MAKING A SUCCESS OF COMMERCIAL POULTRY RAISING.

Plant at Oregon Hospital for the Insane That Will Furnish Eggs and Fowls for All State Institutions—Incubators and the "Old Settin' Hen" in Friendly Contest for Practical Supremacy—"System" the Keynote of the Enterprise

MAX MULLER IN CHARGE OF PLANT.

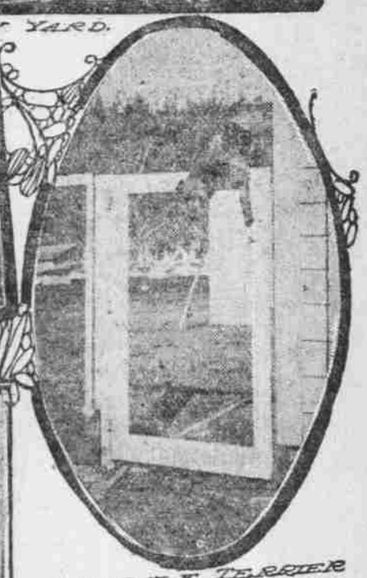
PRACTICAL COLONY HOUSE, A FEATURE OF THE PLANT.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE STATE'S POULTRY YARD.

MOTHERING THE DUCKLINGS.

INDIAN RUNNER DUCKS.

DROVE OF PEKINS



AIREDALE TERRIER ON GUARD.

BY W. J. CUDDY.

THE best poultry plant in Oregon is state owned and conducted. I use the superlative advisedly, because I "know chickens." The plant is located in the orchard of the State Hospital for the Insane. I made a visit there lately, and after as much fuss as if I were seeking personal commitment to the institution, I got in. This statement is not made to deter visitors, for all are welcomed any day of the week.

More than a year ago the deplorable condition of the plant led Superintendent Steiner to seek the proper man to run it. He found him in Max Muller, a "chicken man" born for the work. Statement of a single fact is enough to show he was needed. His first action was removal of four loads of refuse from the one house in general use.

Mr. Muller is demonstrating that commercial poultry-growing can be done in Oregon. The housewife with two dozen hens to clean up the table scraps makes a profit of two or three dollars a year on each fowl, the only expense being occasional purchase of a sack of wheat. If she be so minded she writes to the county paper a financial statement of her profits, and half the people who read it are spurred to calculate the immensity of the business if they should enter it. For if there be a profit of $48 a year on 24 hens, there should be $2000 a year on 1000 fowls. Of course, anybody can raise chickens!

Why So Many Fail.

It is the most alluring of enterprises in the beginning, but, alas! 99 and a large fraction per cent of those who enter it "fall down." They lack the one ordinary essential—system.

Mr. Muller is the feature of the asylum plant, aside from the fowls. He was given carte blanche when he took the job, the only request being that he produce results. So he took the Barred Plymouth Rock for his foundation stock—"the only chicken for this country," he told me. The eggs are large and the meat is perfect. There are also two large flocks of Pekin and Indian Runner ducks, and a feature of the scheme is a pheasantry for reproducing the game bird of Oregon, to be turned loose when needed to restock the fields in different parts of the state.

Chickens are hatched by hens and incubators. I could not get an opinion of preference from Mr. Muller. "Both are all right," he said. Both are necessary at times and he gets good hatches from both.

How Plant Is Arranged.

In the incubator house, which is partly underground to insure evenness of temperature, there are five machines of 144 egg capacity, and in one filled with duck eggs the ducklings were just peeping from the shells. "I hatched 90 per cent of the eggs," he said. Ten machines will be added to the plant this Fall.

In another house 22 hens were hatching, 10 of them on pheasant eggs, and the chickens are ere this in the brooder house. This house is a series of 8 by 10 pens, heated by hot water, opening into wire-fenced runs and absolutely clean and glaring white from frequent whitewashing, as are all the buildings of the plant. The wood floors are covered with chopped straw, into which the feed is thrown. This feed, by the way, is dry mash from bins of rolled oats, wheat, oyster shell and grit. The "natural" food of the fowl—bugs and insects—is supplied in the form of fresh meat ground in a chopper and given at frequent intervals. Before the chickens get into this house, however, they are kept a few days in a Mandy Lee brooder to harden them to meet the exigencies of the cruel world they have entered.

Increasing the Chicken Supply.

Twenty hens and two roosters are kept up for breeding purposes, and record is made of their eggs. The roosters, all thoroughbreds, of course, are changed at intervals.

Following the life of the chicken, when a few weeks old a suitable number are placed in a colony house. A wire fence encloses them for a few days, in which time they acquire such familiarity with the house that when the wire is removed and they are given the run of the orchard they always return.

The plant contains five houses for laying hens, with eight nests to the house. These nests open on the outside, with hinged covers sloping to shed the rain.

I was impressed with the tameness of the fowls, and when I remarked upon it, Mr. Muller laughed, and lifting the cover, showing eight hens on nests, picked out one and replaced her with no fuss on her part, and she kept right on in the process of production. How many people can do that in their backyard coops? Yet that tameness is a need in the business.

Preventing Spread of Disease.

The breeding plant will be shut down about July 15, and that yard, as well as other inclosures, sown to rye and clover. That "sweetens" the land and prevents disease gaining a foothold. But there is no disease in the premises, anyway.

The colonies of ducklings are interesting. They are orphans that have never known the joys of a parent, but they do not miss her, for each flock is "mothered" by an overgrown Plymouth Rock capon, who calls them to feed and clucks the riot act when they stray. The tender solicitude manifested by these abnormal creatures for their charges is an interesting study.

The Pekin and Indian Runner ducks are kept in another part of the grounds, where they have cemented basins of running water in which to disport. Contrary to custom, they are not kept up until 9 o'clock to prevent them laying anywhere. "I teach them to lay in the house," said Mr. Muller, and when he showed me the eggs I believed him.

What Asylum Plant Proves.

The needs of the Asylum are three cases of eggs daily. That is 1080 eggs. The capacity of the plant is now much less, but there will be about 2000 hens and pullets in it this Fall. This number will be increased yearly, until the production is sufficient to supply all the state institutions.

Such is the plan of Governor West, announced a few months ago. At his request Professor James Dryden, of the department of poultry husbandry at the Oregon Agricultural College, visited the Asylum plant and recommended the project as feasible. And because I have seen the plant and know the man in charge, and believe in Mr. Dryden, and, as I said in the beginning, "know chickens," I am safe in saying that commercial poultry-raising can be made a success in Oregon. It is being done on large poultry farms on the other side of the continent, and it will be done here. All needed is System.

COMDENSATION—A Novel of Washington Society.

By Anne Warwick (Miss Edith Cranston.)

CHAPTER III.

"It's deadly commonplace, but after all, the commonplaces are the great poetic truths."—Stevenson.

Two weeks later—and the night of the Harwood dinner. Engineered by Lucile Page, who was admirable in an entirely new complexion and a rattling sequin gown, the affair had at least the semblance of success. Precedence was a matter with which Mrs. Page never concerned herself, so that from her seat at the old Senator's right she beheld what she considered an extremely well-placed set of people. In reality they were as hopelessly mixed as mincemeat.

"You have won a succes fou," she purred to her host, telling over the list of guests on her pointed rose-tinted fingers. "The gayest of the young married set; the most attractive debutante; New York's richest young man; the author of the hour; the elite of the diplomatic corps; and the Steeles!"

"And Mrs. Page," added the willy legislator, smiling upon her fatly. "Don't think, dear lady, that I fail to realize that I owe it all to you—"

"Nonsense!" she disclaimed—she could afford to be generous tonight; Indiana had never seemed so far away. "I was really quite lazy; Miss Traynor did all the work. She must be invaluable to you, is she not?"

The innocent question brought Harwood's round pink eyes upon her sharply, but he saw only a pair of drooping darkened lids.

"Quite so," he murmured indistinctly, "invaluable." And he proceeded to devote himself to the authoress in cerise tulle, who was crumbling her bread in a manner frightfully temperamental.

Mrs. Page turned to Steele, whom she had taken good care to place on her right, but found him disappointingly engrossed with Miss Warrens. The latter, decided Lucile impartially, was not unworthy of attention; the melting cream softness of the gown she wore brought out the dense black shadows of her hair and emphasized almost to severity the simple Greek fashion in which it was dressed. It was a type too unelaborate to appeal to Mrs. Page; but she had to acknowledge that it was both effective and unusual, and had easily distinguished Kathleen as the debutante of the season. Mrs. Page leaned a little nearer to hear what she was saying to Steele.

"Were you really out of town all of those ten days? Then I am glad, because I thought you had quite forgotten your promise that we were to be friends." (Mrs. Page's lip cupled; straightforwardness struck her as ridiculously raw.) "How did the New York speech go? I read it in the Post, and thought that it was splendid!"

"It took well enough,"—Steel's voice was unenthusiastic—"that sort of thing generally does; eulogy is the easiest form of eloquence. If I had not written it some time ago I should probably have done it differently." He spoke with a half tender impatience as he recognized how completely and how soon this new young influence on his life had made him dissatisfied with his best work—or rather, what until recently he had called his best work. "However, I have put together something on this new bill which I hope is really better; if you come on Tuesday you will hear it."

"Oh! I shall come, surely. I have always wanted to, you know, but Aunt Ann thought it was no place for 'a young lady reared in Virginia.'" They both laughed at her delicate mimicry of Miss Ann's primmest manner. "Now that I know you, though, she is reconciled; so I shall come very often."

"Good! I hope you won't find us too dull." Steele's face was turned from Mrs. Page, but the satisfaction in his voice brought her suspicion attentively upon him. She had tried for a long time to captivate his interest, and she was not a woman who rejoiced at another's success where she had failed.

"Mayn't I come, too, Tony?" she whispered softly.

"Certainly, only it's not in your line," he answered with courteous indifference, scarcely turning round from Kathleen.

Mrs. Page's high, light laugh rang out like the shrill rippling of shallow water.

"Tony should be less candid in his infatuation," she said sotto voce to Harwood.

He scowled disagreeably as his sharp eyes caught her meaning. "The Major and I have plans for her," he puffed in an important undertone.

The widow nodded comprehension. "I'll help," she volunteered, rising at the same moment to lead the way into the drawing-room.

In a very few minutes the men followed, Nelson Harwood and Bruce Melmouth, "New York's richest young man," making an undignified dash for Kathleen's sofa. They arrived rather out of breath and at exactly the same moment.

Mr. Melmouth was a sufficiently attractive member of that playful jeunesse doree whose antics the papers are fond of retailing for the public Sunday breakfast. One read of "Young Melmouth's sensational drive through the Park with ten of the Fluffy Ruffles chorus girls on the box of his tally-ho"; or again how "That popular cotillion leader, Bruce Melmouth, nephew of the wealthy Mrs. James Edison Bruce and heir to the three largest fortunes in New York City, was seen on Saturday riding a skittish but perfectly managed steed down Fifth Avenue in company with the beautiful Miss Van Bronx," etc., etc.

Kathleen, it must be said, paid very little attention to him. He gave her the impression of having left undone most of the things the real world was doing, and of having grown tired during the process. The only people who really bored Kathleen were those who could not conceal that they bored themselves; just now she preferred Nelson Harwood, with his easy, broad, swinging shoulders and brown, elongated young face. Had it not been for its generous coat of tan, the face might have appeared forceless; but when did 18 ever take reckoning of such points?

"Come here and sit with me, Nelson," said Kathleen with a proprietary little gesture of command. "I want to know all about your trip, and I have hardly seen you since you came home."

"Bruce Melmouth wandered off to the authoress in cerise tulle, and Nelson dropped down beside Miss Warrens with a sigh of relief.

"Awful jack, that New Yorker," he hazarded comfortably. "About my trip, Kathleen? Oh, it didn't amount to much! I went to all the stereotyped places, and did all the stereotyped things till I was sick of 'em. I'd have come home long before, only Uncle Nelse raised such a row every time I suggested cutting the thing short."

"But you had lots of interesting experiences, didn't you?" persisted the girl. "Weren't you hunting big game in Africa, or something?" she concluded vaguely, her eyes suddenly drawn by the flint in Senator Steele's, as he smiled at her across the heads of some superfluous people.

"Oh, yes, it was interesting enough, but a fellow my age, just starting out you know, ought to be at home settling down to an acquaintance with his business. The almighty dollar is such an elusive quantity, I think we ought to get on its trail as early as we can. After all, money's the greatest thing in the world; don't you think so, Kat? Don't you want a lot of it some day?" he smiled at her arrogantly. He would inherit a few millions on his own account whenever the Senator should step into the celestial congress.

Kathleen brought her eyes back to her old playmate's shrewd blue ones.

"Why, I don't know, Nelson," she answered slowly; "I never really thought about it. I suppose it would be nice to have money, but I'm very happy just as we are, and there are so many things I want more——"

"What?" he demanded incredulously. Here was a queer proposition—a girl who had other desires than clothes and the wherewithal to get them!

"Why to be loved, first of all—I mean to prove myself worthy of the love of those I care for, and then to count for something real in their lives; and to study, and to hear beautiful music—and to—oh!—to really be something!" She ended in a glow of enthusiasm, her eyes black with earnestness.

Nelson felt uncomfortably out of his depth. A debutante who talked of study, and being things, was—was quite unusual, you know, and er—a little distressing. He caught at the one loophole she had left.

"But music—that is, good music—costs, and——"

"Who's talking about good music?" trilled a gay voice, and Mrs. Page stood before them, her green sequins hissing malevolently; "because we are going to have some," she continued—"that is, if Miss Warrens is kind enough—will you sing for us, dear?" She took the girl's hand in an intimate elder-sisterly manner, which could not have been improved.

Kathleen acquiesced with agreeable promptness. "Certainly, if you operas-spoiled people can find patience for an amateur." She started over to the piano, and Mrs. Page returned to Nelson with the complacency of an extremely tactful person.

"Forgive me for interrupting," she whispered sibilantly through her pointed white teeth—they were her one original feature, and remarkably like her; "but people were begging for music, and she really sings."

"That's all right," Nelson laughed shortly,—he could not tolerate Eliachum's relict. "We weren't talking about anything special."

"Oh! Weren't you?" she cooed, widening her eyes at him. "Why not?"

Without the ceremony of answering, he went over to turn Kathleen's music; but she had none, and before he could reach her, she began to sing, in a full, liquid clear contralto—that indescribable sort of a voice which, for want of a better adjective, is called "sympathetic."

Steele, who had never heard her sing before, listened with surprised enjoyment, watching her out of half-shut eyes. He was glad she had not chosen anything operatic, or out of the amorous ballades soufflees,—generally a cult with girls of her age. To this new craving for simplicity the old melody she had selected proved wholly beautiful, and he found his taut nerves relaxing and his heart growing happier as he listened. While he continued to be rather amazed at the lasting quality of the interest she had aroused in him since her debut, secretly he was not a little delighted that he was still capable of such an interest; and he cultivated it carefully. Conscious that the young girl acted upon his complexity-worn soul with all the tonic of a precipitate cold shower, he grew constantly more eager to shed his weary cynicism for a simpler manner which he had almost forgotten, and to exchange opinions with her on every subject under the sun.

As she rose from the piano he started to go to her, but was waylaid by Olive Traynor, Senator Harwood's private secretary. A neutrally gowned person of indefinite age, with mouse-grey eyes, vague eyebrows, and a smooth, characteless coiffure, the harmlessness of her features was perfectly matched by her dead, uninterested manner. Carter Howard had said she was the most assertive negation in existence.

"Ah! Senator Steele," her voice was a faithful copy of her hair, "won't you tell us something about the President's attitude towards the Venezuelan skirmish? Senor de la Vega and I have just been discussing it, but we don't really know anything. Of course you were in executive session when it was brought up, and went to see the President as the Senate representative, so—" she stopped conclusively.

Steele's expression chilled with intense irritation. He had always felt an unaccountable dislike for Miss Traynor. Now her assurance in effecting a conversational hold-up, and her effrontery in demanding the official secrets of an executive session, caused him to drop his usually imperturbable tact for patent sarcasm.

"Feminine intuition so carefully developed as yours, Miss Traynor, needs no outside assistance, surely. As for Senor de la Vega, he and his country evidently act on the same principle—that where ignorance can be simulated it is safer than to appear informed." He met the Venezuelan's vindictive eyes with a steady contempt, then turned on his heel and joined the group about Kathleen.

The diplomat looked after him with the expression of one who notes an account to be settled in full, later.

"He is rather what you call primitif, is he not, this Senator?" he asked in a voice as smooth as a highly polished stiletto.

"Hardly on affable terms with finesse," returned Miss Traynor monotonously. "Never mind, I'll find out for you some other way."

She looked emotionless after Steele, noticing that his tired face glowed into animation as he talked to Kathleen. Miss Traynor had not only a retentive, but an extremely orderly, memory; her data were kept carefully pigeon-holed, ready for instant use. Tonight she registered a new entry, smiling her harmless, non-committal smile.

"There's a reason for that woman's passivity," remarked Carter Howard to Mrs. Steele as they passed her on their way out into the hall; "no one would ever put themselves out to be so needlessly respectable, without some fixed purpose. I must say, though, that she has learned her metier perfectly. One rarely meets a person so entirely consistent."

Juliet looked gravely into his keen hazel eyes.

"Perhaps she finds in consistency her claim to distinction. She has always seemed rather pathetic to me, for some reason."

"Repression is apt to be, isn't it? Anything fearfully overworked is bound to go to seed, even self-control; and inactivity—such as mine for instance—always grows pathetic as the years roll over it."

Mrs. Steele regarded him thoughtfully, even while she smiled. "One would never call you inactive, Carter; you are as determinant as—as Anthony, only different."

"Yes," agreed Mr. Howard, settling his glasses farther up his nose, "that is it—different."

"I mean, rather more impersonal," Juliet added quickly, as though she feared he had misunderstood her comparison.

"You mean less serious. Anthony has gone in terrifically hard for one thing all his life, while I have found merit in carefully going in for nothing. And do you know, Juliet, I am nearly sure that I have had the best of it. You see in the first place I have all the advantages of an unlimited acquaintance with myself, which has been a fine thing for both of us."

"I don't know," Mrs. Steele looked charmingly stern when her best friend waxed self-enthusiastic, a not unfrequent amusement with him. "I think you might spend some of your time more profitably than forever agreeing with yourself."

"I am not the one to allow monotony to pall," Mr. Howard reminded her with dignity. "The minute the marginal utility of my own reflections begins to decline, I pack them off and come to see you."

Juliet laughed hopelessly. "You know I am resigned to listen; in the end it all amounts to the same thing."

"I see now why Anthony is a successful politician," said Carter plaintively; "you never let him see that even you believe in him; splendid training for combativeness, that!"

"Are all politicians combative?" ased Juliet with laudable innocence.

"Well, a bit belligerent," affirmed Mr. Howard mildly. "They take their cue from the Administration, you see. By the way, how did Anthony come out with the Venezuelan affair?"

"Very satisfactorily, I believe, though it was a frightful bungle, all around. The President finally consented to compromise with Congress."

"I am inclined to think that Anthony has what is vulgarly known as 'a pull' with His Eminence in Authority."

"They do seem to understand each other," Juliet acknowledged with a half defiant flush of pride. "Of course, you don't like the President, Carter, so—"

"You are mistaken," Carter interrupted amiably; "I do like him; in fact, we're such good friends that I feel free to talk about him behind his back!"

They had been pacing up and down the badly-done Spanish hallway, and Juliet paused before the stairs, turning a moment to look back into the drawing-room. Under the chandelier Kathleen stood talking, with Anthony and Melmouth and de la Vega listening attentively. Juliet looked back at Carter uncomfortably.

"What do you think of Kathleen Warrens?" she asked.

"A great relief among a sea of debutantes," pronounced the oracle,—"de la Vega and Melmouth agree with me, I see." He looked beyond Anthony at Nelson who was plainly fidgeting, while pretending to entertain the authoress. "I hope she isn't going to marry young Harwood."

"Hear the philosopher! My friend, you were meant to have been a woman. First, your intuition; and now this new trait proves it! But if she should, why not?"

"Don't trust him," Carter answered briefly. "Long weak faces mean—well, mean anything; you can never be certain what. The charming Lucile has the remains of one just like it."

"Good-night, pessimist!" Juliet gave him her hand in a wholly friendly clasp. "Tell Tony I am ready to go, please, and don't forget you dine with us on Saturday." She moved on up the stairs, Carter looking after her until the last blue fold of her gown had disappeared. Then he went back to the drawing-room.

"She has gone?" It was Mrs. Page who called across from the alcove.

"I beg pardon—you were speaking of—?"

"Juliet, of course," she pouted impatiently.

Carter nodded comprehension. "Oh I see—Juliet; I really could not tell you whether she has gone or not, but I dare say if you hurry you might catch her." He smiled agreeably as he turned his back on her noisy serpentine train.

"Now that you are in town I shall accept no more excuses," Kathleen was telling Steele, half seriously. "Mrs. Steele has come to us ever so many times, but you—you are always busy, or away, or something. You are really no sort of a friend at all! But I'll give you one more chance. If you think you like to hear me sing, come in on your way home some afternoon and Auntie shall give you tea while I make the music—you must, or I shall forfeit my half of the pledge!

Steele smiled down at her with eyes that held something warm and sympathetic as he took the hand she gave to him.

(Continued next Sunday.)