



Raising Geese.

A correspondent of the *Gennese Farmer*, on the subject of raising geese, says:

"Of all the domestic birds, none are so profitable as geese, where there are facilities for keeping them; for there are none that can do so much for themselves when alive, and none that come to so little waste when dead. Unlike the fowl, all parts of the geese are equally good. Besides which, every feather is of value, greater than that of every other of our domestic birds. Every housewife knows how to appreciate beds made of their feathers; and in these days of steel pens, the goose still possesses quills. When young, the goose is a popular dish on the table, and most esteemed by the epicure. How is it, then, that the goose is not more popular with the farmers? It can only be accounted for by the fact—for fact it is—that it is not in every one's power to keep them.

The chief requisites for keeping geese, are a pond of water and a pasture for grazing. The latter is essential, as the bird is graminivorous as well as granivorous. An occasional cabbage-leaf will form an acceptable variety of food, and during the winter any spare vegetables will help to supply the deficiency of the pasture. If fed high, some varieties of geese will often lay in autumn, but the advantage of a brood of goslings in November is questionable.

In allowing geese to range at large, it is requisite to be aware that they are very destructive to all garden and farm crops, as well as to young trees, and must, therefore, be carefully excluded from orchards and cultivated fields. It is usual to prevent them getting through the gaps or holes in fences by hanging a stick or yoke across their breasts.

They are accused by some of poisoning the grass, and of rendering the spots where they feed offensive to other grazing stock; but the secret of this is very simple. A horse bites closer than an ox, a sheep goes nearer to the ground than a horse; but after the sharpest shearing by sheep, the goose will polish up the turf, and grow fat upon the remnants of others. Consequently, where geese are kept in great numbers upon a small area, little will be left to maintain any other grass-eating creature. But if the commons are not short, it will not be found that other grazing animals will object to feeding either together with, or immediately after a flock of geese.

It has already been said that geese are much given to grazing, but we have not said that they improve the pasture. This, however, is the case, although there is an old proverb to the effect that nothing will eat after a goose—whereas the auxiliary verb should be can and not will. The fact is, the goose will thrive on a pasture so short that a goat would starve on it; and the consequence is a short sweet herbage.

Although water is the natural element of geese, yet it is a curious fact that they feed much faster in situations remote from rivers or ponds. They should not be allowed to run at large when they are fattening, as they do not acquire flesh nearly so fast when allowed to take much exercise. It is stated that geese can be raised, in a proper situation, at a profit far greater than almost any other stock. But to do this, more attention is required than is usually bestowed on their keeping and management. Like other fowls, they may be brought by proper management to a great degree of fatness; but the period at which they are the fattest must be chosen to kill them, otherwise they will rapidly become lean again, and many of them would die.

Geese may be fattened at two different periods of their lives—in their young state, when they are termed "green geese," and when they have attained their full growth. The methods at each period are very nearly the same. A goose diet, for the first two weeks, is formed of oats and water mixed in a trough; after this, the food is gradually changed to barley meal mixed with water, of the same crumbling consistence that has been recommended for the goslings, the water being given separately in small quantities.—Steamed potatoes, mashed up with four quarts of buckwheat or oats, ground, to the bushel, and given warm, is an excellent diet, and will render geese, cooped in a dark place, fat enough in three weeks.

In selecting a situation for a goose-house, all damp must be avoided; for geese, however much they may like to swim in water, are fond at all times of a clean, dry place to sleep in. It is not good to keep geese with other poultry; for when confined in the poultry yard they become very quarrelsome, and harass and injure the other fowls; therefore it is best to erect low sheds, with nests partitioned off, of suitable size to accommodate them; and there should never be more than eight under one roof. The larger ones generally beat the smaller, in which case they should of course be separated, one from the other, by partitions extending out some distance from the nests. The nests for hatching should be made of fine straw, of a circular shape, and so arranged that the eggs can not fall out when the goose turns them. From fifteen to seventeen eggs will be as many as a large goose can conveniently cover.

In the event of any one being induced by

our account to keep geese, let us recommend him not to begin with young birds. They are not to be depended upon for breeding till the third year, and do not attain their perfection for a year or two subsequently to that age. When once in their prime they never retrograde, so that, barring accidents, a person possessed of a gander and three or four geese (no way related to each other, and in their prime of life,) may consider himself set up in the anserine for life.

Cultivation of the Castor Bean.

The Castor Bean (*Ricinus Communis*), or Jonah's Gourd, is beautiful as an ornamental plant, and for this purpose it may well have a place in every garden. The quick-growing, large, tree-like stems with monster leaves even in northern climates confirm what is believed by commentators on the Bible, that the plant which sheltered Jonah, called a gourd, was no other than our castor bean plant. For garden ornament, it is only necessary to plant a few of the beans in hills, or in a drill, thinning out to 18 or 20 inches apart. The stalks grow from 5 to 10 feet high, or more on rich soil. Both stems and leaves are of a dark purplish color. Within a few weeks past, several subscribers of the *Agriculturist* have personally assured us from their own experience, that wherever the castor bean is planted in a garden, the moles will surely take their departure. It hardly seems credible, but may be so—especially if moles are as easily nauseated as children with the slightest odor of anything like castor oil. In form and appearance, the fruit resembles common small colored beans. The oil pressed from these is the common medicinal castor oil of the druggists, which is sold in large quantities. We have seen thousands of bushels of the beans in bags on steamboats on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, which were taken in at towns on the banks of those rivers, along Southern Indiana and Illinois, and some we believe from Eastern Missouri and Northern Kentucky. They will grow well anywhere south of 40°, and probably further north. There is just now a new interest awakened in the cultivation of this crop in the States above mentioned. A subscriber residing in Saline County, Illinois, who has grown several crops successfully, furnishes the following directions, which are very full:

FIELD CULTURE.

The yield is 12 to 20 bushels per acre. Prepare the ground just as for Indian corn, but without much manure, or the plants will run too much to stalks. As soon as the ground is warm and the weather settled, say about the first of May, have the surface well prepared with plow and harrow, and mark it off into rows four feet apart. Then cross-mark it at the same distance, but leave between each set of four rows, a space wide enough to drive through a sled, wagon or cart. The cross rows run in a direction to admit of the ready entrance to the spaces left for the team. Plant in hills at the crossing of the rows, the same as corn. As soon as the plants are up, draw a little earth around them to keep down grass and weeds, and as a protection against the cut-worm—taking care not to break the tender stems. When well started, thin out to two stalks in a hill. Cultivate the same as corn.

They will commence to ripen the first of August. Place upon a sled, or on wheels, a tight box holding eight or ten bushels. With two men and a boy to drive the horse, go through the wide rows or spaces, each man taking two rows on either side, and cutting off all the bunches that are beginning to crack. When the box is full, take it to the yard or bean-house. A yard will do in fair weather, as the sun will soon pop out the beans. If in an open yard, smooth off the ground, and set up crotched stakes about four feet high and twelve feet apart, laying on poles or rails, and spreading the beans over them as soon as cut and hauled in. Boards should be set around to keep the beans from flying off as they fly out. When thus sheltered by the sun, rake off the stems and sweep up and bag the beans like wheat. They should not be allowed to get wet, and it is much better to have a bean-house and use fire heat instead of the sun for curing them. This may be, say 16 feet square, and be covered with boards so closely as to retain the warm air. Put in this a furnace, placing it so that the beans can not fall on it, as from their oily character they readily take fire and burn briskly. Place joists about seven feet high, and over these lay slats, two inches wide, half an inch apart; spread on the beans as gathered, and start the fire, and keep it up until they crack out and fall through the slats.

The gathering from the field can be repeated at intervals of a week or less, as the bunches will continue to ripen until frost. I think the castor bean crop improves old land instead of impoverishing it. The stalks left in the field are tender, and can be broken up readily to plow under, by dragging a heavy brush over the field when dry in the spring.—[Agriculturist.]

Wool Growing in California.

The stock raisers of California, notwithstanding the low price of wool in that State, have given much attention to the raising of sheep as more profitable than other kinds of stock in locations where there is plenty of range suitable for pasturage, as is the case in most of the counties in the southern and cen-

tral portions of the State. The following, in relation to the subject, is taken from a recent number of the *Stockton Independent*:

The Los Angeles News, of April 18th, says the wool clip of that county will probably amount to 1,000,000 pounds for the present season. All of this will have to be shipped off to the San Francisco market for want of home manufactories, which the News calls upon enterprising capitalists to erect. The wool of Los Angeles county has vastly improved within a few years. Formerly it was all from the small scrub sheep of the New Mexico breed; but now none but the finest imported breeds are herded there. The wool clip of that county will, perhaps, be worth \$200,000 this year. In this connection we may add that the mountain counties of Calaveras, El Dorado and Tuolumne, are also beginning to show that sheep can be profitably raised for their wool alone in those regions. We know of one herdsman in Calaveras, who, though but two years in the business, and having begun on a small stock, will this year market from 8,000 to 10,000 pounds of wool, at from eighteen to twenty cents per pound. His pasture was free, and as the increase of his flocks more than pays the interest of the capital invested, with labor and incidental expenses included, of course his wool crop is all clear gain. There is room enough in the mountains of Calaveras alone, for half a million of sheep, and their grazing will not cost a dollar.

Buckwheat a Bad Crop for the Soil.

A correspondent of the *Country Gentleman* thinks buckwheat a bad crop for the soil, and says:

Several years ago I turned in a light crop of grass the last of June, and sowed the sward to buckwheat and had a heavy crop. The next year manured the same field well, and planted to corn. It came up feebly, looked pale and sickly for all the first part of the summer, but seemed to recover in a measure towards the latter part, but did not mature before the first hard frosts so as to make a fair crop of sound corn—a fair growth of fodder with an undue proportion of soft corn. Not thinking that the previous crop had much to do with the failure of the one following, and liking a crop of forty bushels per acre of buckwheat, which is good swine feed, I repeated the same process within a year or two afterwards, and with the same results. I then made up my mind that buckwheat is not only an exhausting crop, but that it leaves the soil unfit for a good crop after it, until it can recover from the deleterious effects of the buckwheat. It seemed to create an acidity in the soil, for I noticed before plowing the next spring that sorrel started up plentifully. I abandoned the growth of buckwheat from that time, and have never found any other crop that left the soil unfit for a good crop of corn, with proper preparation and culture. In my case I lost more on my corn crops than the whole value of the buckwheat. A crop that will create a cold acidity in the soil, so as to sensibly affect the one following, is unfit to be grown upon a good soil. Buckwheat will thrive fairly on rather sandy and gravelly soils, if the season is not too dry. If I had such land, and was desirous of cultivating this crop, I would put it upon this kind of soil once in two years, letting it rest the alternate year, but never upon good soil designed for corn the following year. No crop that can exhaust more than the value of a crop can be a paying one in the long run on good productive lands.

Plant Flowers.

It is pleasant these fresh balmy mornings to see ladies in their gardens planting flowers. Spring opens joyfully and nature calls for the cultivation of the beautiful. Flowers, fragrant and delicate, adorn alike the mansion of the wealthy and the cottage of the lowly. And "how strikingly emblematic of human life are the flowers of the garden and the field! One is low and modest and simple; another is delicate in tint and rich in fragrance; another is glowing in colors but wholly scentless. One is hardy and enduring under almost any change of the seasons; another delicate and sensitive and shrinks from the heat and withers at the touch. Yet all spring up and bloom and fade and die, some in one stage of existence and some in another." In the language of that great man, Silas Wright, "So with human life; the shades and casts of character are as various as the tints and fragrance of the flowers, and all bloom and fade and die—some in infancy, some in the budding season of youth, some in mature life and some by the frosts of age, but all, all die, and as with flowers, the Autumn and Winter of years close the scenes with one generation to make room for another, and another and another."—[Placerville Democrat.]

GONE TO SMASH.—At an examination of a boy nine years of age, for admission to one of the public schools, the teacher, after a satisfactory result in reading and spelling, asked:

"What do you know about the United States?"

The youngster replied:

"Don't know nothing, nobody does; all's gone to smash."

He was admitted.

The Island of Ceylon.

Ceylon has nearly the area of Scotland, and in number almost one half of our population; yet its records say that four or five centuries since, when our ancestors were bent down by struggles for national independence Ceylon had a million and a half of villages. The statement resembles a fanciful exaggeration, till we learn that it might bear a million and a half of farms, and that each "farmtown" would be reckoned a village, in the language of the chronicles. Even with that information, as many of the villages might contain a considerable population, the number tries the disposition of the reader to credit these old chronicles, till he farther learns that this small island may have contained people, whose commerce extended from the extreme east of China to the great sea, and even to the eastern ports of the Atlantic; and its cities rivalled Babylon or Nineveh of old in their magnitude and wealth, and stretched farther along the banks of artificial lakes than the London of the present time.

The lines of streets are still traceable through the jungle, but the profuse vegetation of their sites, and the nature of their material, have left few traces of the private dwellings of their citizens; yet the ruins of their public monuments, their palaces and temples, indicate a degree of wealth and skill, and patient industry, not surpassed in Assyria or Egypt. The labor bestowed on some of these public works appears almost incredible, especially when we remember that Ceylon had no single Nile spreading over its lands, and bestowing on them the ceaseless fertility of the land of the Pharaohs. Large and numerous tanks, formed at great expense, and preserved by equal care, were the substitutes for the Assyrian rivers and the Egyptian Nile, in irrigation; and the sustenance of this great population depended on their security. Their graven images equal those of Nineveh or "Thebes" in beauty and size. Their temples were more extensive and magnificent, and their palaces were more splendid than any other remains excavated from the ruins of the past. Yet they have only been discovered—they have not been excavated. They were unknown till within a comparatively few years, to Europeans, who stumbled upon them, and, as if by accident, threw aside the fallen cities, till the time arrived when they would be appreciated, and would assist in tracing the secrets of a dark and melancholy tale—a history that must have been not less dismal in its details, not less terrible in its aggregate, than any judgment recorded in ancient ages on the sinful followers of a perverted faith; for these great centers of a population the densest, for centuries since, on the earth, must have been depopulated and ruined by the conversion of the water works, at once their pride and the means of their support, into their destruction, when they spread over their lands, and raised miasma from every field, till death was borne on every breeze, and the pestilence poisoned the atmosphere, and the soil threw its screen of flowers over their tombs.—[Edinburgh Witness.]

Female Heroism.

The record of the exploits of those ladies, who, rising above the timidity attributed to the sex, have impelled by religious or patriotic motives, emulated the deeds of the most renowned warriors and soldiers in the field, would be indeed a brilliant one. We should behold the wives and maidens of the ancient Helvetia, the worthy ancestors of the modern Swiss, rolling back the veteran mail-clad warriors of Rome in disastrous defeat; we should see the matrons of Britain hurling defiance at Caesar's legionaries, and towering above the tide of battle, Boadicea, the war-queen of Icen. Coming down to later times the maid of Orleans would rivet our attention—that wondrous peasant girl of Domremi, who led the chivalry of France to battle, who commanded armies, attacked fortresses, hurled back the tide of invasion, and perished at last, not fairly overcome, but the victim of disgraceful treason.

Joan of Arc seems to have transmitted her heroic spirit to many of her country-women. In the campaign of '63, on the Sambre and Meuse, Duouier had for his aid-de-camps two of the loveliest young ladies of France. Of dazzling beauty, their figures showed to advantage in their fine cavalry uniforms, and they inspired as much respect and enthusiasm by their valor as they won admiration by their charms. They rode into the hottest of the battle, carrying the orders of the general, cheering on the charge and chiding the retreat. An eye-witness of their exploits tells us how he saw these girls, by their remonstrances, more than once check the flight of the panic-stricken troops. "Whether are you going, soldiers?" they cried in their slender voices. "The enemy is not in that direction. Follow us!" and waving their gleaming swords, they would lead in the path of danger and glory. In almost every stricken field of modern times where the French colors have waved, we have been told that women have been found where the dead lay thickest, sleeping beside the lovers, brothers and husbands they refused to forsake in the hour of deadliest peril.

Turn to Spain, that land of romance, where the sunlight of chivalry lingered latest, and there you will find splendid examples of female heroism gilding the decay of that unhappy country, like flowers brightening a ruined wall. At the sieges of Saragossa, Valencia, Gerona and Tortosa, the women en-