charge for giving information, and let me know by return of post. Believe me to remain,

Yours truly,
Miss A. LEITH.

"The Hermitage,
Ancaster, C. W.

NOTE BY EDITOR C. FARMER.—Though the above letter was not meant for publication, we cannot resist the temptation to put it in print. We are much pleased to receive such a communication, and to find that young people are reading THE CANADA FARMER, and becoming interested in rural pursuits. One page of the sheet of note paper on which the above letter is written, contains a sort of "Family Register" of our little friend's ducks and chickens. The pen has been lightly drawn across it as if she repented of giving so full particulars, but we are sure it will interest our readers as it has done ourselves. It is as follows:—

"DUCKS AND CHICKENS PERTAINING TO MISS A. LEITH."

10 in one brood; 2 in one brood; 2 in one brood; 1 in one brood.

DUCKS.
11 in one brood; 9 in one brood.
Total—35.

CHICKENS.
2 ducks; 2 chickens.

"All doing well, and well taken care of." We would inform our young friend that we do not charge anything for giving information, and if she will send us any questions she would like to ask, we will answer them in THE CANADA FARMER, and then they will benefit others as well as herself.

NEW CANADIAN HYBRID GRAPE—"H" makes the following enquiries:—"A short time ago you mentioned a grape vine of great promise, and which was likely to be the vine for Canada, belonging, I think, to Mr. Arnold of Paris, C. W. I should like to read something more respecting it. What are its special good qualities? Is it early? Are there plants of it for sale at the right season? And at what price? And how should Mr. Arnold be addressed? Why does he not advertise?"

ANS.—By referring to our issue of Nov. 1, 1865, our correspondent will find his questions fully answered so far as the qualities of Mr. Arnold's grape are concerned. It is early, though further experiment is required to authorize a statement as to the average date of its ripening. There are no plants for sale, nor will there be any, until the grape is more fully tested, and a sufficient stock of young plants raised to make it worth while to bring it into the market. In due time it will be advertised.

TWO QUESTIONS.—"A subscriber" enquires as follows:—1. "Can you or any of your numerous readers instruct me how to mend India-rubber?"

2. "Is there any such thing as a cheap pocket microscope, which could be used for examining ports &c."

ANS.—1. We are unable to give the required information, but some of our readers probably can.

2. A very handy and powerful microscope, composed of three lenses, is manufactured by Mr. C. Foster Optician, &c., of this city. price \$2.00.

POTATO-DIGGING MACHINES.—"L. Hawell" of London, C. W., writes:—"Could you inform me, through your paper, if there is such a thing made in Canada as a machine for taking out potatoes, as if so, where they are to be got and about what price one would be. If you can answer this in your next issue I should feel much obliged."

ANS.—There are two or three potato-digging machines made in the United States, but so far as we know, the implement is not manufactured in Canada.

HOW TO DESTROY ANTS.—"A Correspondent" enquires as to "the best method of exterminating these tiny pests of the lawn and the garden."

ANS.—We have published in past numbers of the CANADA FARMER several suggestions for the destruction of these annoying little wretches. We subjoin two more "cures," which we extract from a recent issue of the *Gardener's Chronicle*. Says the first:—"Take 1 lb. of black soap, dissolve it in four gallons of water, and scatter the solution through a fine rose over the runs and nests. Death will ensue. The remedy should be repeated until all are destroyed, taking care, however, not to water the roots of plants or to destroy grass on lawns. Stir the top of the nest on a hot day, sprinkle with the solution, and the result will be satisfactory."

The second is supplied by "A Would-be Gardener." It is as follows:—"I have been greatly troubled with ants in both stove and green house, and have tried several ways of getting rid of them; the most effectual of which has been to get a beetle trap baited with a moderate quantity of sugar in the bottom, and to put it in their runs at night. In the morning the trap will be found to be nearly full. Have a bucket of hot water close at hand, and immerse the trap in it. I have killed thousands in this simple manner. I have tried guano-water, and also sprinkling dry guano in their paths, but without the least effect."

The Canada Farmer.

TORONTO, UPPER CANADA, JULY 16, 1866.

Among the Apiaries.

We have recently visited a number of apiaries of various sizes, and have a few things to note for the benefit of our readers in reference to what we saw and heard when among them. In the first place we were surprised to find in how backward a state the art of bee-keeping is among Canadian farmers. Very few comparatively, keep bees, whereas there should be an apiary on every farm. Those who do keep them, with very rare exceptions, follow the old style methods, and know little or nothing of modern improvements and discoveries in apiculture. Our limited experience in reference to the matter made us diffident and modest at first, but we soon found that a study of Langstroth, Quinby and other bee publications, together with a year's observation of bees in a moveable comb hive, had put us in practical acquaintance with the subject far ahead of men who could boast of twenty or thirty years experience in the old fashioned way. Several bee-keepers with whom we met, had never heard of moveable comb hives, did not know the utility of smoke in taming and handling bees, and could give very little account of the habits of these little insects. The fact is that with the common box or straw hives, and old-time methods of management, the bee-world is a realm of mystery. "Shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it." Bee-keeping is a venture instead of a science,—a lottery instead of a business. Several

things were told us by old fashioned bee-keepers which they could not explain, but which we had no difficulty in accounting for. "I lost a stock in that hive last winter though there was a plenty of honey." Explanation, for want of ventilation the congealed moisture stopped the passages, and the bees could not get to their stores. "A fine late swarm perished in that hive." Explanation, they were robbed by the other bees, and had too little honey to live through. Strangest of all, we were told of stocks that got through the winter well, had plenty of honey when set out in the spring; but they ate up all their honey and did not make enough to live on! The inference was that a lazy fit had taken the bees,—they wouldn't work,—and so had nothing to eat and died. Human beings will sometimes take fits of laziness and starve for want of the bread they might have by working for it, but bees never do this. Had these bee-keepers used moveable-comb hives and watched their bees, they would have known what the matter was. They would have ascertained that there was this year a strange failure of the honey harvest between apple-blossoms and white clover,—just at a time when the quantity of young brood to be provided for, immense quantities of honey were needed for home consumption. Had they discovered this, and fed their bees for a few days, they would have saved them. We might give other illustrations of the want of practical acquaintance with this subject which came in our way, suffice it to say that our little tour among the bee-hives has thoroughly convinced us that people who will stick to the old haphazard way of keeping bees, and will not read and inform themselves on the subject had better let the thing alone, for they cannot rationally expect success. In our climate, there are certain precautions that are absolutely essential. It is different here from those warmer countries of Europe, where bees may be very much left to themselves, and where they thrive even if neglected. It is not laborious work that they need here in looking after them; there is nothing required that is so arduous as to discourage anyone, but there must be some knowledge of the nature and habits of the bee, and a little attention to those wants which man is to supply as a small return for the generous hoard of sweetness the bee makes for him. We are free to confess that we met with no instances of signal success in bee-keeping among those who adhere to box and straw hives, and are not posted in modern ideas and improvements. But we did meet with several instances of downright failure, and with some cases of fluctuating "luck,"—good and bad, which ought to be exchanged for steady intelligent success. As a case coming under the last remark, we met with a farmer who last fall had seven hives of bees, only two of which had wintered over. But these two had "done splendid this spring." They had multiplied to seven, one hive having swarmed twice and the other three times. Now, in all probability, they were allowed to increase in some such way last year, and weak swarms with an insufficient store of honey were permitted to brave our long winter and to perish with hunger. If some of the weak stocks had been doubled or trebled, and a little attention paid to feeding them toward spring, there might have been say four strong stocks to begin business with the present season. The locality is evidently favourable for bees, or the two stocks would not have multiplied as they have done this unpropitious season, and with four strong stocks there might easily have been an increase to ten of sufficient size and vigour to collect honey enough and to spare. Such increase is all that could be desired by any reasonable bee keeper. We urge it upon our readers that they take pains to inform themselves on this and on all other practical matters pertaining to rural economy. Why should we shoot in the dark, when we may have the blaze of full day light?

In the course of our apiarian travels, which were not, however, so extensive as we could have wished we met with some pleasing exceptions to the fore,