The Press Poultry Department

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Building A Heavy Laying Strain.

When mating cockerels to pullets they should be strong, vigorour and we'l developed. In fact, all stock used as breeders should be well developed, or the chicks will be weakly.

Using the trap nest not only gives you a record of each hen's work for future reference when selecting breeders, but enables you to weed out the drones, for any hen which does not get caught in the nest is not laying, and should be removed from the pen if she does not begin laying withing a reasonable length of time. A look at the egg record at the end of the month will disclose the fact if some of the hens are not producers, and eating up the profits of the more industrious hens.

Hens which are not laying, or are laying but once in three or four days should be weeded out. They often look as vigorous and healthy as the hens which are laying, and it is not safe to go by appearance. The trap nest is the only sure method of finding the drones.

There are several so called "systems", a part of which is to tell by the appearance of a hen whether or not she is laying. One judges by the comb. If it is full and red, the hen is laying. Another tells by an examination of the pelvic bones. If they are flexible and can be spread so as to admit three fingers of a man's hand, it is an indication that the hen is laying.

Others claim to be able to tell a hen which is a prolific layer by the formation and shape of the body. The ideal laying hen is wedge shaped in three ways. The back is broader a little back of the middle than in front. The abdomen of a laying hen is lower than the breast line, and the back should be broader than the lower part of the body. The type thus formed is wedge shaped first, on sides from front to rear, second bottom to top, front to rear, third, base of tail downwards.

Personally, I do not consider any of these so called "systems" seriously. The Wyandotte hen is almost a direct antithesis of the type described above as being the ideal laying hen, yet there are some strains of Wyandottes which produce over 200 eggs per hen, per year.

There are, however, very few flocks which will average 200 eggs per hen per year, and the larger the flock, the lower the average as a rule.

Where five hundred or a thousand laying hens are kept, it is not practical to use the trap nests, as it would keep several people busy releasing the hens and recording the numbers. Breeders who use the trap nests keep a small flock separate from the rest of the fowls, and trap nest these, and use their eggs for hatching, to replace the hens sold. Two laying seasons is thought to be as long as a hen can be profitably kept for laying.

The average hen, according to the statistics of the U. S. Government, lays about 80 eggs per year. This is a very low yield for a pure bred hen.

There are records of hens bred for laying, of as high as 260 eggs per year. This is exceptional, of course, but it shows what careful selection of the best as shown by carefully kept records, and proper care will do.

Three or four years of careful work along the lines I have laid down will put you on the road to success with a flock of uniformly good layers.

For the Children

Grenville Temple Emmett Posing as a Picture Boy.

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The grave looking young gentleman in odd looking costume is doing his best to keep still and remember what he was told. When caught by the photographer he was posing as "Lord Althorp," as represented in the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds. It is pretty hard work for a little boy to stand stock still for any length of time, but the photo shows that he succeeded admirably. The boy's name is Grenville Temple Emmett, and he is the son of Grenville Emmett of New York city. While Master Emmett behaved so well as to win the plaudits of the beholders, it is quite likely that he would have much preferred not to pose at all.

How to Split Paper.

According to Popular Science News, there are two ways of splitting a piece of paper. One is to lay the sheet of paper on a piece of glass, soak it thoroughly with water and then press it smoothly over the glass. With a little care the upper half of the sheet can be peeled off, leaving the under half on the glass. Let this dry and it will come off the glass easily. Of course the glass must be perfectly clean. The second way is a better one, but it requires some good practice. Paste a piece of cloth or strong paper on each side of the sheet to be split. When it has thoroughly dried pull the two pieces of cloth apart suddenly and violently. The paste can then be softened with water and the two halves of the sheet easily taken off the cloths.

Orchestra—A Game.

The game of orchestra is great. Select a conductor, who seats his orchestra in a semicircle, each being assigned to play some imaginary instrument and instructed how to play it.

The conductor first calls on his orchestra to tune up, and then, naming some lively air, begins to hum it, at the same time waving a baton, when all players must join in imitating, by voice and gesture, their instruments, such as harp, violin, cornet, trombone, flute, clarinet, piccolo, drum, cymbals, etc. Solos may be called for and the one representing the instrument named must respond or pay a forfeit. There are few games that afford more fun and laughter than this. Be sure to select a comical person to be your leader. —Philadelphia Ledger.

More Lives Than the Cat.

If a starfish be torn limb from limb and the fragments cast into the sea from each limb another starfish will result. The residue of the body will reproduce the lost limbs. From each severed limb will grow a new body. The brittle star, which is the most disruptive of the whole brigade and will shatter itself in fragments when an attempt is made to draw it from the sea, is, however, believed not to have this uncanny resemblance to plant life. But the sea cucumbers voluntarily undergo division for the purpose of multiplying their kind.

Nancy's Way.

The wind was whistling round the house
and shaking at the door;
The sky was dull; the snowy fields lay
level as a floor.
I'd tired of my fairy book, and Dot began to fret.
"These stupid winter days," I yawned, "I
wish the sun would set!"
Then Nancy Joyce came running in, her
cheeks like roses red,
"I've found the finest coast and slide!
You must come out," she said.
"And Billy's skating on the pond and
says he'll pull the sled
Or that he'll come and help us build a big
snow house instead!"
We hurried into coats and hats, so Nancy
need not wait,
And, laughing, hand in hand we flew
down to the garden gate.
How bright the dull day seemed to grow!
Or was it just the voice
And happy ways that made the change of
jolly Nancy Joyce?

—St. Nicholas.

MARKETING FRUIT IN OHIO.

The marketing end is just as important a part of the fruit growing business as any step which precedes it and is receiving much attention just now. In way of solving this problem the plan that has been evolved by the peach growers in the district adjacent to Port Clinton, O., is interesting and may be of value to fruit growers elsewhere. Briefly, the plan referred to is a disposal of the fruit at auction sales, which are held in the home markets. While two successful co-operative marketing companies had been in operation for about twenty years, the auction plan was not inaugurated until six years ago. At that time any peach grower not a member of either company was likely to fall a victim to the commission men who often got these growers to consign their fruit. Since the auction plan has become established the buyers have been compelled to buy outright. As fast as the fruit is picked it is sorted into three grades and taken in baskets to the auction station and sold to the highest bidder. Thereupon the grower is given a slip stating the number of bushels of each grade and the price of each and next receives in exchange for this a check on the local bank. There is no uncertainty about this plan, no delays, no telegrams stating "stuff not as represented" or anything of the kind. Now and then the grower receives less under this plan than he would by consigning to reliable houses, but he runs no risk, and the money in his pocket on the spot has a good sound.

A HERD OF WILD HORSES.

In the rugged and forbidding valleys of Okanogan county, Wash., which lies north of the big bend in the Columbia river, range today a most interesting group of some 5,000 wild horses. These are said to be the runty descendants of horses of good breeding and a much larger size that were brought west at the time of the gold discoveries in the fifties and sixties. These animals average about 700 pounds in weight, are remarkably swift and sure of foot, much like the bighorn sheep, and up to the present time have resisted practically all attempts at taming and bringing under domestication, being vicious and wild and showing no regard for their own lives when attempts have been made to subdue them. An interesting trait noticed in the stallions of this wild herd is their persistent attempts to coax to this wild life mares grazing on the nearest ranges. In many cases these efforts have been successful, with the result that more than one ranchman has unwillingly furnished new blood for this wild horde. However, a railroad is soon to run into the heart of the country ranged by these wild horses, and it is not likely they will long survive this encroachment of civilization.

REPAIRING TREE DAMAGE.

Doubtless more than one reader of these notes who has lately set out small fruit trees will find before spring that some of the trees have been girdled by mice or rabbits unless measures have been taken to protect the trunks. One of the best safeguards against damage by mice is a removal of all grass and weeds from about the trunk over a radius of two or three feet, for mice rarely do damage unless there be a shelter of some kind close to the trunk. In case damage is done and the discovery of this should not be left until spring, it may be in part overcome by giving the wound a coat of linseed oil or white lead and tying on a poultice of moist clay or cow manure. If the tree is entirely or almost girdled it will be advisable in the long run to take it out in the spring or at once if conditions permit and set a new one in its place. With apple trees bridge or strip grafting may be done in cases where the girdling is complete, but one must be quite expert at such work to insure success.

IS BEARING FRUIT.

For the year ending Nov. 1 Iowa produced 2,783,684 pounds more butter than for the preceding year. In accounting for this increase Dairy Commissioner Barney attributes no small part of the gain to the work done by lectures and demonstrations on the dairy specials that were run over the main railroad lines of the state last winter. In these lectures emphasis was laid upon the need of testing each member of the herd for butter fat production, the importance of and what constitutes a proper ration and the necessity of grading up the dairy herd by the use of a first class sire. Much of this better dairy gospel work has been done in several of the states, and the practical good that has resulted it would be difficult to measure.

ABOUT CROWN GALL.

Crown gall is a disease of fruit trees that in some sections is causing a good deal of trouble. It is a fungous disease that makes its appearance in an enlargement and fibrous or hairy growth at the crown of the root. While many trees affected with the disease do not die, many others are practically ruined. The damage from crown gall may be reduced somewhat by a drenching of the base of the tree and adjacent roots with bordeaux mixture, but this only helps and does not repair damages. It has been found that the disease is contagious, may be carried from one tree to another with hoe or cultivator shovel and that it is not safe to set new trees in soil from which diseased trees have been removed.

F. E. Trigg