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FIGHTING LICE.

BY MR. BOYER IN FARM-POULTRY.

So much has been written upon this subject that it seems almost ridiculous to refer to it again; and yet how few hen houses in the country are free from these miserable pests! We verily believe that if there was less lice among the poultry on the farm, there would be less other ailments.

It is easy enough to give a set of rules by which the enemy can be conquered, but if those rules are not *rigidly* followed out, the pests will continue to thrive. Do not put all your trust in the hired man—not that we mean that the average hired man cannot be trusted, but there are a great many who have the weakness of easily forgetting matters, and for their special benefit we refer to it. A gentleman one day invited us to inspect his hen house and tell him what those miserable “creatures” were that seemed to have captured the entire plant. We called. “Millions of red mites!”

“Do your hens lay?” we asked.

“They do nothing but scratch,” put in the hired man, who was standing near by.

“And what do you do then?” we asked of him.

“Let them scratch of course—nothing else could be done.”

The owner of the plant, if it might be called a plant, was about embarking in the hen business. Eggs were to be his specialty, and this same hired man was selected to take exclusive charge. He had theories of his own, and took great pride in telling what he once did “in the old country.”

“Do you clean up those droppings every morning?” we asked.

“Do I? Well, I should say not. Who ever heard of such a foolish thing? Why,

man, the manure keeps them warm?”

“Keeps what warm, the lice?”

He took this as a good joke, but I felt offended at the fellow.

“How often do you fumigate this house by burning sulphur in it?” we put to him.

“What do you want to fumigate for?”

“Young man,” said we, “You might be able to raise chickens in the sweet hereafter, but you cannot do it here. You cannot raise lice and eggs in the same house. Your birds have a sickly look, and I am told you are doctoring for cholera. Nonsense! Kill those lice, and keep this place clean, and you can throw physic to the dogs.”

Such a place! The manure under the roosts was piled up a foot high. Cobwebs hung from the walls, so that we were completely covered. There was nothing but filth about. And yet the house was a comfortable and neatly constructed one. The owner invested considerably money in his hobby, but his poor success almost knocked the life out of it.

There are more places just like this one.

How many henneries on the farm are cleaned up every morning. How many are fumigated every month? How many are whitewashed twice a year? How many are visited every now and then with a kerosene can, in search of lice? To make hens pay lice *must* be kept down.

All the insect powders in the world will not amount to a snuff if the place is not kept clean. It is no easy task to fight a big regiment of lice; it is far easier to prevent them.

We prevent by burning sulphur in our house once a month. We do not guess when the month is up, but make it a rule that on the first or second day of each and every month the buildings *must* be fumigated. Every spring and

fall—we take April and September—we whitewash the interior of the buildings, and to each pail of wash put one ounce of carbolic acid. Then, of course, we gather the droppings every morning, and sprinkle either road-dust, loam, or plaster over the platforms.

It is said by some that a whitewash to which is added a couple pounds of flour of sulphur and a pint of strong suds made from whale oil soap, is a grand weapon to fight lice.

Some poultrymen recommend tansy leaves in the nests, and some believe in tobacco stems.

An old gentleman once said that if the heads and under the wings of the fowls infested with lice, were greased with either goose or hen oil, three times a week; and the roosts kerosened often, and sifted ashes put in the nests of the sitting hens, the “lice would skeedaddle.”

A southern gentlemen said that he has had the best of success by greasing the fowls with unwashed butter, fresh from the churn.

Another gentleman writes that he rubs dust and dried ashes into the feathers of the hens. He also scatters the mixture all over the house.

On the subject of lice, Mascall, an old-time writer, said: “They got them in scraping abroad foul straw, or on dung-hills, or when they sit in nests not made clean, or in the hen house, by their dung lying long there, which corrupts their bodies and breeds lice and fleas.”

J. Brace writes: “We sat a hen on a perfectly clean nest, made in a barrel away from our hennery, with a view to guard against vermin; she was a large White Brahma—a pet hen—but on the morning of the twentieth day of her sitting, we went as usual to feed her, and found her dead—perfectly covered with lice, or vermin more resembling sheep ticks than anything else we could com-