

THE HEN-MAN



By R. H. WILKINSON

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There exists in America a certain type of person who, born and raised in a city apartment, possesses what is known to the vernacular as a yen to own a small place in the country, firmly believing that he can buy a few chickens, raise a few vegetables and live there, commuting to and from his metropolitan job, for about one-third the cost of existence in his city apartment.

This is a splendid idea, especially that part about living one-third as cheaply as in the city.

It has its other advantages, too.

There is, for example, the matter of fresh air, fresh dairy products, plenty of space to move around in, freedom from the hustle and bustle of city life.

It's a pity that the plan hasn't, can't and never will be developed profitably. I mean the moving-to-the-country bug.

Steve Bolton was attacked by the bug.

Steve had become fed up on city life. He was a bachelor, young and handsome, and was forever chasing about from party to tea to dinner, to theater, or any other of the dozen places where handsome and eligible young bachelors are welcomed.

Steve was fed up.

He wanted a breath of fresh air; wanted to get up with the sun, drink in the crisp morning air, tend to the chickens and catch the 7:30 train to town and his broker's office.

He wanted to spend his evenings seated comfortably before a cozy fire, get in some good reading, go to bed at nine o'clock and sleep the sleep of the just.

Also, he wanted to economize.

The cost of living in town wasn't giving Steve much of an opportunity to save for rainy days.

This plan of Steve's was swell. Too bad it couldn't work.

Steve talked the idea over with Jim McDevitt.

Jim had tried the same thing once, but for some unknown reason was back in his city apartment.

Jim approved of Steve's idea without a moment's hesitation.

"Great scheme. You'll like it, Steve, out there. Fine way to live. Fact is, I'll have the missus buy her eggs from you. You can bring them in every morning. Help you get started."

Steve's dreams soared.

He pictured himself laying aside a tidy sum from the profits on his eggs.

Good scout, Jim.

Steve also called on Rus Whitcomb. Rus and his wife had tried the living-in-the-country idea, too.

And Rus, like Jim, approved and applauded.

Sure, he'd buy all the eggs Steve could raise.

Fresh eggs from the country! Boy, nothing could be better.

Later that same night Jim McDevitt called Rus Whitcomb on the telephone and the two of them held a gleeful conversation.

So old Steve had got the bug, eh? Well, let him find out for himself. Won't do him any harm to get stung.

He'd never rest till he got the crawling out of his system anyhow.

Besides, it was comforting to know there were other fish grabbing at that same live-cheaply-in-the-country bait.

On the following Sunday, Steve chartered a drive-your-own car and motored out in the country.

Along toward mid-afternoon he chanced upon a little place in the town of Medvale that seemed to suit his exact purpose.

There was a white house with green blinds and a picket fence around the front lawn, in which a half dozen shade trees reared themselves.

Behind the house there was a barn, several outbuildings and a rather large henery.

Steve hunted up the owner and was astonished and delighted to discover the place could be rented for less than one-half of what he was paying at his present apartment.

He sewed the thing up at once by making a substantial deposit and signing a six months' lease.

A month later Steve was established in his new abode and tremendously happy.

Two dozen Rhode Island Red chickens clucked contentedly in the henery. Shrubs had begun to flower and the shade trees were bursting forth their buds.

Ah, yes, Steve was far happier than he ever dreamed he could be.

He was going to bed early, getting up early, reading a lot and learning a good deal about the hen business.

After the first week Steve carried

with him each morning a half dozen nice fresh eggs and proudly handed them to Jim and Rus when he reached the office.

Jim and Rus received them solemnly and praised him highly for his success and winked broadly behind his back.

Along about the first of May, Steve's hens, or most of them, stopped laying.

After failing to solve the mystery himself, he consulted a neighbor and was told that the biddies were at this time of year usually interested in raising a family.

Steve thought this was great. He went home, gathered together all his spare eggs and put five of his hens to set.

The others he locked up in a barren anteroom to "break up" their family raising notions.

At the end of two weeks eight of the three dozen eggs Steve had set, hatched.

The young man was jubilant.

He proudly summoned his neighbor, to display the result of his breeding efforts, and was told that five of the eight chicks were roosters, which wasn't so good.

It was about this time that monthly bills began to arrive at the hen farm, and after an evening spent in intensive figuring Steve discovered that the cost of electric lights, cooking gas, telephone and other incidentals of livelthood was quite as much, if not more, than the cost of the same conveniences in town.

It was two days after this that Steve learned, much to his disappointment, that the "fresh" cream, milk and butter which he had been having left at his door each morning were shipped out of Boston on the night previous and distributed in the country by a chain dairy products company.

Augmenting these startling revelations, Steve came to the conclusion that getting up with the sun every morning wasn't such a swell idea, especially if it happened to be a rainy day or if the air wasn't bracing because of the humidity.

He found also that the long, quiet evenings were more or less palling once you got used to them, and that a month of reading had brought him up to date on current literature.

In fact, Steve began to know a long time for a flog at city life, for an evening at a night club or trip to the theater or a gay dinner party.

Startlingly, he discovered that, after all, farming was a business, and unless you devoted your entire time to it, it was pretty difficult to make it pay.

Which, incidentally, when you look at the thing squarely, is quite true of almost any business.

To add to all this, Steve one day awoke to the fact that Jim and Rus, who had had their fling of commuting from the country, were giving him what is known as the merry ha, ha.

They had, in a manner of speaking, put up a job on him.

They wanted to see him get stung.

And when he finally admitted that this country idea was a lot of bilge they would be all set to enjoy the situation with crude and raucous guffaws.

This knowledge was disturbing. Steve's ears burned at thoughts of it.

And in the end he vowed to foil the instigators of the joke, and turn, if possible, the tables.

Thus minded, Steve on the day following brought as usual his half dozen fresh eggs to the conniving rascals who posed as friends and advisers, suggesting on delivery that, in view of the fact that eggs were scarce these days and because these from Medvale were strictly fresh, the recipients of the daily half dozen pay a little more than the amount asked at the corner delicatessen for less fresh hen fruit.

Jim and Rus agreed readily enough.

Of course, fresh eggs were worth more money.

What was more, they were eager and anxious to give Steve a helping hand.

A week later Steve moved back to his city apartment and with a great feeling of relief settled once more into the comfortable routine to which he was accustomed.

But each morning for six months thereafter he paused at the corner chain store en route to the office, purchased two one-half dozen boxes of eggs at 20 cents the half dozen, and later sold them to Jim and Rus for 30 cents.

Which explains why, in the early fall, when Jim and Rus, puzzled over Steve's continued success as a hen-man, motored one day to the little white house in Medvale (the same house, incidentally, which first one and then the other had occupied during their own venture in the egg-raising business) they discovered that Steve had quitted the place six months previous, and were prone not to guffaw when next they encountered the would-be hen-man, but merely to chuckle in good fellowship fashion and vow with him to warn all others against the live-in-the-country bug when it attacked friends and neighbors of the city.

POULTRY

DEVELOP PULLETS' BODY FOR LAYING

Use Care in Early Feeding to Bring Maturity.

By Roy S. Dearstine, Poultry Department, North Carolina State College, WNU Service.

The proper feeding of chickens during the period of early development is of vital importance in determining their future laying capacities, so tests at branch station farms during the past five years have proved.

One of the most critical periods in a bird's life is that between the time it goes off the starting mash and the time it is placed on a laying mash diet. The feeding should be such as to bring the birds to bodily maturity at approximately the same time they start laying, and not before. After the birds start laying most of their food goes into egg production and very little, if any, goes to skeleton growth. Hence, a bird that starts laying before it has reached full growth is liable to remain undeveloped and will seldom have the stamina needed by heavy producing hens.

Too great an amount of protein in the food before the laying period is apt to start the pullets laying too soon. An excess of carbohydrates or a feed of cereal crops alone also are conducive to too-early laying. A good feed should have the proteins and carbohydrates well balanced.

A mash containing 15.1 per cent protein, of which 4 per cent was animal protein, fed along with the regular scratch feed was found to give the best results in the experiments conducted with Rhode Island Reds and White Leghorns. Fed on this diet, the birds reached sexual and physical maturity at approximately the same time.

Discovers an Easy Way to Clean Poultry House

The ease and efficiency with which a poultry house may be cleaned depends considerably on the construction of the dropping boards. If they are made in removable sections the work is much easier, writes a correspondent in Successful Farming.

For this type of construction, attach supports to the wall on which the dropping boards are to be built. These should be spaced not more than 4 1/2 feet apart and should extend into the center of the building about 3 1/2 feet. The dropping boards should be made in sections 5 feet long and 4 feet wide so they are of a convenient size to handle. If "eye" bolts are fastened to the back wall and hooks placed in corresponding positions in the dropping boards, they may be hooked to the wall, making them easy to remove.

Removable roosts may be placed on top of the dropping boards. When constructed in this way, the roosts may be taken out and the dropping boards may be removed or raised in the front and hooked to the ceiling until the house is cleaned.

To Stop Feather Pulling

Feather pulling among hens is not a habit, nor is it caused by too close quarters. Neither is it caused by being hungry, unless one could call it being hungry for salt. Salt seems to be what they want when they pull out feathers and pick each other. Freshly pulled feathers have a slight saltiness, but the blood has more. To stop the feather pulling and picking, says a correspondent in the Rural New Yorker, hang a piece of fat pork low enough for the hens to reach it—two or three pounds for a flock of 30 to 40 hens—and keep water by them all the time. As long as they have water they can eat all they want, and it will not hurt them.

Small Eggs Hatch Poorly

Hatching eggs, weighing less than 20 ounces per dozen, showed, in recent experiments in the state of Michigan, a very poor hatchability and produced small chicks which developed slowly. Eggs weighing 21 to 22 ounces per dozen had a fair hatchability, but those weighing 23 ounces or more per dozen showed a good hatchability and chicks of good weight.

Poultry Hints

Loading hens in the farm flock eat the profits the busy biddies make.

Chemically, the shells of brown eggs differ from those of white ones.

Grit is an aid to the gizzard in crushing and grinding feed and should be before the birds at all times. Not over three-fourths of a pound of hard grit will be needed by a hen in a year's time.

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL Lesson

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Member of Faculty, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

Lesson for April 22

OUR ALL FOR THE KINGDOM

LESSON TEXT—Matthew 19:16-20. GOLDEN TEXT—I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.—Acts 20:35.

PRIMARY TOPIC—A Poor Rich Man.

JUNIOR TOPIC—Giving Jesus First Place.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—The Right Use of Money.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Stewardship of Possessions.

The lesson title is likely to be misunderstood and the teaching misapplied. Jesus did not directly, nor by implication, teach that eternal life can be obtained by parting with possessions. In his dealing with the young man, Jesus showed him his erroneous notion as to personal goodness and endeavored to reveal unto him his own essential nature.

I. A Certain Young Man Came to Jesus (v. 16).

For a full view of the characteristics of this man see Mark 10:17-30 and Luke 18:18-30.

1. His virtues.

a. Courageous (Mark 10:7). He was of high standing, a rich young ruler (Luke 18:18, 23). To come to Jesus at this time meant to this young man ostracism from national fellowship. It required real courage.

b. Earnest (Mark 10:17). He came and knelt before Jesus.

c. High aspirations (v. 16). He wanted eternal life. There was an aching void in his soul in the midst of pleasures which affluence brings.

d. Pious and moral (v. 20). From youth up he professed to have conformed to God's holy law.

e. He believed that Jesus could inform him of the "good thing" to be done to inherit eternal life.

2. His mistaken notions.

a. About Christ (v. 16). He esteemed Jesus to be good but did not apprehend him to be God.

b. Concerning himself. He was self-righteous. He thought he was good and that he could do something good.

c. Concerning eternal life. He thought that eternal life could be obtained by good works.

II. Christ Dealing With the Young Man (vv. 17-22).

Jesus skillfully led the young man to see his errors and then put his finger on the weak spot in his life.

1. Jesus' question (v. 17). "Why callest thou me good?" Without giving him a chance to answer he declared that only God was good, as if to say, "I am good and therefore I am God."

2. Jesus' answer to the young man's question (vv. 17-20). "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Jesus here met him on his own ground, namely that of the law. The law reveals sin and thus shuts the mouth of a self-righteous sinner (Rom. 3:19). The law curses instead of saves (Gal. 3:10). The gospel was given to save men from the curse (Rom. 1:16, 17).

3. Christ's command (v. 21). Replying to Christ's citation of the commandments of the law the young man glibly asserted that he had kept them all from his youth up. In Christ's command to go and sell his possessions and distribute them to the poor, he put his finger upon the weak spot.

4. The young man's decision (v. 22). He decided against Christ. In the supreme test he chose his wealth.

III. The Relation of the Rich to the Kingdom of Heaven (vv. 23-26).

This teaching concerning the peril of riches was most timely. Covetousness was fast taking hold of the people. Judas was well under its sway.

1. It is difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom (vv. 23, 24). This difficulty lies not in the possession of riches but in trusting riches. The step from possession to trusting is a very short one. Riches are deceitful (Matt. 13:22). The tendency of increasing wealth is to destroy the nobler life of the soul. It lulls into security (Rev. 3:17); it leads to self-indulgence (1 Tim. 6:9), and to pride (Ezek. 28:5). Entrance of the rich into the kingdom is possible though difficult (vv. 25, 26). It is possible for the grace of God

a. To sanctify riches.

b. To so open a man's eyes that he may see his downward course and repent.

c. To change a man from self-seeking to self-sacrifice.

d. To make men humble.

IV. Rewards for Following Christ (vv. 27-30).

Those who turn their backs upon their country and possessions for Christ's sake shall receive a hundred-fold in this life and eternal life for the world to come.

Claim Paper Violin Is of Superior Quality

A violin made from the gummed paper used in orthopedic appliances has been shown in Vienna, and it is claimed that it possesses a tonal quality comparable to instruments made from selected woods by the best Italian craftsmen.

The acoustic properties of the gummed paper were accidentally discovered during the manufacture of orthopedic appliances and the violin was made as an experiment.

While it is possible to construct easily enough from paper an instrument rigid enough to permit of use as a violin sounding board, the purity of tone could not be gauged without a test. Popular opinion regarding the nature and qualities of woods employed in old violins have recently been controverted by scientific tests.

Even trained musicians cannot readily distinguish between the notes obtained from a "Strad" and other highly prized makes when properly tuned and played.

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Eternal Law of Life

To love one's neighbor as oneself is not a mere pious sentiment; it is every whit as much a law of life as fresh air is to the body.—Sir Wilfred Grenfell.

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