

AMATEUR FARMING.

How to Propagate Hens, Together with Some Habits of the Bird.

I intend to discourse on the delights of amateur farming—the raising of cabbages at \$1.50 a head—although, to tell the truth, I never cultivated any quite so economical as that, writes Luke Sharp in the Detroit Free Press. His paper, excellent as it is, ought to have an amateur farming column. I have felt that for some time, and now, as the horniest-handed son of the soil on the sheet, I throw myself into the chasm like a Roman fellow, armor and all.

My experiences in farming have been somewhat different from those you read of in the many excellent agricultural papers we have. The correspondents of those journals make money on their farms. I never did. They show how \$240 invested in chickens in the spring amount to \$1,264.50, besides having all the eggs the family could use, and at the end of the year a great many surplus fowls. I have gone over these statements in detail and figured them up and they were without flaw, but I never could make the problem come out right in practice. The dog ate up several to begin with. When I killed the dog some new kind of epidemic that was fond of chickens came along. Then some were stolen and the rest got tired of me and went away to a neighbor who could understand and sympathize with their various moods. They refused to lay in the nice comfortable boxes I provided, but preferred to go out to the back fields, accumulate a wealth of eggs and then sit on them. Finally the hen would become weary of the sedentary business where she found seclusion and inactivity telling on her health, and would easily abandon the eggs, when a little more close attention to the occupation would have resulted in complete and multitudinous success. Their conduct in the matter of laying was most ungenerous. When eggs were twenty-five cents a dozen the hens would go on strike, when eggs were down to about eight cents then they all became industrious. Fowls seem much more fond of gardening than I am. I hate to work in a garden; they don't. Nothing delights a hen so much as to undertake the entire supervision and cultivation of a newly-planted garden. If I could only peg away with half the industry they do I would be one of the richest market gardeners in America. They are at leisure and late and they cultivate the ground in a beautiful way that leaves it quite ready for planting something else. The first time I planted seeds in the garden they never came up. "Too deep," a neighbor told me. But that was before I kept hens. When the hens got right down to business the seeds came right up every time. Hens always have a great crop. I never succeeded in raising any crop but weeds. Canada thistles are my specialty. My neighbor says he never knew any one who was so successful in raising Canada thistles as I am. In fact, my farming has caused a great deal of comment in the neighborhood, as I am surrounded by old-time farmers who never before saw agriculture carried on by scientific methods. I go by the advice of the agricultural journals and hand-books of horticulture. They don't believe in planting certain things in certain stages of the moon. I have ridiculed the moon theories a good deal, but as their crops come up and mine don't, except what the hens resurrect of them, I am beginning to think that perhaps there is something in the moon besides the man.

But to return to the hens. My hens are a particularly high-toned variety. It is always best to go in for the most expensive kinds (see Handbook of Fowl Culture, page 98). There is no money in the common kinds; every body raises them. I got a dozen of very much warranted eggs. The hens that laid those eggs had taken prizes at three State fairs and I don't know how many smaller shows. When you get expensive eggs you can put a cheap hen on them and the chickens are warranted to be just as good as a ten-dollar hen did the sitting. I bought a fifty-cent hen that was in the sitting business—the man told me. I never found out just what objection that cheap hen had to those dear eggs, but she positively refused to sit on them. Probably she thought anything so expensive should not be sat down on. I tried to coax and even to coerce her, but she persisted in walking around on those eggs and protesting at the top of her voice. I assured her that chickens were not accumulated in that way, but it was no use. She seemed to think it was an omelet we wanted, for she broke several of the eggs. I noticed in reading the agricultural journals that many of the best farming inventions have been constructed first by enterprising amateurs. I desire here to call the attention of those useful papers to my setting hen attachment. The eggs were in a nice nest that rested in a wooden box. In the bottom of this box I bored a couple of two-inch auger holes. Through these I put the two legs of the flitting and indignant hen and pulled on the legs until the hen fitted nice and snug on the eggs. Then I tied the legs together underneath the box. It was a great scheme. Even if she flew away with the box and all she would still be sitting on the eggs.

Unfortunately my summer vacation came on at that time and I went away and forgot all about that hen for two weeks. She stuck to the deck like Cassandra and her fate was similar. A farmer should never take a vacation. A hen is just as contrary when she makes up her mind to sit as when she makes up her mind not to. She generally resolves to go in sitting session about the time when there isn't a stable egg within miles of the premises. She is mad all the time and goes around with her wings scraping on the ground.

It is said that dousing a sitting hen in water will cure her of the mania. It will if you keep her under water long enough—say twenty minutes.

That's all I know about hens.

A Help for Harvard Students.

A new help for student-work is for a professor to gather out of the whole library such books (no matter how many) as he wishes his classes, especially to study. These are put in an alcove under his name; his pupils have access to them all day and take them over night, returning them next morning. This plan is new, but it grows in favor. In less than five months there received 3,000 books. In less than six months are reserved 3,000 books. All books are numbered in 1880, \$1.00 to 1880, 50¢. The rate of increase greatly outruns that of the number of students. It speaks of an increasing industry and productiveness. And the best thing about the institution lies here is that it is hopeful and not time-worn forward.

A Mole's Consistency.
A rich man had a piece of land upon which a poor mole was grazing. "I shall harass you," said the man to the mole, "and make you move this land to grow me out of which I can very soon, while the state will supply you with food." "When the mole replied: "If I consent to go to your place you will have all the moisture and I will be worse off than I am now, because I have to eat to dry states instead of fresh green grass. I'll do no, sir." "How unmerciful you are," remarked the land owner, "your father never had any food but moisture, and yet worked sixteen hours a day without grubbing." "And that is true," replied the mole, "but you know, my father was no man."

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