

# WILKINS' WING

## SOMETHING ABOUT THE THINGS WE EAT

BY WALDON FAWCETT

SHORTLY BEFORE THANKSGIVING

CHRYSAEHEMUMS THE THANKSGIVING FLOWER

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PICKING APPLES

A BIG YELLOW

PICKING CRANBERRIES

MASSACHUSETTS BROWN TURKEYS

SCENE ON A POULTRY FARM

FOR NO annual holiday feast is there available a more tempting array of eatables than confront the housewife who sets about making a menu for the Thanksgiving dinner. At the head of the list, of course, stands the all-important turkey. No other class of domestic poultry has come into such general use throughout the entire world as the chief feature of the repasts on the traditional feast days of the autumn and winter and the demand for the fowl that temporarily displaces the eagle as our national bird is, if anything, even greater at Thanksgiving than at Christmas.

The turkey is a delicacy that the civilized world owes to America. However, it did not require any great length of time after the first explorers had returned home for the people of Europe to swathe to the footholds of the turkey and give it a place on their dinner tables. The first turkeys were transferred from Mexico to Europe in 1519, and by 1541 it had taken its place among the fowls in England, whereas 20 years later it was the customary fare of the farmer. All present-day turkeys are the descendants of one of three main families. The North American wild turkey, the original species of the eastern United States, the Mexican turkey and the Honduras turkey, which was originally a native of Central America.

It has only been, however, within the past one-third of a century that the turkey-raising industry has assumed its present scope and magnitude. Within the past few years there has been special improvement owing to a growing realization that it is more profitable to use pure-bred breeding stock than the smaller and less vigorous stock of days gone by. The efforts to introduce throughout the country the several standard varieties of turkeys have benefited the turkey-growing industry of the United States.

The general tendency during recent years has been toward higher prices for turkeys, and these advances have been the more readily obtainable since the late supply of market turkeys has been much less in proportion to the demand than it was a few years ago. The average wholesale price of turkeys as recorded in New York for the past dozen years has ranged from \$3 to 20 cents per pound, whereas Boston dealers have in some instances had to pay even higher prices, and in Chicago the prices have fluctuated from 6 to 18 cents.

That turkey-raising is not so universally followed in all rural communities as the average city dweller supposes it to be is well attested by the fact that whereas there are more than 5,000,000 farms in the United States, the annual crop of turkeys is not much over 4,000,000, or little more than one turkey to each farm. As a turkey producing state, Texas is far in the lead, producing upward of two-thirds of a million turkeys each season. Following Texas come Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Ohio and Indiana, in the order named. The state of Rhode Island, which is justly famed for the quality of its turkeys, produces less than 5,000 turkeys a year, but these birds in the aggregate are worth about double an equal number from any other state. Rhode Island turkeys often bring 35 and 40 cents in the markets of the big cities, when other turkeys go begging at 20 to 25 cents per pound.

That good profits are within reach of the turkey-raiser may be appreciated when it is explained that in the west

and southwest under ordinary conditions turkeys can be grown and sold at six cents a pound, live weight, and return a profit to the grower. Smaller growers who live near towns and villages have an added advantage, in that they have an opportunity to dress and sell their turkeys to private customers at local retail prices. Indeed, experienced men declare that there is no other kind of livestock that will return so large a profit to the successful producer as will poultry, and no kind of poultry that brings in more money than turkeys when properly handled.

It costs comparatively little to raise turkeys by reason of the fact that the birds are able from the time they are six weeks old until winter sets in to gain the greater part of their entire living from bugs, grasshoppers and waste grain that they pick up in their wanderings over the farm. In other words, they are self-sustaining foragers where they have sufficient space to roam over. Turkeys that are hatched in the early spring should grow to weigh from 14 to 20 pounds by Thanksgiving. These weights are, of course, often exceeded by the birds furnished by the best growers, but all in all they may be pronounced the most popular.

Six standard varieties of turkeys are more or less grown in this country, namely, the Bronze, Narragansett, Buff, Slate, White and Black. The main differences are in the size and in the color of plumage. The Bronze and Narragansett are the largest, the Buff and Slate are medium, and the Black and White the smallest. There is, however, scarcely enough preference shown in the open market for any one of these varieties for table use to cause it to be favored in the production of turkeys for the market. Even in Rhode Island, where the highest quality is attained, there is not much preference for any particular variety. Taking the country as a whole, probably more Bronze turkeys are grown than any other variety. The Bronze is a cross between the wild and the tame turkey, and its beautiful rich plumage and its size are bound to make it conspicuous in the turkey family.

The successful turkey-grower has to continually bear in mind many considerations regarding turkeys that may seem strange to the person whose only acquaintance with the bird is in the form in which it appears on the dinner table. While our present-day turkeys are classed as "domestic fowls," they are in reality only semi-domestic when goodly number of turkey-growers when keys like cage birds or house plants. Indeed, too much care and attention is the worst possible thing for a future Thanksgiving feast. In their wild state the turkeys ran hither and thither, seeking small grains, seeds and bugs and getting plenty of exercise in the quest for food. Consequently, it is unwise in their present semi-domestic condition to pamper them and overfeed the birds on unnatural foods.

Feeding the newly hatched turkeys is one of the responsibilities that devolve upon the turkey-raiser. Some feed bread and milk in a mortar and sieve the diminitive birds with it, while others soak bread in milk and squeeze it dry before feeding. Still others adhere to an absolute grain diet, while a few feed the young turkeys on a mixture of the rising generation of birds anything they imagine they will eat. In the autumn, when the weather begins to turn

cold and insect food becomes scarce, an increased grain diet is provided for the growing birds.

The policy of the most successful growers is to keep the turkeys growing from the start to the finish of their comparatively brief lives and have them ready for the Thanksgiving market when the prices are the best of the year. Complete growth and the greatest possible weight will, if plans have been rightly laid, be attained toward the close of the eleventh month of the year, for the records of years show that the highest value of market turkeys has invariably been reached during the last week of November. The prices for turkeys are at their highest, often almost as high at Christmas time, but the demand is not so brisk.

Many of the farmers in Rhode Island and elsewhere who grow turkeys for a fancy market feed them chestnuts and celery seed during the last few weeks of fattening. However, such delicacies are rather expensive articles of food and can only be used by those who sell their product for almost double the average market price. Such feeding imparts a pleasant flavor that adds value to the turkeys which are finished in this way, and these specially nurtured birds find ready sale at the highest prices for the fowls of those with whom cost is a minor consideration.

Quite as much attention must be given to the killing and shipping of the turkeys to market as has been bestowed upon the proper growing of the birds. After turkeys are killed they must be dressed according to the requirements of the market to which they are to be sent. For instance, in the case of turkeys sent to Boston it is the custom to remove all the feathers and chop the heads off, whereas New York demands its turkeys with the heads on, also the tail and outer wing feathers.

Few turkey-raisers sell their product direct. Most of the birds are disposed of by the farmers to jobbers or middlemen, who make a business of handling such stock and who ship to the various city markets. A large portion of the turkey crop that comes to American cities at Thanksgiving time must of necessity be packed in ice, although experts declare that turkeys hot thus packed are at their best. The men who pack turkeys for shipment become marvelously adept in their work. Mr. Voss of Rhode Island, who has for more than one third of a century supplied the White House at Washington, on one occasion, with the aid of two men, picked and shipped 34,500 pounds of turkey.

Next to turkey the chief standby of the American housewife at Thanksgiving time is the indispensable cranberry. This appetizing product of nature is native to a narrow belt of country along the Atlantic coast from Maine to New Jersey and in isolated areas along the Allegheny mountains from southern Pennsylvania to North Carolina. The middle west also receives a portion of its holiday supply of cranberries from Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. The earliest plantings of the cranberry were made in the Cape Cod region of

Massachusetts during the first quarter of the nineteenth century and from this meager start the industry has grown to its present proportions, when more than 20,000 acres of cranberries are under cultivation, producing more than 1,000,000 bushels per year.

The old Bay state still enjoys the distinction of leading all her sisters in the production of this Thanksgiving delicacy, for whereas New Jersey has a cranberry domain of 2,350 acres, or nearly half as much as Massachusetts, the Jersey cranberry growers harvest each year only about one fourth of a million bushels, whereas the land of the pilgrims, with its smaller area in cranberries, sends nearly 600,000 bushels to the dinner tables of a hungry nation. The Massachusetts yield of 117 bushels per acre is exceeded only in that garden spot of western Oregon, where some small cranberry patches have yielded 113 bushels per acre.

Two species of cranberries occur in the "belt" of which the brilliant-hued fruit is a habitant. One is known as the Little Cranberry and is the old world kind, whereas the other is the large, or American cranberry. The fruit of the cranberry is borne on short upright shoots of the previous season's growth and the fruit has the appearance of being distributed along the stem, a fact which is taken advantage of in harvesting and which has made it possible to devise mechanical devices that are to a considerable extent increasing the harvesting capacity of the women and children who find occupation as cranberry pickers.

In their composition both species of the cranberry are closely allied to the so-called huckleberries. Botanically they are classed merely as distinct species, all the blueberries, huckleberries and cranberries going to make up one family. Of this group so many of which produce delicious dessert and culinary fruits, the cranberry is the only one which has been improved and extensively cultivated. It also enjoys the distinction of being one of the native fruits of America which has become an important commercial product and has won for itself a world-wide reputation.

The areas in which cranberries are cultivated or where they are indigenous to the soil are known technically as bogs or meadows, for the cranberry, while not a water plant, thrives best on soils in which the water level is within a few inches of the surface of the soil. The first step in the preparation of a cranberry bog or meadow is to eradicate all bushes and tree growth, following which the surface vegetation is removed by a process known as "turfing," which consists in removing a layer of soil to a depth of from two to four inches.

After the removal of the turf the area to be planted is graded in order to make it perfectly level, the object being to maintain the water level at a uniform depth below the surface of the soil and at the same time make it possible to flood the area with water, as it may be necessary to do from Novem-

ber to May, in localities where it is desired to protect the plants from insects and from late spring frosts. Dams are also provided in order to store a sufficient quantity of water to flood the area. The next operation in providing a source of cranberries is "sanding," which consists in covering the area to be planted to a depth of three or four inches with a coating of sand.

In the coast regions, where a large proportion of our best cranberries are grown, the sanding of the meadows is a simple matter, since the borders of the bogs are usually made up of sand blown in from the ocean. In the Cape Cod country sanding is done almost entirely by hand labor. The sand is carried in wheelbarrows over temporary movable plank tracks from adjoining sand banks to the surface of the bog. The bogs in most cases are too low and soft to allow the use of horses.

Like other economic fruits, the cranberry is not often propagated by seeds, but propagates itself naturally by offsets. Commercial propagation is carried on by the use of cuttings or layers. The cuttings with which new cranberry meadows are established are usually 10 or 12 inches long. Planting of new meadows is done as early in the spring as cuttings can be secured, usually about the first of June. Once planted cranberries take care of themselves insofar as cultivation is concerned. About the only thing necessary for the grower to do is to keep down grass and weedy growths of all kinds.

In the early days of cranberry culture harvesting was necessarily done entirely by hand, and this method is still in vogue in many localities, particularly in districts where the meadows are of small size. However, as the industry expanded the increased demand for pickers made it necessary that, in order to hold the cost of production within reasonable bounds, some device be found which would lessen the cost of harvesting by increasing the quantity an individual is able to pick. This demand has been met by two forms of cranberry rakes. One is operated by being forced through the branches, thus pulling off the fruit, while the other is first forced into the vines, the guard pressed down, and then, by withdrawing the implement, the berries are stripped off, the shoots

upon which the berries are borne being drawn between the iron fingers of the picker.

Either of these ingenious aids to cranberry harvesting enables a great saving of time and expense, as one person can gather 75 or 80 measures of six quarts each in an ordinary working day, while a hand picker cannot gather more than half that quantity. For a time there was a prejudice among many growers against the use of these harvesting devices because of so much imaginary injury to the bogs, but within the past few years this prejudice has largely disappeared.

Cranberry harvesting is usually paid for by the measure. Each person is furnished with a rake and with pails or boxes in which to place the berries as picked. The meadow is then laid off in sections or strips and each picker is assigned to a division. By this arrangement each worker gets his share of both heavily and sparsely fruited plants, and the grower is certain of getting the product from all parts of the meadow. After the fruit is picked it is carried to storehouses, where it is allowed to remain until assorted in the "trays" in which it was placed at picking time. Most of these trays have a capacity of about 18 quarts each.

As the cranberries come from the field there are to be found among them many broken branches, leaves and defective fruits. To remove such leaves and branches there is employed any one of a variety of cleaning devices similar to the fanning mills used for cleaning grain. After having been winnowed in this fashion the fruit is spread upon assorting racks. Operators seated upon either side of this apparatus look over the berries in much the same manner that beans are looked over in hand picking. From the assorting table the berries go into barrels, only a comparatively small portion being graded.

The grower who cultivates cranberries on a large scale almost invariably provides storage buildings on his own land. It is the prevailing practice to hold the fruit in the storage houses until the bogs until the market is ready, which is from six weeks to three months after the conclusion of the harvest. No artificial cold is necessary in the storage houses, about the only precaution necessary being to prevent the

### Crazy Newspaper by Crazy Editors

By a Staff Correspondent.

ECULARLY happy was the thought of the management of the Mauer-Ochlinger asylum for the insane in starting a newspaper written and published by the inmates. The paper is called "The M-O Asylum News." The first number has just been published and has achieved a great success. It is to be a monthly.

The asylum, which is the biggest in the world, is situated just outside of Vienna. Among the inmates are several newspaper men and authors, printers, pressmen; there are plenty of poets.

When the director of the asylum proposed to publish a paper with the assistance of the newspaper coterie of inmates, and they all went frantically to work. A printing plant was already in the asylum. In his opening address the editor details all this and then says: "What, then, is lacking? Workers? A program? We need not shrink from these." He concludes with "And now forward! Every contribution will be received with pleasure by the editor and carefully examined as to suitability. No remuneration, it is true, can be given to successful authors, as the management is, alas, poor and has no funds. But to be printed in the M-O News is something."

One of the interesting articles is headed "The System of Healing by Work—Opinions of Patients on the Value of Occupation."

An artist inmate writes: "In my judgment one may say, with perfect truth, that work is life and the spice of life. The history of civilization proves it." Another patient says he was suffering from depression. He was put to playing tennis, billiards, reading and so on. But these did not interest him. The director then advised him to try carving toys out of wood. He laughed at the suggestion as he was most awkward with his fingers. However, he tried it. Practice made him skilful. He became interested, and is practically cured of melancholia. There are a dozen such statements.

Two or three columns of the paper are devoted to hygiene advice and suggestions of treatment. There is a page each with three reviews of 75 cents, 50 cents and 25 cents.

Critical essays, reviews of books and publications with a scattering of jokes and a dramatic critic's column make up the rest of this highly original four-page paper, which, as its motto says, is "For the Mad, by the Mad."

The dramatic critic writes of a negro minstrel show at the asylum. He ends his notice by saying: "Particularly charming was the little nigger, four years old, who joined in the cake-walk right merrily. The artistic results arrived at, however, were on the whole more original than high class."

So is the M-O News.

**Pink Whiskers Nam.**  
From the Minneapolis Journal.  
With Hughes elected in New York there is hope for Chicago's pink feather duster, J. Ham Lewis.

**Oysters Need Salt Water.**  
Oysters can only live in water that contains at least 27 parts of salt to every 1,000 parts of water.