HELEN'S GRASS PLOT.

It Was Quite Pretty Until Her Pet Worms Interfered with Her Success as a Gardener.

Helen loved to play on the grass, and it troubled her greatly when it became hard and dry and brown in winter.

How unpleasant it looked! In some places it was "frost-bitten," in others it looked as if "the moths had been at it," Helen said. There were great bare places, sometimes as big as your hand, sometimes a foot square, all over the grass that used to be so pretty last June. Somebody suggested: "Why not have a grass plot in the house?" That was a fine idea! Auntie had her flowers, mamma had her birds. A little girl surely could take care of a grass plot!

A box was procured, about four by three feet, and in it the earth was carefully prepared and grass seed planted. After some days the tiny green spears began to appear, until, before long—oh, joy in the house and in Helen's window!—there was a lovely green grass plot. A charming expanse of colors, and Helen kept it there in good condition all winter.

She watered it regularly, kept it in plenty of sun to "help the water to make it grow." She cut it at certain intervals all over with auntie's scissors. And one day when the door was shut she indulged a long-cherished wish.


"HELEN'S GRASS PLOT."

She planted her small feet carefully up and down on the soft grass, walking on grass as tender and yielding as if the month were May and not January!

She was very careful when she did this, because, to Helen's delight, two lovely brown worms had come to live in her grass plot. Where they came from nobody knew, but they were there! And Helen sometimes considerately dropped a few crumbs for them among the grass, where no doubt the worms discovered them.

There is some reason to think that the worms believed that the grass plot and the sun and the water and Helen's bread crumbs were all intended for their sole benefit, and that to make them a comfortable home was Helen's only duty. This was Helen's idea, for the worms grew quite fat and bold; and finally Helen was quite willing to have them put out into the garden to hide themselves as best they could in a corner. They were too conceited and needed punishment. But that is the way with worms!—Brooklyn Eagle.

Bull Defies a Locomotive.

While a gang of workmen were repairing the track on the main line of the Pennsylvania railroad, a large bull made its appearance and scattered them in every direction. For about half an hour there was a running fight between the men and the bull. He was impervious to showers of rocks and an occasional crack from a shovel, and finally the men were forced to retreat up an embankment. Just then a heavy freight train hove in sight, and the bull stationed himself in the middle of the track. The engineer blew a warning blast; the bull, accepting this as a challenge, sent back a defiant bellow. Then there was a collision. The train went on serenely, while the bull—where was that misguided animal? Then the men came down the embankment and resumed work.

Scotch Whipping Machine.

If you were a Scotch boy and were inclined to get into mischief you might appreciate the value of a recently invented Scotch machine. It is a device for whipping young folk who have been unruly. It is said that this ingenious machine works like a charm and will turn out more well-punished boys in an hour than the average person could attend to in a day. The machine is in operation at the town of Airdrie. The complaint that the boys make who have been birched by the machine is that too much time passes between the strokes, and each one of them feels like a sound thrashing in itself. Four strokes is a pretty severe punishment for any boy. The lads about the town of Airdrie are said to either be growing better behaved or are moving to another part of Scotland.

TOOK MEAN REWARD.

Soldier Who Wrestled with Peter the Great, and Threw Him, Claimed an Ignoble Privilege.

One of the stories of Peter the Great which is current at the court of St. Petersburg is of the great czar's wrestling match with a young dragoon. Once in the imperial palace—so the story goes—Peter was at table with a great many princes and noblemen, and soldiers were posted within the hall. The czar was in a joyous mood, and, rising, called out to the company: "Listen, princes and boyars. Is there among you one who will wrestle with me to pass the time and amuse the czar?" There was no reply, and the czar repeated the challenge. No prince or nobleman dared to wrestle with his sovereign. But all at once a young dragoon stepped out from the ranks of the soldiers on guard. "Listen, orthodox czar," he said, "I will wrestle with thee!" "Well, young dragoon," said Peter, "I will wrestle with thee, but on these conditions: If thou throwest me I will pardon thee; but, if thou are thrown, thou shalt be beheaded. Wilt thou wrestle on those conditions?"

"I will, great czar!" said the soldier. They closed, and presently the soldier with his left arm threw the czar, and with his right he prevented him from falling to the ground. The sovereign was clearly beaten. The czar offered the soldier whatever reward he should claim, and he ignobly claimed the privilege of drinking free, as long as he lived, in all the inns belonging to the crown. What became of him history does not say.

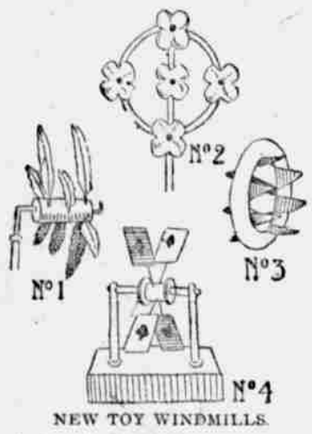
SOME NEW WINDMILLS.

They Can Be Made of Playing Cards, Postal Cards, Feathers and Other Trifles.

Everyone knows how to make the simple windmill by cutting into the corners of a square piece of paper and bending the ends in, sticking a long pin through the center and the ends on a piece of wood.

If, now, you want to make a windwheel, take a circular piece of paper five inches in diameter, and, using your compass, draw a circle in it one inch from the outside. Then draw a dozen lines from the center to the inner circle; cut along these lines with knife or scissors and then bend the ends out, taking care to bend each alternate end in the opposite direction. Then you have a windwheel which will revolve perfectly in the slightest breeze.

Another kind of windmill can be made out of a cork and a few hen feathers. Bore holes into the cork at equal distances from each other and stick the feathers into the holes. Then bore the cork lengthwise and put a hairpin through, giving it a little bend so that the cork cannot touch the wood into which it is stuck to serve as a handle; and now you have a feather windmill.



NEW TOY WINDMILLS.

A windmill with five wings can be easily made out of an old postal card. First fasten a hoop of wood to a stick (as shown in the illustration) and then cut out five circles from the postal card as large as you can. Slit the circles at four equi-distant points, turn the ends inward and outward alternately, stick the ends to the centers by a pin and put them on the hoop at equal distances, and you have a fine windmill with five parts.

Take a small cigar box and fasten the two ends of a spool, having a little piece of wood fixed in each. A second piece of wood serves as the axle of the mill on which a whole spool revolves, to which little bits of wood are glued.

Four holes are bored in the spool, into which little sticks are fastened. On the outer ends of these sticks fasten playing cards or other bits of stiff pasteboard, to serve as the wings of the windmill, and you have the finest boys' windmill ever built.—Boston Globe.

Dolly Was Too Obedient.

A little four-year-old miss was overheard talking to her favorite doll that had accidentally lost an arm, thereby exposing the sawdust. "Oh, you dear, good, obedient dolly! I know I told you to chew your food fine, but I had no idea you would chew it as fine as that."

THE DIFFERENT BREEDS.

Purpose for Which a Fowl Is Wanted Should Always Be Considered by Poultry Raisers.

There is a large number of breeds and many of them possess the same characteristics. Generally a breed that excels in one particular will fall short in another, so that in determining which breed to select the purpose for which the fowl is wanted should always be considered.

The Langshan chickens lay best in the winter. They lay a good number of eggs, are of good size, mature early and are an excellent table fowl.

The Brahmas come next to these, the light colored variety being considered superior to the dark.

Of the four varieties of Cochins, the partridge is considered the best for layers, the buffs the best for table fowls, the whites and blacks following next. One advantage with both the Cochins and Brahmas is that they are easily confined.

The Plymouth Rocks are good layers, good table fowls, good foragers, and, like the Wyandottes, are good general purpose fowls, excelling in no one particular, but hard to beat on the farm.

Leghorns, Minorcas, Spanish, Andalusians and Hamburgs are the best layers, are not setters, but are very poor table fowls.

The Houdans, and, in fact, the whole French class, are fair layers and excellent table fowls.

The games are considered as among the best, if not the best, as table fowls, and are fair layers.

The Polish and Hamburgs are persistent layers, but are very poor table fowls.

The Leghorns cannot be excelled for laying, but they are small and not good table fowls. The brown Leghorns lay the most eggs, the white Leghorns, Minorcas, Spanish and Houdans lay the largest eggs.

The Javas are an excellent table fowl and fatten very readily. When bred for an especial purpose and not carried any further than the first cross, cross breeding may be made profitable. But if carried farther, using a cross-bred is breeding back, and it is largely on this account that cross-breeding is objectionable.

To produce a fine table fowl, cross a strong, full-breasted pit game cock with Dorking hens; this produces a table fowl almost equal to a turkey.

A good cross to produce good layers of medium size is that of the brown Leghorn cocks with Partridge Cochin hens, or a white Leghorn cock with a light Brahma hen.

One of the best crosses for market chickens is a Plymouth Rock cock with Brahma or Cochin hens.

To secure good table fowls, and also combine good laying qualities, cross a Houdan cock with Langshan hens. One result of this cross will be dark legs, but the flesh will be white.

To produce a brood of good layers, the eggs being of extra large size, cross black Spanish cocks with Langshan hens.

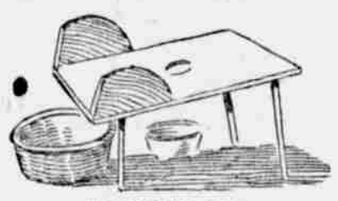
To produce a good market fowl, one that fattens readily, and is easily confined, cross a Brahma cock with partridge Cochin hens.

To produce the best setting hen, one that will remain in the nest, hatch well and prove a good mother, caring well for her chickens, cross a pit game cock with partridge Cochin hens. This cross will also produce good table fowls. In all breeding, care in selecting the best is important if the best results are wanted.—St. Louis Republic.

FOR DRESSING FOWLS.

Method That Permits All the Feathers Being Saved Without Any Soiling Whatever.

The tilting table here shown is just big enough to hold a fowl firmly between the side boards, with its head or neck down through the opening, so that no blood will get upon the table or the feathers. The latter can thus be kept clean and sold. Even at a low price the feathers from large flocks make not a little addition to the profit side of the account. This method permits the feathers being saved without any soiling whatever, consequently the highest price is obtained.—Orange Judd Farmer.


SLOPING TABLE.

Each Breed Has Advantages.

It is doubtful if anyone can correctly select the "best breeds" of fowls without having the same claim made just as earnestly for a dozen other breeds. Some breeds may have certain advantages, but it will also have its disadvantages. Each breed may be said to have only one dominant talent. What it gains in one direction it may lose in another. After all, there would not be ten eggs different in a year between the best and the most inferior (if they could be discovered), with all conditions alike. The man who will claim any one breed as the best issues a direct challenge to all other breeders.—American Gardening.

The Gain of a Chick.

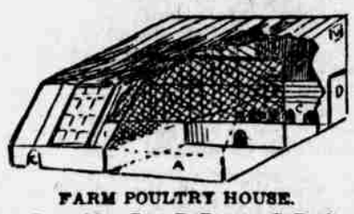
The question of how much will a chick gain is an interesting one, says Poultry West. The following is about correct: The eggs weigh two ounces; the newly hatched chick weighs 1¼ ounces; at one week old, two ounces; three weeks old, 6¼ ounces; four weeks old, ten ounces; five weeks old, 14 ounces; six weeks old, 18½ ounces; seven weeks old, 23½ ounces; nine weeks old, 32 ounces; ten weeks old, 36 ounces; 11 weeks old, 41 ounces.

POULTRY & BEES.

FARM POULTRY HOUSE.

A Cheap and Convenient Structure, with Scratching Pen, Large Enough for Fifty Hens.

A subscriber at Sidney, O., asks for a plan for a house that will accommodate 50 hens, with a scratching pen attached. He says it must be cheap as well as convenient. I present the plan of a house that I think will be suitable. The scratching pen is under the same roof and is separated by only a wire or lath partition, shown at A. In this pen all feeding should be done. The size of the house is 16x20 feet and nine feet at the highest point of the roof. The front slope of the roof should be six feet long to accommodate a hot-bed sash, and would need three of them. The partitions should divide the house into four equal parts, a scratching pen and a roosting and nest room on each side.



FARM POULTRY HOUSE.
(A, Scratching Pen; B, Roosts; C, Poultry Doors; D, Inside Doors; V, Ventilator.)

Place the water, ground bone and grit in the roosting or nest room and do all of the feeding in the scratching room, and also keep the dust bath in this room right under the glass so that the sun will shine in it and keep it dry and warm. For cheapness and durability I would cover the roof with Neponset roofing and paint it well; board up the sides and ends and batten the cracks.

This style of a house is the most roomy and convenient of any I know of, and almost any farmer can build one. To start one, draw your plans, first, to a scale and see how your lumber will cut to advantage. Hang a cabbage or other vegetables in the roost room so that the fowls can pick it from the roost board and the floor, and fall off once in awhile for exercise. The plans are plain and self-explanatory.—E. E. Page, in Ohio Farmer.

A WORD ABOUT QUEENS.

Every Colony of Bees Should Receive a New One Before the Principal Flow Begins.

The bright apiarist requeens colonies of bees almost every year. While queens may live three or four years, and in some case even five years, yet they outlive their usefulness and are not near so prolific the second year as they are the first and seldom prove profitable the third year of their lives. It is true there are some exceptions, but the above is the general rule. Old queens usually quit laying eggs entirely at the close of the honey season during the fore part of the summer, and even if the honey flow continues well on in summer they will check up on egg production. While good young queens lay more eggs during the honey season than old ones, they continue to lay eggs all summer to some extent and in autumn months brood will be found in their combs, hence such colonies are in the best condition to successfully go through the winter, and always come out stronger in the spring. Old queens are more inclined to swarm, and will deposit eggs in the queen cell cups even when the colony is by no means strong enough. The result is that the colony will cast small swarms if allowed to swarm at all, and if prevented by the usual method of removing the queen cells the old queen seems to pout about it and persists in starting more queen cells and also seems to make a specialty of the queen cell business, neglects laying generally, and the result is a colony that will store but little if any surplus honey. Much larger crops would be the result if each colony of bees were to receive a newly hatched and fertile queen in the early spring and before the principal flow began. This method of management would in great measure prevent swarming and also add to the number of bees in the hive, which is the two prime requisites in the production of large honey crops. No queen over two years old should be retained in a hive and it will be better still to requeen every year, even if the queens have to be purchased at one dollar each, which is the usual price of them, but it is much cheaper for everyone who keeps bees to rear their own queens, which may readily be done even with a few hives of bees. Some queens are far superior to others and at the same time may be of the same race or variety.—A. H. Duff, in Prairie Farmer.

Combs in Cold Weather.

Every winter damages the birds more or less by injuring the combs. When a comb is frosted it turns black and often the points decay and fall off. It is very painful, and results in a loss of eggs, as the birds will not lay until the comb is thoroughly healed. The wattles also freeze, especially when wet, as is the case with birds that drink from an open vessel. The best remedy for frosted combs is to keep the birds free from draughts and anoint the combs with a few drops of glycerin and crude petroleum mixed. To prevent the difficulty, if necessary, cut off the combs and wattles with a sharp knife or shears, dip the head in alum water and put the birds in a dry, warm place. Should the weather be warm rub the cut surface with crude petroleum as a protection against flies.—American Gardening.

As to Congressional Ages.

It may be of interest to the public to know that the average age of the 86 senators is 56.83 years, Senator Pettus of Alabama, who is 78, being the oldest and Senator Beveridge of Indiana, who is 37, being the youngest. Another peculiar thing about Senator Pettus is that he began his congressional and senatorial career at the mature age of 76. But he is hale and hearty, bidding fair to witness the burial of half his senatorial juniors.

In the house there are several old maidish members who fail, refuse or neglect to give their ages. Of the 356 members who have no squeamishness on that subject the average is 48.66 years, Mr. Grow of Pennsylvania, who is 76, being the oldest and Mr. Fitzgerald of New York, who is 27, being the youngest; so that the oldest senator is two years older than the oldest representative, the youngest senator is 10 years older than the youngest representative, and, so far as can be ascertained, the average senatorial age is 8.17 years more than the average representative age.

Pennsylvania not only has the oldest representative in years, Mr. Grow, but she also has the oldest in point of service, General Harmer, who on that account administered the oath to Mr. Speaker Henderson. In the person of Mr. Grow she also has the only ex-speaker in the house. It may also be a matter of interest to state that only four ex-speakers are now living—Grow of Pennsylvania, Kiefer of Ohio, Reed and Carlisle of New York. That brilliant litterateur Frank G. Carpenter says that their work saps the vitality of the speakers. I doubt whether that fact, if fact it be, will ever deter any ambitious statesman from aspiring to that exalted station.

Champ Clark