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W. T. Mc Cornell,

The American Heron,
The Poor Man's Friend.

1910.

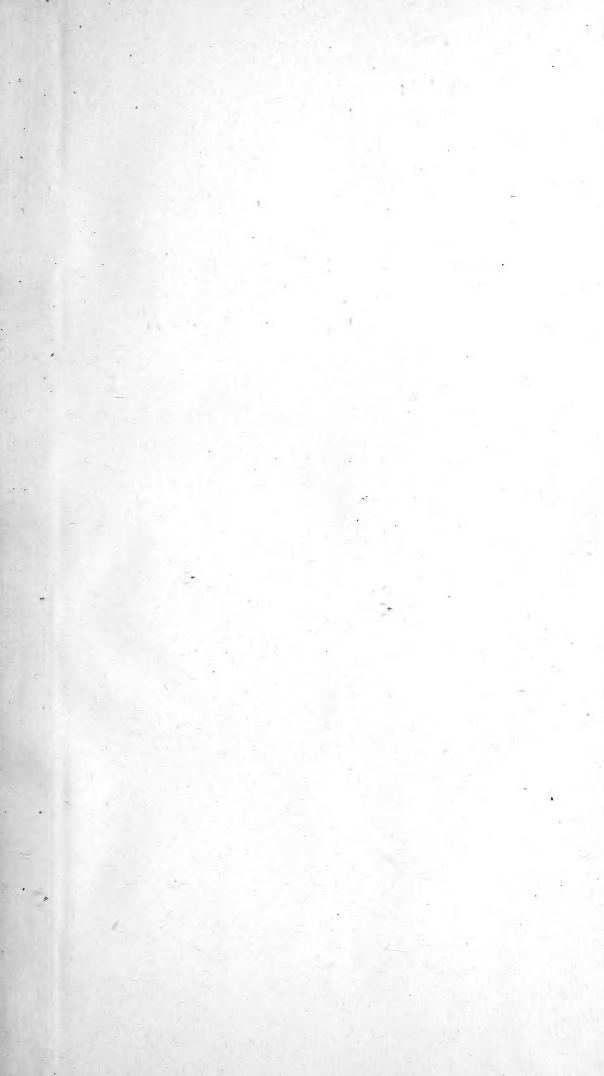


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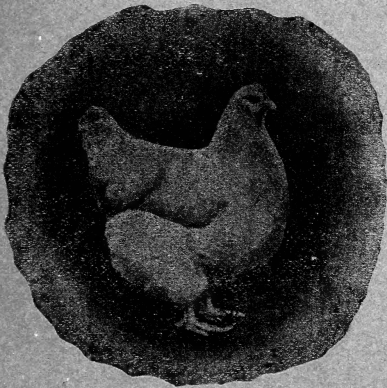




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THE AMERICAN HEN
The Poor Man's Friend

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W. T. McCONNELL

SF 487
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FOREWORD.

The chief merit of this little book is that it is true. I have been prompted to write it that I might point out the way to a certain class of people whereby they might add a few dollars in spare time to their all too meager income in these days of high prices. I am going to tell my story in a simple straightforward manner so that you may see when you have finished reading it, just how simple a thing it is to make a single hen produce \$20 or more in the course of one year.

I have read a good many books on poultry raising which told how to secure handsome profits, but they have all dealt with the business on such a large scale that it wasn't feasible for a person with small means or one who did not desire to devote all their time to the industry.

Some poultry men who have told of their success have been able to show almost incredible earnings after several years of experience and securing a long list of prize winnings, and others because they were located near a market which afforded them from 40 to 60

cents a dozen for eggs the year round.

This is the faithful account of how a beginner, inexperienced in the poultry business, located in a village far from city markets, made \$20 per hen with a small flock the first year, and it is an experience which can be duplicated by anybody, anywhere.

I wish I was able to distribute this bit of information free, but I am a poor man and it costs money to print this little book, advertise it extensively and mail it to interested people. Hence I am compelled to make a small charge.

How I Began.

My imagination was fired by reading certain poultry books and journals and I began planning to make an experiment. I had raised a mongrel lot of chickens for many years for supplying my table with meat and eggs, but I now began to study the different breeds with a view of selecting some one variety. And with all the attractive free literature that is offered you setting forth the merits of each particular breed it is no easy matter to make a selection.

After much study and investigation I selected the Single Comb Crystal White Orpington of the Kellerstrass Strain, and for reasons that I will detail in a later chapter.

As a beginning I purchased 15 eggs for \$3. From these eggs I raised four fine birds, one male and three females. This did not give me as large a pen as I wanted and I began looking about for some pullets. I experienced some difficulty in getting what I wanted, but the party from whom I had secured my eggs in the spring had a few August hatched pullets that she was offering at \$2.00 each at eight weeks of age. I finally traded a \$5.00 Cycle Hatcher, which had been used one year, for two choice pullets. Then I found a man who had three

Pen of Chickens

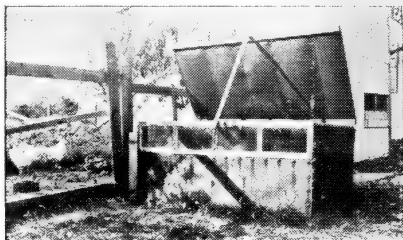


This was my original pen of White Orpingtons consisting of Eight Pullets and a Cockerel.

¶ They represent an outlay of about \$12.00, and gave me a return of almost \$200.00 the first year.

July hatched pullets from the same pen as mine and these I bought for \$5. Figuring my incubator at \$4, I now had a pen of eight fine pullets and one cockerel at an outlay of \$12. It is easy to see that had I invested my \$12 in eggs in the spring I would have had two or three times as many chickens for the same money. Or, had I been an experienced and careful poultryman, I might easily have had as many chickens from my first investment of \$3 for eggs as I now had for \$12. But they all grew well and developed into fine birds and I was highly pleased with my investment.

My Poultry Plant.



¶ This is a cut showing my Poultry Plant which is fully described in the following chapter.

¶ The material in this Coop and Yard cost between \$3.00 and \$4.00.

¶ This Coop and accompanying Yard, which was 12 x 24 feet, accommodated 9 birds.

How I Cared For My Chickens.

Now that I had my chickens the next thing was how to care for them. I built a simple little coop, the material in which cost about \$2.

In making this coop I used strips of lumber two inches wide. For the back I made a frame six feet long and thirty inches high. For the front, one frame six feet long and eighteen inches high and one six feet long and twelve inches high. For the ends I made two frames, each three feet long and twenty-eight inches high. These frames were then covered with paroid roofing except the small one for the front, which was filled with glass and placed above the eighteen inch frame. The sides and ends were put together with screws. The roof was made in a similar manner except that it was made six feet and one inch long to extend over the ends of the coops a trifle. The roof was hinged to the back frame of the coop, and a strip of wood about one-half inch thick, one and one-half inches wide and three feet long with holes bored certain distances apart in it, was used to hold the roof in any desired position. A light frame was made to fit the top of the coop and slide easily between the

front and back of the coop from end to end. This frame is covered with a wire netting to keep the chickens from flying out when the lid is up, and in winter is also covered with muslin to keep out the cold drafts. The space made by the ends being lower than the sides of the coop admits plenty of fresh air for the fowls when the lid is down. A floor was placed in one end of the coop and raised about two inches from the ground. This provides a dry place in which straw can be scattered. Some paroid roofing over the floor is an advantage as it keeps dampness from the ground out of the straw. This floor covered about one-half of the bottom of the coop. In the other end and against the back of the coop was placed the roost board. The roost board was made in the following manner: A frame was made out of seven-eighths inch by one and one-half inch strips. It was fifteen inches wide and two feet, ten inches long, and the bottom was made by nailing paroid roofing to the frame. Two small blocks were nailed to the ends of the frame on which to rest the ends of the perch and raise the perch three or four inches from the bottom of the roost board.

In the center of the coop to separate the floor end from the dirt was placed an eight-inch board edgewise, and held in place by cleats on the front and back

sides of the coop. This keeps the chickens from scratching the straw out upon the dirt floor end of the coop.

The roost board is supported by cleats nailed upon this center board and the end of the coop. In the morning the roost is removed and this allows more space for the fowls during the day. Galvanized hoppers for feed and water are fastened to the sides of the coop.

In this coop I kept my fowls confined during the winter. I believe, however, that for this number of chickens the coop should have been a little larger. In spite of the fact that last winter was one of the severest in this section of the country for many years, my chickens were comfortable and happy. I did not have even a frozen comb.

When the warm weather came I arranged a little run in connection with the coop. In order to make this portable I made my fence in panels. Each panel was made in the following manner: Two six inch boards twelve feet long were laid horizontal on the ground four feet apart and joined at their ends with six-inch boards five feet long. The panel was then covered with wire netting five feet in width. I made the panels with one board next to the ground and the upper board dropped one foot from the top of the wire or

end board and on the inside of the wire. The object of this was that in the event the chickens undertook to fly out, they would attempt to alight on the board and be forced back by the wire extending above the board.

Make as many panels as you want, place them end to end and wire together. I made three, using two for one side of my pen and one for an end. My barn served for the opposite end and a garden fence for the other side. This enclosed a parcel of ground 12x24 feet. Placing one end of the coop against the fence and making an opening in both the panel and the end of the coop, allowed the chickens to pass from the coop to the run.

Now for the feeding. This is not a treatise on fancy or scientific feeding. Had I fully understood this my results might have been much better. My principal feed was a mixture of grain, grit and cyster shell, such as is found in most grocery and feed stores and sold as Scratching Food. In addition to this, I kept beef scrap, bran and charcoal before my chickens, and for green stuff, in the spring and summer I threw them lawn clippings each day. In the winter I gave them sprouted oats, and I have fed some short cut alfalfa.

Sprouted oats is a very cheap feed and easy to provide. I had a shallow

box four feet long, two feet wide and two inches deep. It was made by taking light material two inches wide and making a frame and nailing laths crosswise for a bottom. I put my oats box in the basement of my house, covered the bottom with oats to the depth of an inch; sprinkled the oats thoroughly with tepid water morning and evening and in a very few days I had a luxuriant patch of green oats.

Each day I took out a small quantity, roots and all, tore it to pieces and threw it to my flock. In feeding alfalfa it is well to soak it over night in water and in the morning, or at whatever time you want to feed it, mix it with a mash of meal and bran and pour hot water over it. When it has cooled sufficiently feed in a hopper. Don't put in too much at first for generally the chickens have to learn to like it.

Table scraps and milk both make most excellent poultry feed, but with no cow, a small family, frugal wife and several cats, I had but very little of these choice morsels.

Occasionally in the winter I would cook the potato peelings or a mess of small potatoes and feed while warm to my fowls.

My conclusion of the whole matter in caring for chickens is to keep them warm in winter, and cool in summer.

Furnish them a good variety of feed and keep plenty of fresh water before them, and milk if you can. Keep the quarters clean and free from lice and mites.

How I Found a Market.

Two of my pullets began laying when barely five months old and in January they all got down to business. I was anxious to get a more definite idea of the laying qualities of each hen. I sent for four trap nests which came in two sections, two nests in each section. I placed these nests in the floor end of my coop, one section sitting on the other. I put a leg band with a number on each hen. In another chapter I will give you some of my results.

In February I began advertising in the poultry journals. I inserted this little classified advertisement in two poultry journals:

"Crystal White Orpingtons, Kellerstrass Strain. Selected eggs from a pen of beauties at reasonable prices. W. T. McConnell, DeLand, Illinois."

I kept this advertisement running for three or four months. In one paper it cost me 60 cents and in the other 80 cents an issue.

They brought me scores and scores of inquiries from many different states. To these inquiries I replied as promptly as possible telling just what I had and offering 15 eggs for \$3 and 30 eggs for \$5. At these prices I sold \$70 worth of eggs, and was compelled to return some money for the reason that I could

not supply the eggs at the time they were wanted. Also I had many inquiries for eggs in quantities of 50 and 100 eggs at a time. To these I always replied that I was not prepared to handle orders of that size. You can readily see that the only reason I did not make more money was because I did not have more hens.

And this I did without being able to advertise a single prize winning bird. Not but what my flock contained some birds that were fit to be shown, but being late hatched, none of them were finished at the time of the early shows, and as they were laying at the time of the later shows, since I had so few I did not want to disturb them. The demand for eggs was so great that I was unable to save many for my own use, but occasionally I placed a few under a hen or in the incubator with other eggs. In this way I hatched several and after losing a good many I find myself this fall with 27 fine young birds. Of this number there are four fine cockerels, three of which will sell readily for \$5 each and one for \$3. There are nine early hatched pullets that I can sell any day for \$5 each, and 14 later hatched that are worth today from \$2 to \$3 each, or an average of \$2.50 each.

Here is the statement:

Eggs for hatching\$70.00

3 cockerels at \$5	15.00
1 cockerel	3.00
9 pullets at \$5	45.00
14 pullets and cockerels at \$2.50.	35.00
Total	\$168.00

Dividing this result by 8 we have an average of \$21 per hen, and by the end of the year when the younger birds shall have more nearly matured we can add \$25 or more to their value.

So you can see I have made my claim far under the truth rather than above it. Not only so, but one of my hens was a drone or else not exactly right. She never laid more than a dozen or fifteen eggs and died early in the hot season. In reality, therefore, my results have been from seven hens instead of eight. If you will estimate for the whole year, adding \$25 to present value of young stock, making a total of \$193, and divide by 7 you will get an average of \$27.57 per hen.

This is certainly a very good return for the money invested and labor expended.

These results have been secured by one with no particular skill in poultry raising or genius in advertising, and who had only ordinary success in hatching and raising the chicks. In fact, I often felt that I lacked considerably in having even ordinary success. However, some of the poultry journals tell

us that this has been one of the worst years in a decade for fertility of eggs and vitality of chicks, and so I feel encouraged.

Accordingly I feel justified in saying that what I have done cannot only be duplicated by anybody, anywhere, but many by following similar lines can do far better. In fact I expect to do much better myself next year.

I can name two parties within twenty miles of me who by working along the same lines have done better than I. One is a woman who has had the care of an invalid sister and her family, and in about four years has built up a fine flock and an excellent business. This year she won second pullet at the Illinois State Poultry Show and third hen at the Illinois State Fair at Springfield. The other is a photographer with an extensive business. He began about five years ago and today has the most valuable flock of white Orpingtons the state. At the Illinois State fair this year in a class of 160 entries he won 1st and 2nd hen, 1st cockerel, 1st, 2nd and 3rd pullet.

I am working with all my might to build up a flock that will beat them and expect to catch up soon. I mention them to give additional proof of what I have said before and now say again that what I have done can be done by anybody, anywhere.

How I Packed Eggs For Shipping.

I do not know that my way is the easiest or best, but it is a very satisfactory way to me. I shipped eggs to many different states and never heard of but one egg being broken.

I bought cheap market baskets at the grocery store for 5 cents each, and a cheap grade of unbleached muslin for coverings. The merchants gave me all the excelsior I wanted to carry away. I lined the basket with paper and covered the bottom with excelsior. I then wrapped each egg in paper and placed four rows of eggs with three eggs in each row on the excelsior in the bottom of the basket. This done, I placed little rolls of excelsior wrapped in paper between the eggs, making it impossible for one egg to touch another or the side of the basket. Next I covered this layer of eggs with a heavy paper, put in more excelsior and another layer of eggs as before and so on until the basket was filled. I rounded up the top of the basket with excelsior, placed a paper over top of this, cut my cloth the right size, and sewed the cloth with heavy thread or twine to the edge of the basket, drawing it down tightly. With some flour paste I pasted a large label on the

muslin covering. On this label I had printed in large type "Eggs for Hatching, Handle Carefully," and in smaller type directions for the treatment of eggs by the customer. In blank places for that purpose I wrote my own name and address, and the address of the customer. The eggs were then ready for delivery to the expressman.

But be as careful as you may in caring for your chickens and in gathering and packing your eggs, that you may please your customers, you will have varying experiences.

I am going to give you an illustration drawn from the letters of two customers:

W. T. McConnell, DeLand, Ill.

Dear Sir: I set the 30 S. C. White Orpington eggs on April 11th and today I took off 27 chicks. I am well pleased with the result.

Very truly yours,

.....

Within a week from the receipt of the above letter I had a letter from another customer who had eggs from the same hens and whom I had tried as carefully to please:

W. T. McConnell, DeLand, Ill.

Dear Sir: Being so disappointed in the hatching of those eggs we got of you, thought it best to write. Of those

30 eggs we have only 8 little chickens, there being 4 eggs that the hens broke and the other eggs, which are 18 in number, being in the nest; there are a few of them that had little chickens in them, but having died before they were matured, and some of them were simply rotten, no life whatever. I am very much disappointed as I took the best of care of them. I think it is too bad.

From

.....

Of course such a letter makes you feel badly, especially from the evident purpose of the customer to place all the blame upon you, when you know you have exercised the same care that has enabled another customer to have the most gratifying success.

Fortunately, that was the only letter of the kind I received. Not all my customers reported such good success as the first letter printed, but many reported good hatches, ranging from 23 to 25 chicks from 30 eggs. A few thought their hatches unsatisfactory and wrote me very nice letters about it, and I replaced their eggs, as I did also to the one whose letter I have given you

Why I Selected The Kellerstrass Strain of Single Comb Crystal White Orpingtons.

I have congratulated myself many times that I selected the Crystal White Orpington, Kellerstrass strain of chickens. While I feel sure I could have done handsomely with any good breed of chickens, I doubt if I could have done as well as I did with any other breed.

For there is no breed that is attracting so much attention and for which there is so great a demand at handsome prices as the White Orpington, and there is a reason.

The White Orpingtons are of splendid size, averaging from a half pound to a pound heavier than the Plymouth Rocks and Wyandottes. They are low set, deep breasted, with broad backs and large thighs. They are the finest type of fowl for table use and market.

As layers they have established a record that has never been excelled. They have won nearly all the egg laying contests in which they have been entered.

The combination for which people

have been searching for years is found in the Crystal White Orpington. The best layers have been too small for table use or profitable for market. The large chickens suitable for table and market have been poor layers. The Orpington is the happiest combination.

In point of beauty they are without a peer. Their beautiful pure white plumage and large well-rounded bodies appeal to every one with an eye for the beautiful.

They are hardy and mature rapidly. They lay almost without ceasing. After securing my trap nests, I kept a careful record of my hens for 30 days. I installed the nests March 5th and the record is for the 30 days following: No. 49 laid 27 eggs; No. 50, 27; No. 18, 28; No. 16, 26; No. 14, 20; No. 42, 19; No. 44, 18; No. 47, 8.

As No. 47 died early in the season and seemed never to have been exactly right, I have left her out of the egg calculation.

We have an average from the seven hens of 23 4-7 eggs in 30 days. From four of the hens we have an average of 27 eggs in 30 days.

It would have been interesting to have kept this record for the entire year, but in order to do it, especially when the weather is warm, one must be close at

hand to release the hens from the trap nests. For this reason I could not continue the test, but from the total number of eggs I received I am satisfied that four of my hens at least are easily in the 200 class.

In conclusion I want to say that this work has been done with an average of about 30 minutes each day, and without in the least interfering with my other duties. To me it has been a very pleasant as well as profitable diversion, and I hope that my story may be helpful to you in the way of enabling you to utilize in a profitable manner your spare moments each day.

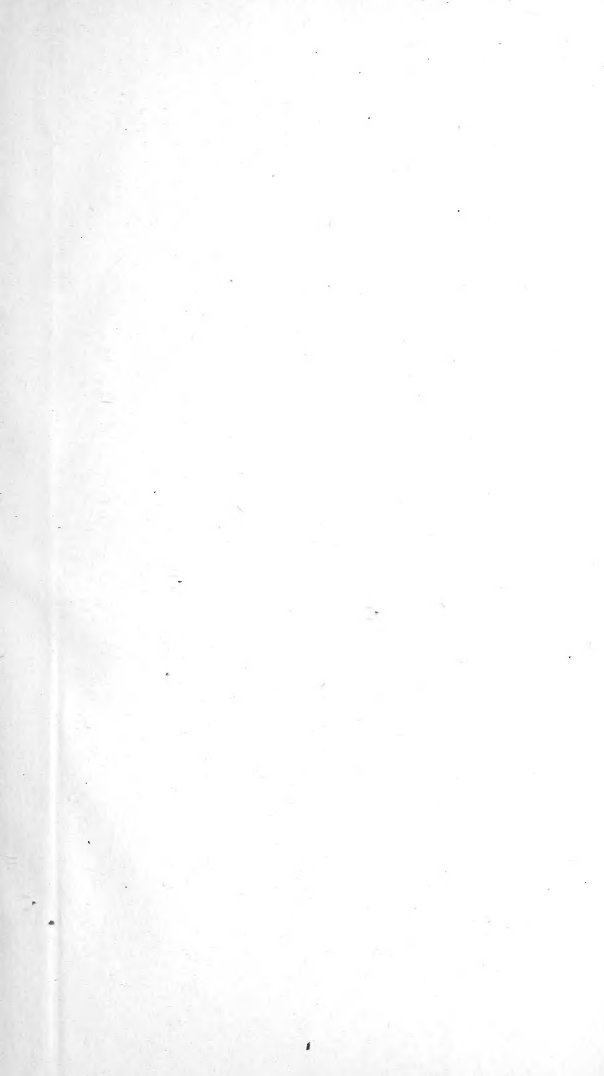
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