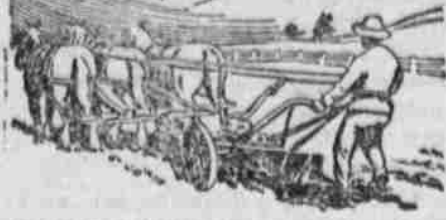


NOTES From MEADOWBROOK FARM

By William Pitt



A purplish red comb indicates bad health in a fowl.

The best egg producers are not always the best market fowls.

He that abuses his colts may expect to be kicked by his horses.

Leaves mixed with straw make an excellent cover for strawberries.

The silo has come to stay as a permanent form of farm equipment.

Clover hay is about three times as valuable as corn fodder or shredded fodder.

Oats and timothy hay have long been considered standard feeds for the horse.

It is still a question whether or not pasteurization of milk is beneficial in every respect.

Well drained yards and pens will help to keep the hogs more thrifty and profitable.

The covered barnyard is rapidly coming into favor as a commodity to the farmer and dairyman.

Sweep up every particle of silage in the chute and alleyway and give it to the cows at every feeding.

Cold weather is not much of a detriment to chickens, providing it is dry cold and the atmosphere pure.

When opening your silo bear in mind that whenever you change feed the change should be made gradually.

A new poultry roost is made of perforated iron tubing which has been soaked in a solution deadly to insect life.

Young geese are not to be picked the first year, unless you sell them dressed, a very difficult thing for the novice to do.

Spraying has come to be one of the unescapable tasks of the agriculturist, whatever his particular line of productive enterprise.

A well-bred animal costs very little more to purchase, and generally less to feed, than a bad one, while the progeny is always salable.

Scarcity of stock cattle of all kinds and high prices asked and offered is a common local condition reported from the corn belt states.

The meadows look good for pasture in the fall and early spring but the man who keeps his cattle off of them always gets better crops of hay.

The dust collected from numerous vacuum cleaners has proven to be a valuable fertilizer, and its sale has become a regular business in Paris.

The novice when selecting a ram of the Downs or other hornless breeds of sheep should be very careful not to select one with stubs—miniature horns.

It is not the little, fat, chubby females which should be retained as breeding animals, for they almost always prove disappointing at farrowing time.

Try finishing some of your poultry this fall before marketing. If it pays to convert corn into six-cent pork, it may pay better to convert some of it into twelve-cent poultry.

The fall, as soon as the leaves are cut by frost, is the best time to make new plantations of rhubarb and horseradish. The ground for both of these plants must be deep, mellow and rich.

The temperature of cream for churning should be 57 to 60 degrees. We also churn about one-half hour. When butter comes before half an hour it indicates too high temperature of cream.

Fowls cured of roup must not be used as breeders, however well they look. They will do for market, or for market eggs, but never breed from them as they will transmit the disease to their offspring.

In starting a new hedge begin it as soon as the ground is workable from receding frost. It pays to dig out the soil and enrich it as for making a garden bed or border. The digging should be to the depth of two feet.

Fall plowing is to be preferred to spring plowing. This applies also to land for corn that is to be manured during the winter and spring. A reasonable dressing of coarse manure may be disked in without difficulty, and is in better position to aid the crop than when plowed under.

A liberal use of paint means a great deal to the farmer.

The young turkey, to do well, must have plenty of exercise.

Two-fifths of the world's 100,000,000 swine are in the United States.

The poultry house should be among the first to receive such attention.

Many large stones, in the way of cultivation, may be lifted out by the plow.

It is well to assume when chickens are dying that the disease is contagious.

When pigs are given bad quarters they can't be expected to return good dollars.

Just now the heavy steer is a much sought after article in the live stock markets.

All brooders and brood coops should be thoroughly cleaned and put away for the winter.

The prosperous and most successful farmer is comfortable only when his stock is comfortable.

A rainy day is a good time to repair and oil up the extra harnesses used during the harvest season.

Observe with care and note as a first point that the cow should have a large and ample-sized body.

Good roads are the reward of common sense applied to the local management of town or county affairs.

A sheep grower can scarcely make a graver mistake than that of growing sheep without regard to their fleeces.

In dairying there is no excuse for the man who goes at it blindly and blames luck and the weather for his failure.

Only well bred stock that is well fed and well taken care of can make money on land worth \$100 or more an acre.

Farmers with heavy steady work now generally try to secure drafty horses even when farm work is the sole object.

The strainer never was made that would take foul matter out of milk. None ever will be. You have got to keep it out.

If all the chickens and full-grown hens run together, the stronger chickens will get most of the feed and keep the others poor.

It is self-robbery to take a dairy cow through the winter when she gives milk only five or six months out of the whole year.

If the cow's pedigree tallies with the milk pail, then it is consistent, and a good foundation, or a poor one as the case may be.

Fancy points may be of no advantage to the farmer, but pure-bred fowls will naturally possess just as great utility as the scrub.

Before laying a cement stable floor care should be taken to have the ground below properly drained and the foundation well constructed.

Selection is absolutely necessary in order to breed and build up a good dairy herd. One must cull closely here as well as in all other lines of work.

Many good, careful farmers find it practical to hog off some of their corn. It will pay you to look into this question, if you have not already done so.

All the diseases which afflict our poultry are those of domestication caused largely by unnatural environment and carelessness on the part of the owners.

Many of the details in butter making can only be looked after by experience. Much of it must be learned by doing the work. No one can begin where the other fellow left off.

Be careful about feeding beet tops to the cattle. Heavy feeding of this material is somewhat dangerous as it tends to purge animals. Feed in limited quantities and with other feeds.

Be sure to have your boar-pen fence boar proof, for the more times he breaks out the more difficult it will be to control him thereafter. Heavy woven wire fencing will hold him securely.

Never allow breeding swine to follow steers or dairy cattle for this is a sure method of developing tuberculosis in swine. This disease seldom originates with swine, but is easily contracted by them.

The calf born in fall does not have to wage the ceaseless war against flies that the spring calf does, while the cooler temperatures prevailing causes the milk to be in better condition. Scours as a rarity in fall or winter.

The fashion and judgment of our best breeders decree that our low down blocky type ram, he that weighs "heavier" than we thought, "the little big sheep," is the one which will be sought these days of prime joints of mutton.



How Birds Withstand WINTER'S BLASTS

By EDWARD B. CLARK

THE greater battalion of the army of the birds is in the southland for the winter. The warblers were the pioneers in the march to escape the cold. The naturalists of the world would give much to know what it was in the torrid time which told these faintest of the feathered creatures that they must be moving on.

There is a puzzle for the scientists even more complex than that offered by the spectacle of migration. It is to get the solution of the problem of why some birds with the recurring autumn invariably seek warmer climes while others apparently much more poorly fitted by nature to withstand cold weather conditions, stay about the familiar nesting scenes when the snow lies deep and the cold is like that of "St. Agnes Eve."

The timouse, the Concord chickadee of Emerson, is a little feathered gem which looks as though a breath of cold would set it all a-shiver. Yet this little fellow sticks by his Northern friends all through the winter, when bigger, more heavily feathered, and apparently more hardy species have sought out the orange and the magnolia groves of the gulf. There are scores of other birds which remain with us to pipe a cheerful note over the snow wastes while their southern-flying friends are silent amid their congenial surroundings.

One of the most interesting bird studies is that which leads to a personal knowledge of how the feathered species care for themselves during a time when exposed man, even though heavily clothed, at times freezes to death. It is a question if many people know how the despised English sparrow, whom we always have with us, manages to pull through a Northern winter without offering himself up as a sacrifice to Jack Frost. It is a matter of current but mistaken belief among those who have noticed the great bulky nests which the sparrows have built in almost every tree that these bunches of straw, dried grass, and feathers form the abiding places of the sparrows during the coldwinter nights. As a matter of fact, a sparrow seldom goes near a tree nest in winter. If he has found a lodging for his summer home in a cornice of a building he may go there to sleep away the long, cold nights, but the tree nest is deserted from the moment the last brood is hatched.

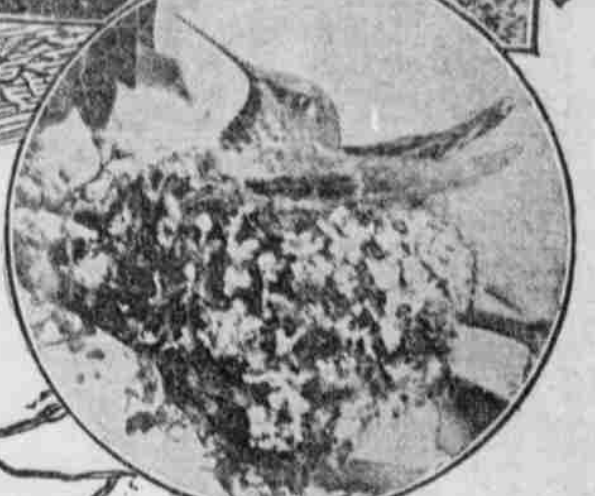
If one wishes to know where thousands of the sparrows sleep in winter let him on some cold night take a stout club and rap with all his might upon an electric light pole that is fitted with an overhanging hood. There is a little platform in some of these hoods directly over the glass globe. Upon this as many sparrows as can conveniently crowd together roost throughout the cold winter nights. A club rapping experiment on an electric light pole at a Chicago avenue corner near the North Side water works lot during a howling blizzard one winter night resulted in the dislodgment of twelve frightened sparrows. They fluttered about in the storm and hung like so many fascinated moths. When the pounding ceased they made their way back to their resting place and doubtless remained undisturbed until morning. Their flat was certainly modern in its appointments, for it was heated and lighted by electricity.

Take a trip through a thistle field in July and there will be seen scores of goldfinches feeding on the seeds of the prickly plants. These little creatures have the appearance of the birds of the tropics. It would seem that barely a breath of the north wind would send them scurrying southward. In truth, however, these birds, frail though they appear, stay with us all winter, yet not one person in fifty outside of the ranks of the bird students knows the fact. In late August the goldfinch drops his gold and black livery and puts on a sober sparrowlike garb. This is the reason why people think that the little thistle seed lover has left them and that another bird has taken its place. In the Chicago Academy of Sciences there is pathetic evidence of how the goldfinch keeps warm during the winter nights. The curator has there an oriole's nest from the outside of which hangs the body of a goldfinch caught by the neck and literally hanged by one of the cords with which the oriole has fashioned its home. The goldfinch has sought refuge in the nest from the weather and on leaving it in the morning has thrust his head through the fatal noose. These birds utilize the deserted homes of all their brethren who build deep nests. The goldfinches return night after night to a nest which an oriole had swung from the tips of an elm in Western Springs, Ill.

The chickadee of which something has been said, builds its nest somewhat after the manner of the woodpecker, but if observation goes for much, the bird does not use this absolutely safe and warm retreat for its winter night lodging. They have been started time after time just after sunset on cold nights from the vacated nests of many species of birds, the chickadee simply burying itself in the warm linings in which the summer before the young of its friends had been cradled.

By mid-September the swallows one and all had disappeared. It may be that if the appearance of one swallow does not make a summer, the absence of the entire tribe may not make an autumn, but it is certain that the birds must feel something that bids them begone, for they go in a body and they go in the twinkling of an eye. The swallows live upon insects, and there is no reason as far as food is concerned, why they should not stay at least two weeks longer, for their homes are in sheltered nooks. The humming birds, despite its delicacy, stays longer than the swallow and complains not.

If one can catch sight of a saucy little woodpecker going into a hole in a tree on his lawn at this season of the year he may hope to have an interesting neighbor during the entire winter. All the downy woodpeckers remain in the north the years through. Some of the red heads stay too, but most of them go a few score of miles to the south. All of these birds that remain pass their nights in holes in trees, and at the time of the first fall month they are busy locating proper cold weather habitations. If enough interest in



the woodpecker is felt to keep him as a companion throughout the winter a piece of suet bound firmly to the limb of a tree and occasionally renewed will insure his presence as a guest as long as the snow flies, and with him, tempted by the suet, will be a goodly company of jays, chickadees, and golden crowned kinglets.

The kinglet, smaller than any of our birds, save the ruby throated humming bird alone, manages to live through all the cold Northern winter and be all the while as cheerful as a robin in April. The kinglet, as far as the experience of one person is concerned at least, prefers to get his summer food in the thick bushes, and seemingly has a preference for those which are near clambering vines. The kinglets cast about for likely places in which to pass the winter. As far as can be ascertained they simply get into the heart of some thickly twigged bush through which run vine branches and there all night long they defy both cold and snow.

The great northern shrike, which is due in the northern states from its summer home in the British possessions about October 1, spends his nights close to the bole of an evergreen tree. There is a little clump of evergreens well within the limits of the city of Chicago where a half dozen of these birds roost nightly from October to March. Inasmuch as they live on a diet of English sparrows and spend all the daylight hours in the laudable vocation of killing the imported feathered pest, the exact location of their roosting place will not be given for fear some champion of the sparrow might disturb the rest of these feathered friends, whom many are unkind enough to call butcher birds.

As a matter of fact one need feel little anxiety for the welfare of the birds that stay with us in winter. The nursery ditty of "What will the robin do then, poor thing?" is tear-compelling, but the robin, the bluebird, the jay, and the chickadee will all care for themselves and will feel no envy of man in his steam-heated flat.

During the bitter weather of winter while people with hearts in the right places are scattering crumbs and seeds at their doorsteps for the little feathered land visitors, the great city of Chicago as a whole is doing its best to feed the storm-blown birds of Lake Michigan. Not all the sewage of the city, notwithstanding the completion of the drainage canal, is sent towards the Mississippi. Some little of it still finds its way into the lakes with its burden of garbage, and there the gull scavengers, by eating much of the output that from their point of appetite is edible, do their best to aid in purifying the water supply.

In the dead of winter when the cold is so intense that it seems that no exposed creature can live, the waste of water between Chicago and St. Joe, Mich., is peopled with strange feathered visitors, who shun the same water stretches when the wind blows soft out of the south. A storm which once rose and preceded a "spell" of zero weather brought with it from the north scores of strange, beautiful arctic visitors known as long-tailed ducks. They may be seen all through the winter well out into the open water of Lake Michigan. They fairly revel in cold weather and in cold water. It is highly probable that they would never come to the great lakes at all were it not for the fact that everything northward is frozen solid. The male "long-tail" is a beauty, with his strongly contrasted black and

white plumage and the two great sweeping tail feathers that give him his name. With his wife he does not lack other names, and they are known in various places as "old Injun," "old wife," "old molly," "old granny," "old squaw," and "old south southerly." Because of the oily nature of their flesh these ducks are unfit for food, and yet the gunners on the Chicago breakwaters and on the government pier used to kill dozens of them in the pure wantonness of sport.

When the sloping stone abutment that protects the outer Lincoln Park driveway, Chicago, from the waves is piled high with ice during the winter the venturesome person who will scale the side of the pile may see in the dark water only a few yards beyond one of the most beautiful ducks known to the bird kingdom. The golden eye, or whistle wing, frequents the cold waters of Lake Michigan all through the winter, and comes close to the shore. It is seldom that more than four or five are seen together, and oftener a single pair will be found. If the protection which the male apparently tries to extend to the female during all times of the year be a basis for judgment, these birds remain mated for life.

The golden eye almost invariably places himself between his gentler companion and danger, and when they are swimming or flying to new foraging places he invariably leads the way. The movement of their wings is so rapid that it produces a musical whistling audible at a great distance. Because of the rapidity of their flight the Indians call them spirit ducks, believing that some supernatural aid is given them to add to the swiftness of their journeyings.

The best of the bird scavengers acting as the allies of the Chicago health department in winter are the herring, the ring-billed gulls. The herring gull is a big grayish creature, almost pure white if he is three years old, with black tips to his wings. The young of the first year are mottled gray, entirely different in appearance from their parents. The result of this difference is that people looking at a winter flock of the gulls think that it contains several species. The lagoons in Jackson and Lincoln Parks are often fairly covered with these birds, provided a heavy storm is coming in from the eastward.

A delicate-looking bird is the kittiwake gull. It does not look as if it could stand the rigors of lake winter weather for a day, and yet neither storm nor cold succeeds in chilling its optimism or in abating its industry. The kittiwakes have been in the lake off Chicago in winter, and here they doubtless occasionally have remained until March.

A bird lover considers it an ornithological epoch when he sees a great black-backed gull. The persistent and careful observer who cares nothing for weather conditions may find this rare creature, perhaps the largest of our gulls, if he will but keep a constant watch along the lake front. The bird has been seen here on several occasions in winter. Its name gives a good description of it. It is sometimes known gressomely as the "coffin carrier."