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the necessary exercise to maintain a vigorous body. Pullet selection depends almost altogether on appearance.

Of the hens, a few which will have reached the age of three years next spring may, under certain circumstances, prove profitable for the winter, but those rising two years are more likely to be the best producers. Trap-nesting and egg records give an excellent opportunity to be sure of the best layers, and the time of year which they do their best work, but as this is not extensively practiced on the farms one must rely upon observation to a large extent. The person who feeds the hens day after day and week after week, who gathers the eggs and takes all care of the flock, if he keeps his eyes open can form a pretty good idea of the relative value of his hens, provided he has some mark by which to distinguish them. It would pay every poultry owner to leg-band all his birds, as this is the only way to be sure of their ages. Watch the hens carefully. Go to the pen early in the morning and when the twilight commences to fall at night, and you will find some of the hens down from the roost very early and busy scratching out their morning's feed. These same hens are likely to be the last to go to roost at night, and the workers in this respect are almost invariably the layers. A hen that sticks to the perch for a greater part of the day usually becomes fat and seldom lays enough eggs to pay for the food which she consumes. The first consideration should be the kind of fowls from which the hens or pullets came; that is, the poultryman should be sure that they come from a good laying strain, and then, as pointed out, he should exercise good judgment in culling, keeping only the best developed, most promising birds, and outside of actual trap-nesting and egg records, he has done all there is to do in the matter of deciding upon what shall constitute his flock of winter layers.

The Ducks.

By Peter McArthur.

It was all a mistake about those ducks. I might have studied them and written them up any time since they came out of the shell, but I got an idea into my head that ducks are so active that I would have to be feeling particularly fit and to be prepared to take a day off for the job. Now that I have looked into the matter I find that the old hen that hatched them misled me entirely. She kept up such a continual clacking and scolding because those ducks didn't act like chickens that I got to thinking that they must be unusually trying creatures. And all the while those young ducks were probably living their duck lives in a quiet, contented way, and there was no reason in the world why they should be reformed into chickens. Fortunately, the old hen finally gave up in despair, and after loudly prophesying that the whole place was going to the dogs just because those ducks couldn't be taught to roost in an apple tree, and because they were all the time getting their feet wet, she went back to laying eggs, and the last I heard of her she was in solitary confinement, because she wanted to start hatching again at this time of the year. All of which goes to show that there is a great deal of unnecessary fussing going on in this world, and that it is possible for well-meaning people to make a nuisance of themselves. The old hen meant well, but she had tackled an entirely unnecessary job.

This morning I hunted up the ducks for the purpose of trying to get a sympathetic understanding of their view of life. I had no trouble finding them. Ever since the oats have been hauled in they haven't wandered very far from the stack. Besides getting all the heads that were exposed within reach, they rob the hens whenever they manage to scratch loose a few grains. As the wet weather has filled all the puddles around the barnyard they do not have to go far for water, and I would give something to be as contented with my lot as they are. I found them lying under the granary with their heads tucked under their wings, and the first thing that struck me about them was the satisfying way in which they lie down. They seem to be built for just that kind of restfulness. When a duck lies down it does it in a whole-souled way that leaves nothing to be desired. It touches the ground from its crop to its tail and gives an exhibition of perfect rest that is worthy of a poem. Come to think of it, there is nothing surprising about this. Ducks are water birds, and the attitude of swimming is the one that they naturally take.

Nature intended them to lie at full length in their own element, and now that they have been civilized into living on land, out of their element, they keep to the old habit. If the ground had not been so wet I would have sprawled down at full length to watch them, and would have shown them that when it comes to taking a rest they have nothing on me. When the conditions are right I can assume a restful attitude and rest as completely as anything in nature. But some people do not regard this as resting. They have another unpleasant word to describe it.

To begin with, I shoed the ducks from under the granary. Though I was loath to disturb them duty must be done. The whole flock rose with a simultaneous "quack" and squattered through a near-by puddle. "Squattered" is exactly the right word, and I have the authority of Burns for using it:

"Awa' ye squattered like a drake
On whistling wings."

The word seems to describe both their appearance and the sounds they make. As soon as they reached a place of safety they all stopped and began wiggling their tails. Then I saw a great light. Duck language is not expressed with the tongue, but with the tail. There is a sameness about the sounds they utter that would make it impossible for them to carry on a connected conversation. With their tails it is different. They seem able to give an infinite variety to the way in which they wiggle them. They can express joy, satisfaction, contempt, surprise, or any other emotion, by the simple wiggling of their tails. Did you ever see a duck dive into the water in such a way as to leave only its tail exposed? If you have you could never fail to tell when it managed to get a good juicy root or a snail by the happy way it would wiggle its tail. Sometimes when they are very happy they can wiggle their tails so fast that all the eye can catch is a sort of hazy blur. At other times, when they are attending to their toilet and rubbing themselves down with the backs of their heads, they will give their tails a little flirt that is just as proud as proud. I think if I set myself to it I could write a bulletin on the language of duck tails. After I had disturbed them they stood and wiggled their tails at one another in a way that seemed to be entirely disrespectful to me. They seemed to be saying, "Humph! I wonder what he thinks he wants now. Did you ever see such a looking creature? How on earth does he manage to balance himself up on end in that way when every duck knows that the true, graceful position for a creature's body is to be hung between two legs horizontally. I wonder how he manages to convey his ideas, if he has any, without having a gaudy little bunch of feathers to wiggle the same as we have. Those sounds he makes with his mouth when the children are around can't have any more meaning than our quacking. It must be terrible to be a poor dumb creature like that." Then they all said "Quack" and gave their tails a most superior wiggle. At this point an unwary cricket started to move past about ten feet away, and instantly every neck in the flock was stretched out full length and every tail wig-wagged: "My meat!" I don't know which one got it, though I think it must have been the brown drake from the contented way in which he wiggled his tail for some minutes afterwards.

Now, don't be offended, but there are really lessons to be learned from the ducks. Their faculty for flocking together is something that farmers might study with profit. Whether sleeping or feeding it would be possible almost at any time to cover the whole flock with a tablecloth, and when they make up their minds to travel they move in Indian file behind a chosen leader like a band of Iroquois braves. And yet it is possible for the poison of class distinction to find its way even among ducks. I remember that one day when I was moving a pile of boards I uncovered a fair-sized frog. Instantly the ducks swooped down on it, and before I had time to interfere the frog had gone headfirst to his doom. He must have made just about as satisfactory a meal as that duck had ever had. And what was the result? While the other ducks went foraging around for crickets and angleworms, the one that had swallowed the frog squatted on the shady side of the stable and crooned to itself and wiggled its tail as if it were the most superior duck in the country. It was easy to see that it felt itself above all the others. (Wiggle.) It was made of finer clay. (Wiggle—Wiggle—Wiggle.) It was really disgraceful the way those common ducks squattered around after grubs and such refuse as collects in the bottom of puddles. (Wiggle—Wiggle.) All afternoon it lay there meditating and digesting and refusing to associate with common ducks. And yet—and yet—even that superior duck will probably figure at a Christmas dinner just like the others. It is a strange world. Even the most gifted ducks cannot long maintain a superior position.

GARDEN & ORCHARD.

The Season's Fruit Markets.

The Prairie markets on account of the large crop in the Western States, are likely to be well supplied, says the Dominion Fruit Crop Report for September. On this account the wholesale firms in Winnipeg and other markets in the Prairie provinces, have been cautious in buying fruit from Ontario growers. Representatives from Ontario have visited the Prairie markets and it is reported that a very large proportion of the Lambton and Norfolk crop has been sold direct to retailers in these cities.

In Montreal and Ottawa, basket fruits have been arriving from Ontario in large quantities, but in both markets the condition of this fruit, as taken from refrigerator cars, is reported as very poor, some plums being sold in Montreal market as low as 10 cents for eleven-quart baskets. This state of affairs may have been caused by the fruit being packed in an over-mature or moist condition.

Reference has already been made to the complaints of growers of a scarcity of buyers. While this condition of affairs is lamentable, and while considerable fruit may be practically wasted, there is no doubt that the situation would be greatly relieved if co-operative methods of marketing were adopted by the growers in those localities from which these complaints originate.

The average buyer is not looking for fruit in small lots, and the consequence is that many owners of comparatively small orchards have difficulty in placing their crop in the buyers' hand. If co-operative organizations were formed by a number of growers in these sections and the fruit were sold by the associations, many of the complaints mentioned would doubtless be eliminated.

September Fruit Crops and Prices

The September Fruit Crop Report issued from Ottawa on the sixteenth of the month, notes that the prospects for apples were then somewhat more favorable than when the August report was issued, particularly for fall and winter varieties, which show an increase of from five to ten per cent. The general averages for the Dominion were placed at 70 per cent. for early apples, 74 per cent. for fall apples, and 67 per cent. for winter apples, making a representative average of 70, the same as the figure for early fruit.

The month of August was remarkable for the number of days upon which rain fell throughout the Dominion, and for the comparatively small number of hours of sunshine. This lack, however, was less detrimental to fruit than to some other crops. Conditions have favored the growth of fungus, though losses on this score have been largely controlled by efficient spraying methods, where practiced.

Winds have been more or less troublesome in Western Ontario where severe storms prevailed about August 25th, and to some extent in Nova Scotia. The Annapolis Valley crop is said to be not more than forty per cent. that of last year. Pears in Ontario are medium to light, being a failure in Prince Edward county. In Nova Scotia and British Columbia they are good. The average of the crop is placed at 80 per cent., with Bartlett's leading. Plums this year are above the average, Ontario and Quebec being the exceptions. Peaches and grapes are up to the mark, though grapes like tomatoes, are late in ripening.

Insect injury to the fruit crop is fairly prevalent, and scab is doing damage all over the Dominion.

As to foreign fruit prospects, the report reads: "The weather continues extremely cold and damp, inducing fungous diseases and preventing the proper ripening of the fruit."

"England.—The crop of cooking apples will not be very high, but there is likely to be an abundance of inferior grades. Later in the season the demand for dessert fruit will be comparatively keen and prices moderate. The crop, on the whole, will be about the average. Apples have been selling in Covent Garden at practically a dollar a bushel for good cooking varieties, and \$1.50 for the best early dessert apples. The last lot of Tasmania and New Zealand apples sold at rather low prices.

"Pears are reported as plentiful though the crop in the Southern counties will be below average.

"Plums have been a light crop, and the color and keeping qualities have been injured by the cold wet season.

"From Scotland comes the same report of unfavorable weather, which will limit the fruit crop perceptibly.

"On the continent the conditions remain practically the same. While the apple crop is fair a