

The White Hen and Yellow Cat.

The little white hen came cackling out of the barn and found the big yellow cat sitting by the door.

"What are you looking at?" she asked as the yellow cat put his paw over his mouth.

"If I want to, I may wash my face, I suppose," returned the yellow cat, putting down his paw.

"Certainly," said the little white hen; "but it is rather strange that every time I come out of the barn, after I have laid an egg, you are washing your face. It looks to me as if you were laughing, and just put up your paw to hide it."

"Dear me!" exclaimed the yellow cat. "It looks to me as if you were beginning to see a good deal, but you don't know very much yet."

The little white hen walked away, with her head in the air; and the yellow cat put up his paw again. And this time any one could have seen him smile. His smile was so broad that his paw could not half cover it.

A few minutes after this the big black cook came running down to the barn, and when she went back, the egg the little white hen had laid was gone.

"I am quite discouraged," sighed the little white hen. "Indeed, I am! I have laid three beautiful eggs, and I hoped I should cover them with my warm wings until they went, 'Crack! crack!' and some dear little chickens would come out of them."

"You are very simple," said the old brown hen. "You should not lay your precious eggs where the old cook can find them."

"Pray, where shall I lay them?" asked the little white hen in astonishment.

"Why, hunt a place where the cook can't find them," said the old brown hen, as carelessly as if it were nothing but pecking at corn to do such a thing, and she walked away to find a shady place to scratch in.

The next day the little white hen laid another egg in the barn and when she saw the old black cook coming she said to herself: "I will not get off this egg at all. Perhaps she will not see it. And if she says, 'shoo! shoo!' I will not move one step."

When the black cook saw the little white hen on the nest, she did not mind in the least, because the little hen ruffled her white feathers and opened her mouth at her. Oh, no! The black cook did not care. She only laughed and said: "Ho, ho, little hen! You gib me dat aig!" And then the black cook laughed very loud, and gave the little white hen a gentle push, and put her great black hand into the nest and took out the new egg. And the little white hen flew cackling out of the barn. And the yellow cat sat at the door and put his paw up to his mouth.

"I am glad you laughed at me again," said the little white hen, very meekly. "Did you speak to me?" observed the yellow cat.

"Yes, I did," said the little white hen. "I have been very stupid. If you had not laughed at me yesterday I should not have thought to ask the old brown hen about the nest."

"Everybody is silly sometimes," said the yellow cat, politely.

"But not so silly as I am," said the little white hen. "I thought I could frighten the big black cook, and lay my eggs in the barn."

"Well, are you going to keep on trying it?" the yellow cat inquired.

"No, in—deed!" exclaimed the little white hen. "I am going to hunt me a nest."

"Why not try under the barn?" the yellow cat suggested very kindly.

"Under the barn?" the little white hen cried in amazement.

"Yes, you couldn't go on top of the barn, would you?" demanded the yellow cat, with a broad smile.

"Dear me! How very funny you are!" murmured the little white hen. "But, tell me, couldn't the black cook find my eggs under the barn?"

"Let her try it!" said the yellow cat, with another broad smile.

PART II.

One morning the yellow cat said to himself: "I have not seen the little white hen for some time. I wonder if she has found a nest somewhere to lay her eggs where the big black cook cannot find them. I think I will hunt her up and give her a call."

He went softly under the barn, and after hunting a few minutes he found the little white hen.

"Well, you have found a fine place!" he cried in a jolly tone.

The little white hen lifted up a very tired looking head.

"I am so glad to see you!" she said, with a little gasp. "I have not been off my nest for three days and nights. Oh, I am so hungry and thirsty, too!"

"Why don't you go?" asked the yellow cat.

"Because," whispered the little white hen, "there is an old gray rat that comes here every day, just watching to get my eggs if I leave them. Oh, if I should lose my beautiful eggs I should not have any little chickens!"

"That's so," said the yellow cat. "But you go and get something to eat, and I will watch the nest while you are gone. If Mr. Rat calls while you are away, I will give him a jolly surprise."

"How very good you are! I believe I will go," said the little white hen; and she hopped off, thankful to stretch herself and to get something to eat and to drink.

The old rat was coming back just as the little white hen went off, and he

chuckled as he saw her go. "Dear me! How she does hurry to get back before I eat those fine eggs!" he said, and ran as fast as he could go under the barn.

When he came to the nest he saw the eggs all uncovered, and he stood there a moment to admire them (not seeing the yellow cat that was waiting for him under the wide board).

The next moment he jumped softly into the nest and was just going to begin his feast when the yellow cat came silently out from his hiding place.

"It would be just as well not to touch those eggs," said the yellow cat, gently.

When the old rat heard the yellow cat's voice he did not dare to lay a paw upon the eggs.

But he pretended not to be afraid and said: "They are not your eggs."

"Are they yours?" the yellow cat asked politely.

"No; they are not mine," replied the old rat. "But no one was here, and I found them first."

"You touch them if you dare," said the yellow cat, coming nearer, and sitting down and bringing his long tail around his legs in front of him.

"See, I am right on the nest!" said the sly old rat. "If you jump for me you will break the eggs. I might as well eat them as to have you break them."

"That's very true," said the yellow cat. "But if you eat or make me break the little white hen's eggs, I will eat you."

"How unpleasant!" said the old rat. Then he thought a moment. Then he said: "But if I eat the eggs, and you eat me, why won't you be just as bad as I am, for you will, in that case, eat the eggs yourself?"

"True again," admitted the yellow cat. "But I don't want to eat those eggs, and if I eat you, and with you the eggs, it will be done from a sense of duty."

"You are a very good cat!" the old rat observed dryly.

"You mean I have the best of you," said the yellow cat.

"To be honest, it does look as if you had the best of me," said the old rat. "And if you will let me drop out of this little argument altogether, I will be very careful not to crack an egg as I go."

"What else will you promise?" asked the yellow cat calmly.

"It seems to me you expect me to promise a great deal for a very little," the old rat murmured sadly.

"Come, be lively!" said the yellow cat. "I don't want the little white hen to come back and find you here."

"Well," said the old rat, "I will promise never to come near these eggs again."

"By my whiskers!" said the yellow cat, sternly.

"By my whiskers!" repeated the old rat, solemnly.

"Be off!" cried the yellow cat. And the old rat ran away as fast as ever his four legs could carry him.

When the little white hen came back she found the yellow cat fast asleep in her nest, with every egg safe under him.—Christian Register.

Destitution in Puerto Rico.

According to the most recent reports from Puerto Rico, the people of that island are in almost as pitiable condition as are the poor of India.

One correspondent declares "the island is one vast poor-house." The delay of the United States government in giving to Puerto Rico a market for its products and a civil government has reduced the laboring classes to a state of misery. The war robbed Puerto Rico of its Spanish markets and the Dingley tariff, in the absence of special legislation, interfered with its United States trade.

Under such circumstances business could not fail to be prostrated. Capitalists were unwilling to undertake new enterprises until the trade status of Puerto Rico had been determined and labor was thus left without employment.

The situation was further complicated by the terrific hurricanes of last September that ruined a great many large coffee plantations and destroyed food crops.

In some districts destitution has reached such a pass that women and children are compelled by nakedness to keep within the shelter of their huts.

In many populous towns there are no resident physicians, the citizens being too poor to support one. Now that a bill has been passed fixing the tariff for Puerto Rico and providing for a civil government, it is to be hoped that measures for the relief of the island will be promptly adopted.

President McKinley's appointment of Assistant Secretary Allen of the navy department to the governorship of Puerto Rico, is generally commended.

Mr. Allen is pronounced by those who know him best as a man of energy and sterling integrity whose business and official training thoroughly qualify him for the difficult work before him.

Grape Fruit.

Grape fruit is coming into use more and more as an anti-malarial, says an exchange. Physicians claim that a grape-fruit eaten daily will do much to keep a person in excellent physical condition.

It is also useful in some fevers, but should be taken in these cases only on advice of a physician. Unlike most medicines the grape-fruit is widely popular at both teas and luncheons.

The bill of fare of an elaborate luncheon frequently starts with grape-fruit, cut in the shape of baskets with one-half of the pulp removed and the skin cut with the scissors to form a handle. The seeds are removed and powdered sugar sprinkled over the fruit, or a lump of sugar inserted. One or two candied cherries in the basket contribute a pretty touch of color as well as an agreeable flavor.

Bee Keeping.

"Practical Lessons in Bee-Keeping" was the title of an excellent paper presented at the twenty-eighth annual meeting of the Kansas board of agriculture, by E. Whitcomb of Friend, Neb., and published by Secretary F. D. Coburn in his recent report.

Mr. Whitcomb's observations and experience have been quite varied and extensive, and what he says should be of considerable assistance to beginners as well as those already engaged in this industry. He said in part as follows:

The problem of wintering is one of vital importance. To leave a colony on the summer stand, exposed to the sudden changes and bleak storms of winter, is not conducive to success, in the beginning. The careful, successful

Choctaw Courting.

Love-making of a fast order is now going on in the Choctaw nation, Indian Territory, and it is estimated that at least 1,000 white men will carry off Choctaw brides before the first of next month, says an exchange. About 5,000 white men have already won Choctaw brides and the land and money that accompany them. The cause of the rush is the recent announcement of the Dawes commission that after the first of the month all persons not Choctaws by blood will not be enrolled on the citizenship list. This means no white men who marry Choctaw women will be allowed to share in lands and money of the Choctaw tribe. Hence quick love-making on part of civilized man.

The Choctaw girls are rather pretty and some are highly educated. Those who are not full-bloods refuse to marry Indians, hence there is a great demand for whites. Choctaw girls marry at the age of 17. Because of their 550 acres of land (equal amount being given to their husbands) no trouble is experienced in finding a suitable companion.

The complexion of these girls is a clear white. Their eyes and hair are black, as a rule, although some are perfect blondes. They are of a kind and loving disposition, and are said by the white men who have tried it to make excellent wives.

To avoid tramps and degenerates marrying these girls, the Choctaw laws provide that all white men, before they can be admitted to the tribe, must produce recommendation of good character from the county judge of the county where they last resided.

It is said that some of the most beautiful and popular girls of the Choctaw tribe have received proposals of marriage from alleged French and English men of title, but, because they refused to prove their ancestry, were rejected.

Frogs.

An exchange advises its readers to secure a few frogs' eggs, place them in a fruit jar or other receptacle, and watch development. Masses of jelly-like substance dotted with little black spots will be found in March and April in the shallow waters of ponds or in pools of rain water standing in fields.

Each one of these little black spots is the egg of a frog and is surrounded with two different substances, one clear and transparent, immediately surrounding the little black speck, the other enveloping the whole, and not quite clear. The first serves as nourishment, answering the same purpose the white of an egg does to birds. Surprising as it may seem, frogs lay spawn, as the eggs are called, forty or fifty times larger than themselves.

The black spots will be seen to increase in size, finally breaking through the outer skin of the egg, swimming about actively by means of the propelling tail. Breathing is at first conducted on the same principle as a fish, through gills, consisting of fin-like appendages on each side of the head, plainly visible. No sooner have these organs attained their size than they begin to diminish, the shape of the head and body changing at the same time, and in a short time they entirely disappear, being drawn into a cavity in the chest and covered with a kind of gill cover. About this time two little projections appear just behind the head, soon developing into legs. Soon another pair of legs appear in front and the tail gradually disappears, being absorbed into the body.

The external changes of the tadpole to frog have been marvelous to the observer, but the internal changes have been equally wonderful. The fish-like bones and gills have been completely changed, and the heart, formerly composed of two chambers, has had a third chamber added.

Frogs feed on larvae, insects, worms and small mollusks. The tongue of the frog is fastened in front, and apparently the end is swallowed; but when an insect appears the frog leaps quickly after it, whipping out the long tongue, covered with a slimy coating, which holds securely every insect with which it comes in contact.

When autumn arrives frogs cease to eat, and protect themselves from cold, burying deeply in the mud, whole troops going together in the same place, passing the winter in a state of torpor. In March, when the weather moderates, they begin to wake and move about.

The frog is the best swimmer of all four-footed animals, and makes enormous leaps in proportion to its size, but the brain, as compared with the body, is very small; still the frog can be tamed by kind treatment, and if approached very carefully will allow its back to be rubbed with a small twig or long wisp of grass. Instances have been known where frogs became quite domesticated, appearing nightly for food, jumping on the hearth rug in order to enjoy the warmth of the fire.

Producing and Marketing Wool.

Below is the summary of Bulletin 178, Michigan Experiment Station:

1. The outlook for fine wools is bright, due to the almost universal falling off in numbers of Merinos kept not only in Michigan and the United States, but in nearly every wool growing country.

2. It is very doubtful indeed if the American wool grower can ever afford to ignore the ultimate value of the carcass producing fleece.

3. Mutton growing with wool as an incidental product will continue to be a profitable industry.

4. Every pound of wool consumed in the United States can be profitably grown here.

5. Breed and feed affect the value of wool from the manufacturer's standpoint. Indiscriminate crossing is unprofitable. A sheep poorly nourished cannot produce a healthy fleece.

6. The manufacturer buys wool on the basis of its true value for manufacturing purposes. The grower, the local dealer, the commission man and the scourer should each make an honest effort to satisfy his reasonable demands.

7. Through established market prejudice against Michigan wools, for which prejudice the wool growers of Michigan in former years are largely responsible, and through the lack of care in preparing Michigan wools for the market, the wool growers of Michigan are losing \$200,000 annually.

8. A small linen, or flax or hemp twine is best for tying wool.

9. Coarse, heavy paint marks should be avoided in marking sheep.

10. More and better wool can be secured by early shearing.

11. Loose, bulky fleeces sell best in the market.

12. Country wool buyers can greatly aid in an effort to bring Michigan wools up to the standard, by buying wool on its merits. By offering an advance in price for wools, properly grown and prepared for the market and by discriminating against poorly grown, dirty or poorly tied fleeces.

13. Commission men and wool manufacturers must buy Michigan wool on its merits. They must pay as much for wools grown in Michigan as those grown elsewhere, provided, of course, they are equal in condition and quality.

14. The first thing necessary is for growers to remove objectionable features of Michigan wool; the next to insist that dealers and manufacturers buy wool on its merits.

15. Avoid lime and sulphur as a sheep dip.

bee-keeper would as soon think of wintering his cow in this manner as his bees, which under proper care would yield under the investment equally as much profit. There are two means of successful wintering. First, packed, on the summer stand; second, in a well ventilated cellar. The first is by far the most laborious, yet it has some advantages.

Most every one has his or her favorite location for the apiary. Some choose the most shaded point possible. After experimenting for several years we have determined that, in my locality at least, the most exposed place possible is prolific of the best results.

In the country between the Missouri river and the mountains the nights are usually cool, and we find that the mercury falls two or three degrees lower in the shade than on the open ground; that it requires a much longer time to warm up the hive in the shade in the morning than those not shaded; and, besides this, the sun comes out so warm in the morning that often before the colonies in the shade are warmed up the sun has evaporated a great portion of the nectar. It is with the bee as with the farm hand: the fellow who gets out early in the morning is the one who usually accomplishes the greatest day's work.

In experimenting with this matter of location we find that the colonies located nearest the shade gather the least stores, while those located on the most exposed ground gather most. One case in particular was a colony shaded by a small plum tree. As the tree grew the colony produced less stores, until it barely gathered sufficient to winter itself. We moved this colony out into the sunlight and it went back to its old record in honey-making.

We set our hives facing the east, that the sun may shine on the entrance as soon as it peeps up in the morning, and further, that it may shine on the rear late in the evening in order to facilitate evaporation as long as possible. We use a temporary shade made with a few old staves tacked on a two by two, two feet long, and which protects the top and sides of the hive, allowing a free circulation of air, and the sun to shine on either end as it is reached.

Watering bees is of considerable benefit, and we would as soon think of allowing our other stock to roam the country in quest of water, as the bees in the apiary. During winter the moisture that condenses in the hive furnishes the colony water, but during the early spring these condensations cease. They begin brood rearing early, and in order to prepare food for the young larva, must have water. The most vigorous bees go forth in quest of water, and it at some brook or tank where it is ice cold, fill themselves, and are chilled, and do not get back to the hive. The necessities for water steadily increasing, other bees go out, to share a like fate, until the colony is emaciated and the brood dies; and then we say to our neighbor bee-keeper: "I am bothered with spring dwindling."

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