

WONDERFUL HEN IN MAINE.

LAYS 251 Eggs in a Year and Fields a Profit Dividend of 176 Per Cent.

After five years of careful breeding for egg production, regardless of all other accomplishments, Prof. George M. Cowell, agricultural expert at the University of Maine, has succeeded in obtaining more than 40 hens that have yielded more than 200 eggs apiece in a year, and has produced one hen which has laid 251 eggs within 13 months, thus beating all previous reported records in egg yield.

This hen, reports the New York Sun, known to the records as No. 817, is a small Plymouth Rock of pure strain, though not shaped according to the standard type. She is not only under the size demanded for perfect specimens of the breed, but her wing barring is imperfect and her neck is too slim for her body.

In spite of her defects, as viewed from the standpoint of the fancier, she is in actual performance the most valuable hen in the world, being capable under average Maine conditions of returning to her owners a net profit of 176 per cent. a year.

The figures, which have been passed upon and approved by expert bookkeepers, are deducted from counting the average cost of food and subtracting the total expense of subsistence from the income derived from eggs, which is 13 cents a dozen.

Prof. Cowell has devoted himself almost exclusively to breeding hens for a specific purpose for the last five years. Beginning with 1,000 hens divided into flocks of about 20 hens and two cockerets to a pen, he has employed trap nests and been able to get at the exact performance of every bird.

The first year the best record was 230 eggs, laid by a Plymouth Rock pullet. There were 11 other Plymouth Rock hens that exceeded 200 eggs each the first year, though of the 500 White Wyandottes only three reached the 200-egg class.

The next season the most prolific hens in their respective classes were put in pens together, and eggs saved from these were kept for hatching. Again the Plymouth Rocks outstripped the Wyandottes in egg yield by great majorities, so from that time on until the end no further attention was paid to the Wyandottes.

Having hatched male and female chickens from the eggs of his best of greater ability to lay eggs. Prof. Cowell mated the selected stock and waited for results. At the end of the fourth year he had produced 24 hens that had laid more than 200 eggs each in a year, and one hen that beat all previous hen records by laying 251 eggs. Again making his selection of breeding stock from the most prolific in his pens, and mating the hens to cockerets from the same strain, he at last secured the most prolific in the world, No. 817.

In speaking of his labors, Prof. Cowell says that the problem of developing a flock of hens that will beget chicks to maintain or outstrip the ancestral records is beset with many difficulties. After reaching a certain point in breeding the physical stamina of the fowls degenerates, and the birds die from a too intimate mixture of allied bloods.

The hen known as No. 817 is vigorous and apparently healthy. She is active, beyond the usual conduct of hens, and bids fair to live for years.

From her and two other hens, each of which has laid 246 eggs in a year, Prof. Cowell is saving for the hatching of still more prolific fowls. What the limit is going to be he cannot tell. He hopes to arrive at the hen which will lay 300 eggs in a year and yield a net profit of 300 per cent., though he is not at all certain that the fowls are capable of doing so much without physical collapse.

It will take four or five years longer to decide the question either way. Meanwhile he thinks he has originated a breed of fowls that Maine farmers and poultrymen can keep with an assurance of profit.

Men Living in Nests.

Several travelers who have returned from the heat of Africa and the Australian continent tell wonderful stories of nest building people who inhabit the wilds of those countries. The bushmen of Australia are perhaps the lowest order of men known. They are so primitive that they do not know enough to build even the simplest form of hut for shelter. The nearest they can approach to it is to gather a lot of twigs and grass, and taking them into a thicket or jungle, build a nest for a home. The nest is usually built large enough for the family, and if the latter is very numerous then the foliage above will form a natural covering, but there is never any attempt at constructing a protection from storms.—Nature

Free Electrical Instruction.

Without money and without price, Konigsberg, Prussia, is giving electrical instruction to all who are employed at the electrical works in that city. The lectures are held two evenings a week from 7:30 to 9:30, and are delivered by some expert engineer of long practical experience. At the end of each course, which lasts about 12 weeks, examinations are held. Those who succeed in passing these examinations are awarded certificates.—Chicago Tribune.

Beat Him to It.

Longman—Your friend Cunningham is a pretty smooth article isn't he? Shortun—You bet he is. Why, I went to his office to borrow five dollars last week, and before I could get away he had borrowed ten from me.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

SEEN AMONG THE BAHAMAS

Wonders and Beauties of Nature in the Waters of the Coral Islands.

Very wonderful are the sights that can be seen through the bottom of a bucket if the bottom is of glass and the sightseer is looking over the side of a boat into the waters of the Bahamas. An observer writes: "To describe the coloring of the waters of the Bahamas would be to throw discredit upon the writer. Nor could the indigo, ultramarines, vivid emeralds, with intervals of amethyst hue, according to depth and floor, be done justice to save by an experienced painter. What, then, can be written of sight revealed through the bucket? Even in this little garden patch grow purple fans and yellow feathers in clusters, gently waving to the ground with lace coral, brain coral and finger coral; corals not as we usually see them, fried and bleached, but living specimens clothed by nature in soft velvet, with other life of great variety creeping and swimming among them—long-spined sea urchins, sea cucumbers, huge gnarled star-fish and fishes than which no butterfly was ever more gorgeously arrayed; fishes blue, green, yellow, red and rainbow tinted, with elongated fins wafted hither and thither in harmony with their surroundings in the submarine kaleidoscope.

"Let us 'up buckets' and set sail seaward among the islands of coral. For here all is coral, and not all nice coral, either; coral which you cannot even sit down on, and upon which a fall would be harrowing to contemplate; coral which jars the soles of your feet in two days, and rasps your boat to splinters in trying to land; trochocoral, cruel and unbecomingly coral in what appears above the surface, raised in peaks and islands, intersected by caves of great dimensions, supported upon stalactite pillars and carpeted with the old red cave dust. High palms and fir trees adorn many islands, others are bare; but all the great beauty lies beneath the sea. There are no tarpon here. Most of the fishes of the west coast of Florida are either absent or beautified out of recognition.

"Suddenly a flock of flying fish will take the air and, contrary to all we are told by our naturalists, will change direction, right, left or upward, with a true flight, like a pack of sandpeeps. The great blue bee will test the fisherman's tackle to the extreme, while good sport is ever at hand with the evil-jawed barracouta. The terror of the sea appears to be a great serpent-like eel, called the moray. To quote local authority woe betide the man who even persists the moray to sight him. No use to run, equally futile to climb the mast; nothing will daunt the moray whose ire has once been roused. He just drops the man into the sea and bears him to shreds."

ODD INDUSTRIES OF PARIS.

The Man Who Takes Drunkards to Their Homes the Oddest One of the Lot.

The ramasseur de nuit is the humblest member of the ragpickers' corporation. He is generally a laborer out of work and collects whatever he can find and judges salable, from a scrap of paper or an orange peel to a dilapidated stove, says the Pall Mall Gazette. Take old boots, for example. However bad, they have a market value, for they always contain in the instep one sound piece that can serve again, and generally two or three more at the heel and the back.

Old provision tins, again, are full of money; the lead soldering can be removed and melted into cakes, while the tin goes to make children's toys. There are about 5,000 of this class of night birds in Paris.

Another quaint night bird is the "guardian angel." The "guardian angel" is a person attached to the establishments of some maitre-quits—low barkeepers and certain public houses, for the purpose of looking after the safety of drunken customers. He accompanies them to their homes, defends them in case of need, as often as not has to put them to bed and leaves them only when they are without the reach of mischief. He earns about 50 cents a day. Cases are also on record where grateful drunkards have remembered the "angel" in their wills. To return the compliment, the "angel" has invested some of his funds in the purchase of a barrow, the object of which is but too obvious.

An important night bird is the member of the guild des patois modistes. He deals in tobacco manufactured from stumps of cigars and cigarettes picked up in the street and holds empires on the Place Maubert by the statue of Etienne Desaix, twice a week at three a. m., on these days the square is called the "market of wet paw." The industry is quite remunerative, on a modest scale, of course, and would be even more so were it not for the government, who stepped in with characteristic greed and on the grounds of monopoly it holds proceeded to tax the tobacco collected with so much painstaking care.

Cruel Horsemanship.

The horsemanship is the most cruel and bloodthirsty of the entire family. He is armed with a most formidable weapon, which consists of four lancets, so sharp and strong that they will penetrate leather. He makes his appearance in June. The female is armed with six lancets, with which she bleeds both cattle and horses, and even human beings.—Colman's Rural World.

Would Swallow It.

Many are willing to lose this world—by swallowing it.—Chicago Tribune.

WOODS TAKE PICTURES.

Invisible Radiations Have Detected That Act Upon Photographic Plates.

Invisible radiations that act upon the chemicals of a photographic plate come from other sources than uranium, radium, thorium and allied metals. They also emanate from certain vegetable products. Dr. William J. Russell, an Englishman, recently described before the Royal Society in London some surprising results which he had observed. Nearly all woods appear to possess this strange property, though some are more powerful than others. An exposure from half an hour to 18 hours is needed to procure an impression. The wood should be in contact with the plate, or close to it. The wood of cone-bearing trees is especially active.

A picture shown by Dr. Russell was derived from a cross section of a branch of a Scotch fir, and showed distinctly the rings formed there by the annual growth. The radiation here seems to come from that portion which was added in the spring, and the annual portion had apparently little or no influence. The change has been attributed to hydrogen peroxide emitted by the resins in the wood, and these exist in both parts. However, it is suggested that perhaps it is confined in the autumnal half of the ring in such a way that it cannot escape.

Experiments with spruces show that radiation occurs from all parts of the section alike. Hence rings are not well defined. With the larch again there is a reversal of the behavior of the fir. There is enough difference between the spring and autumnal growths to make an impression for every year, but the latter part is the most effective.

In addition to many woods, different resins and allied bodies can, when used alone, be proved to be active, some naturally much more so than others. Ordinary resins, Burgundy pitch, gum mastic, are active; asphaltum, dragon's blood much less so, but true gums, such as gum senegal and gum arabic, are entirely without action on a photographic plate.

Several years ago Dr. Russell made public a statement that the photographic action had been observed in printer's ink, and that old books would sometimes exercise it. Accurate copies of print could thus be obtained, although a contact of several days was sometimes necessary. At that time it was suspected that it was the rosins in the ink which produced the effect.

The most novel of the revelations made by Dr. Russell in his recent lecture was that wood has a property which has hitherto been observed only in a few minerals. If exposed to strong light it will absorb some of the rays and afterward give them off. Though the rays in question cannot be seen, the peculiarity is manifested in the following manner:

A piece of black paper or tinfoil is laid on a bit of pine board, so as to cover only half of the latter, and the whole is then exposed to the light. A photographic plate having been applied to the wood, the portion which was illuminated acts more powerfully than the rest. It is credible, of course, that instead of a true radiation being involved a chemical change is effected in the wood or some ingredient thereof, but the phenomenon is not the less mysterious.

Dr. Russell points out that the increase in activity is not uniform in consequence of the illumination, but that those parts that are already acting and which would reveal the texture of the wood act more strongly. Bodies like sugar, starch and flour, which contain neither resin nor allied substances, do not behave in this manner.

Interest in the Flamingo.

There are larger birds than the flamingo, and birds with more brilliant plumage, but no other large bird is so brilliantly colored, and no other brightly colored bird is so large. In brief, size and beauty of plume united reach their maximum development in this remarkable bird, while the open nature of its haunts and its gregariousness seem specially designed to display its marked characteristics of form and color to the most striking advantage. When to these more superficial attractions is added the fact that little or nothing is known of the nesting habits of this singular bird, one may, in a measure at least, realize the intense longing of the naturalist, not only to behold a flamingo city—without question the most striking sight in the bird world—but at the same time, to lift the veil through which the flamingo's home life has been but dimly seen.—Century.

French Increase Slowly.

The French minister of commerce has received an official report of the last census of France, begun in 1901. It shows the population to be 38,961,945, or a gain of only 444,613 in ten years. Comparative tables disclose that there is no other European country in which the population increases so slowly. The percentage of increase in Germany, Great Britain and Russia is almost a third greater than in France for the same period.

How They Looked at It.

"It's a glorious day!" exclaimed the minister, walking home with the colonel after meeting "You can almost hear the rustle of angel wings in the silvery sunlight."

"You're right," said the colonel. "I can almost fancy myself seated in a garden green with mint—sipping a fine julep, with a 'nigger' on each side of me, fanning the gnats off!"—Atlanta Constitution.

REFRESHMENT IN DESERT.

Species of Cactus from Which the Indians Obtain Water to Quench Their Thirst.

A stranger left alone in the desert would die of thirst, and yet there is water in all deserts, and both the native races and the native animals know how to find it. This water is stored by plants, which have built and filled their reservoirs for their own purposes, but which yield up, when required, for the use of the animal world. The extent of the root system in desert plants, by means of which they absorb their water from the soil, is astonishingly great. In the Mohave desert of California a branching cactus 19 inches in height was found to have a network of roots extending over an area of ground about 18 feet in diameter. The roots lay near the surface at a depth of from two to four inches, a situation which enables them to take advantage of a single downpour and to suck up a supply of water sufficient, if need be, for a whole year's use. Some desert animals go without drink for months at a time, deriving all their moisture from the watery tissues of plants, says a writer in the Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution. The rainfall of the desert of Sonora is so small and so irregular that periods of prolonged drought occur, during which the native tribes take advantage of the water stored in cactuses.

The juice of certain species is sweet and palatable. These are called the bisnaga. The writer found an opportunity to observe the extraction of water from a bisnaga according to the primitive process and by one of the aborigines. Upon request a Papago Indian guide, of the state of Sonora, Mexico, exhibited the operation. The plant was about three and a half feet high and 20 inches in diameter. Its top was first sliced off, exposing a white interior. The guide then cut a stake and proceeded to mash the white flesh of the cactus into a pulp. As the churning progressed, a bowl was formed in the top of the cactus, and when a suitable quantity of pulp had been accumulated in it, the Indian, taking this up handful by handful, squeezed the water into a bowl, throwing the rejected pulp on the ground. The natives use the cactus water, if need be, for mixing bread.

A notable feature of the bisnaga is the fluted character of its surface. Between the times when its body is fully distended with water from the absorption following a heavy rain and other times when its interior tissues are shrunken after a prolonged drought, the plant, if ordinarily constructed, would be liable to injury by cracking. What form could be more admirably suited to accommodate the bisnaga than the fluting of its surface, each rib becoming thick by the absorption of water and thin by its loss?

BRITISH COUNCIL POLITICS.

Partisanship Exists in City Bodies in England the Same as in the United States.

Americans have cultivated the belief that partisan politics in the council is inconsistent with good government and yet British council politicians are not so innocent of partisan tendencies as we are taught to believe, says a writer in the World To-Day. In the first place nearly every member of a British council is nominated by the ward caucus of the national party to which he belongs.

Hammersmith, in London, with a population of 100,000, may illustrate such organizations, for there the Conservative club, which elects and claims members of the borough and county councils, as well as parliament, has a complete borough organization with an executive committee of 60 members, a like ward organization in each of its 11 wards, fixed places of meeting and a regular printed year-book. Like organizations exist throughout the cities.

The civil service is not entirely free from partisan council influence. It is affirmed by many, though denied by some, that the late Sir Arthur Forwood, the great conservative leader, said: "I want it understood that the way to preferment in Liverpool is through the conservative party." Councillor A. T. Salvidge, a former associate of Sir Arthur, an able and experienced councillor and a great labor leader, is in fact a boss.

He keeps the labor element in the conservative party and thus keeps the conservative party in power. "How do you manage to lead the workingmen?" I asked him. "By advocating what is best for their interest."

"But you must remunerate the workers in some way?" "They call me a boss, but I never gave or promised money or place to anyone for political support."

Thefts in Women's Clubs.

"Kleptomaniacs" is becoming a source of great annoyance at the social functions of the women's clubs in New York city. For the last two winters women who frequent these gatherings have suffered loss, and now scarcely an entertainment of such a character takes place that some article of value is not missing. Jeweled hatpins, purses and chateaine bags have been purloined. At the recent breakfast of the Women's Republican association, at Delmonico's, a sable muff was lost, and at the federation meeting at the Hotel Astor an expensive leather box was taken. The woman is thinking of having a detective to protect them.

Feminine Charity.

Mrs. Homer—So you saw Mrs. Neighbour's new tea gown, did you? What do you think of it? Mrs. Callier—It is quite stylish—but don't you think the colors rather weak? "Yes, but they match her tea very nicely!"—Cincinnati Enquirer.

IT DIES IN DAYLIGHT.

But Cavern Beetles Are Able to Move About in Pitch-Dark Homes.

The cavern beetle was first discovered 70 years ago in an Austrian cave, the grotto of Adelsberg. One specimen only was caught and, though its discoverer offered a prize of \$25 for another, it was 14 years before a second was found.

The cavern beetle has a little round body, long legs and absolutely no eyes. Brought out of its gloomy haunts into the light of the sun, it dies almost immediately. Yet in its pitch-dark home, far beneath the surface of the earth, it moves with as great rapidity and certainty as any of its eyed relatives on the upper soil.

To make up for its lack of sight it is provided with antennae of extraordinary length and delicacy. By means of these it feels its way over the rough surface of the stone and hunts its prey—other smaller blind insects—with rapidity and absolute certainty.

The cavern beetle has its enemies. The biotroch (a specimen of scorpion) and the great eyeless spirit hunt it remorselessly. Prince Khevenhuller, who thoroughly explored these caves some years ago, describes it as a most extraordinary sight to watch by the light of a candle a scorpion, absolutely eyeless, hunting a beetle, equally blind, along the cavern wall. Although the beetle was several feet in front of the scorpion and divided from it by a fissure in the rock, yet the scorpion tracked it with absolute and almost appalling certainty.

The spider found in these caves is of a lovely ivory white and is able, like other insects which inhabit the same subterranean depths, to run rapidly and find its way with as positive certainty as if it had eyes and light to use them. Like several of the others, it, too, perhaps if taken out of the cave, sunlight seems to wither and shrivel up these insects. Just as if they had been placed in front of a hot fire.

Yet, in spite of this fact, it is known that the blind cave creatures are descended from others which originally lived in the light of day.

An ordinary proof of this is that, though no faintest ray marks the difference between day and darkness in the depths they live in, yet it has been ascertained beyond shadow of doubt that those whose ancestors were nocturnal in their habits still prefer to move about during those hours when the surface of the earth is in darkness.

Numbers of different kinds of fish are known to live in the gloomy rivers and lakes which exist in all large caves.

At San Marcos, Tex., borings were recently made to provide a water supply for some new fish hatcheries. At a depth of 189 feet a great stream of water was struck, which shot up at the rate of 1,200 gallons a minute. With it came thousands of tiny, shrimp-like creatures, and also a large number of curious little, pale-colored reptiles, provided with long tails and each having four legs. These tiny monsters were absolutely eyeless.

The only trace that they ever possessed such organs are two little black spots above the nostrils. A similar creature known as the olm inhabits the rivers in the Austrian Alps already mentioned. In the depths of the Plannia cave, nearly a mile and a half from the entrance, the olm is most abundant. The waters are fairly alive with them, and when some years ago the Archduke Ferdinand paid a visit to this cave a net was let down and a number of the little reptiles caught for his benefit.—Chicago Chronicle.

A JUDGE OF MEN.

But the Discerning Girl Missed It in Two Cases at Least.

They were spending a short time in the country, and men were few. The little, stout, middle-aged man seemed to be the life of the hotel. He was everywhere, attending to everything, he had a smile and a joke for everybody, and had been particularly devoted to the young girl from London.

"I hate gloomy men," she said. "I like to see men bright and jolly and cheerful, like you. I think a man's business creeps into his manner to a certain extent, don't you?" "Um—well, I don't know," he said. "It may, but you can't always tell."

"I can," she said, cheerfully. "At least, I can generally come pretty close to it. Now, you take that funeral, solemn-looking man that we see on the veranda every night. He looks and acts as if he had lost his last friend and never expected to have another. He is somber in his dressing, too. His manner shows how seriously he looks at life, and if an observing person can't tell exactly what his business is, she ought to be able to get near it, anyway."

"What should you think he was?" "An undertaker, or a tombstone manufacturer, or a lawyer, or possibly a heavy tragedian."

"Well, he isn't any one of them."

"Do you know him? What is he?" she asked, eagerly. "He is a professional humorist."

"Dear me, how surprising! Now I should have thought that might have been your business, but certainly not his. What is your business?" "Oh, I am an undertaker."

THE LAND OF EARTHQUAKES

About Fourteen Hundred Shocks Shake Up Japan Each Year—The Record.

According to a treatise by Baron Dalroki Kikuchi, which has recently been published for private circulation, Japan has annually about 1,400 earthquake shocks, which leave a record in observations where suitable apparatus is employed. Of these perhaps not more than 50 are generally noticed. Indeed, a still smaller number are attended with serious harm. Since 1875—nearly 30 years ago—only 18 have occurred, which caused a loss of life or did much damage to property.

In October, 1891, took place the great Nuno-Owari earthquake, in which 7,000 people were killed, over 17,000 injured and nearly 20,000 buildings destroyed. In 1875 the imperial government commenced the systematic observation of earthquakes. Of the 225 large shocks recorded since the earliest times, 47 had their origin in the Pacific, 17 in the Japan sea, 2 in the inland sea, 114 inland and 43 are obscure.

Baron Kikuchi believes that "the distribution of the earthquake origins in Japan seems to have a close connection with the curvilinear form of the country. They are arranged approximately in two systems, which are respectively parallel and normal to the arc formed by the Japanese islands." Almost all recent earthquakes in Japan, extending over a large area, seem to be "tectonic"—i. e., due to mountain forming agencies—while in earthquakes accompanying volcanic eruptions the shaking is confined to a comparatively small area.

The imperial earth quake commission, which was founded in 1892, has been watching with special care magnetic disturbances in connection with earthquakes, and has found that such disturbances usually attend or precede earthquakes. Continuous magnetic observations are now being made in five different places distributed over Japan as evenly as circumstances will allow. As Baron Kikuchi remarks, "this investigation is one of the few means at present available for diagnosing the state of underground stress, and it is a promising one."

Other investigations have been undertaken to determine the relation of earthquakes to latitude variation. Determinations of gravity are also being made at properly chosen spots, with a view of obtaining more knowledge of the internal structure of the land.

COTTON FIELD SINGERS.

Negroes Do Best Work When It Is Accompanied by Their Vocal Melody.

The champion negro cotton picker of Texas, who can pick a bale of cotton from the bolls in two days, must be a good singer, said a man who spent his early life on the farm, to the New Orleans Times Democrat. "else he could not pick that much cotton in so short a time."

A report from the Washaebie district says his best day's work this year was 844 pounds. That's pretty good cotton picking. I dare say he sung a few lines while he was reaping for this record. No negro can pick cotton without singing. Whenever you see a negro pulling his sack up and down cotton rows in a place you can bet he is not doing much picking. He may get out of the field with 125 or maybe 200 pounds, but he will not set the world on fire as a picker of the staple.

"Singing is a part of the game, and when you find a negro who begins to sing and holler as soon as he bends over the row you may know thereby that you have a good hand. The negro as a rule works by music. In no other line of activity is the fact so noticeable as in the cotton patch.

Here is where the negro must sing if he would meet with any satisfactory measure of success. It is so loud, discordant howling, either.

"It is music, the like of which you can not hear at any other place, or under any other circumstances, a low, soft hum, delicately intoned, rhythmic, meliow, soothing, and all the while the negro's body swings to and fro over the cotton row as with his nimble fingers he pulls the long white locks from the boll."

"I have known a great many cotton planters who would not hire a negro cotton picker unless he was satisfied that the negro sang as he worked. It is a curious thing that pickers of this type have more time for the humorous bantering and jawing so common among this class than the men who work in silence.

"The singing negro does not work so hard as a matter of fact, as the silent negro. This is because he works more rapidly. The song he sings seems to make the machinery run more smoothly, and so he accomplishes more in the end than the quiet fellow, and has some time for the foolish talk of the cotton patch besides."

Intolerable Provocation.

"I admit that I hit the plaintiff," said Subbuba, "and I'd do it again!" "Come! Come!" interrupted the magistrate, "don't talk that way."

"Judge, I was down in my cellar last night, trying to coax the furnace to give out some heat. In the midst of my work the bell rang and I had to answer it. When I opened the door this man stepped in and tried to sell me a patent fire extinguisher!"—Philadelphia Press.

Life on African Railway.

There is no lack of excitement along the line of the Uganda (East Africa) railway. At Nairobi, one of the principal stations, the postmaster found a lion on his front stoop one morning; several natives and more than one white officer along the road have been eaten by lions; on one occasion an engine could hardly make its way through miles of locusts on the track.