OUR POULTRY DEPARTMENT

THE ROSE-BUG MENACE IS WITH US AGAIN—OTHER INFORMATION FOR OUR POULTRY RAISERS

BY POLK T. BRAMBLE

The Rose-bug menace is with us again in Kent and the whole Eastern Shore section. For many years, serious losses have occurred in the case of young chicks dying without any apparent cause during June and early July. These losses have been especially severe on farms where the young chicks had wide range about the door yard and over the fields. On commercial poultry plants, where the growing ranges were cultivated or moved and in good green sod, losses rarely occurred. These peculiar losses have been ascribed to many and varied causes.

Close observation has shown that chickens are very fond of eating rose bugs, searching them out and devouring them in large numbers early in the season when they first appear. They lie on top of the ground in the grass, and it is a number of days before they develop the power of flight. The chickens will always find the rose bugs long before the poultryman knows of their presence, and the first indication one has that the rose bugs have arrived will usually be a few dead chickens lying around the brooder house. Upon cutting them open, and examining the crop, they will be found to contain varying numbers of these insects . Postmortem examination has revealed anywhere from one or two, up to as high as 50 or more insects in the crop of a single bird.

Often times the crops of the chickens which have eaten large quantities of rose chafers will be so large that one might diagnose the trouble as due to crop bound condition if no postmortem examination was made. It used to be assumed, years ago, that death was due to a mechanical injury to the lining of the crop by the spines on the legs setting up irritation. Others have explained the death from eating rosebugs by the fact that the bugs may have bitten or penetrated or ruptured the crop and the tract of the alimentary canal.

Lamson, in describing the situation stated that for many years reports came to his office each year of immense losses from these, amounting to several hundreds of chicks per farm, which induced him to take up the experimental work. He said, "The deaths from this rosebug diet usually occurred in from nine to twenty-four hours after feeding. This led the writer to believe that death undoubtedly resulted from a cause other than a mechanical injury to the crop."

This belief led to detailed experimental work. Extracts were made from crushed rose chafers, the liquid resulting from the crushed chafers being mixed with distilled water, filtered, and fed to chicks in varying doses and at various ages, from a medicine dropper. The result was a great many deaths. Small chickens died in a few hours after being fed the extract. Older chickens of heavier weight and greater constitutional resistence, when fed small quantities of the extract, lived, but showed distinct signs of poisoning, while large doses of the extract resulted in their death.

Since it is a well established fact that the rosebugs kill chickens by poisoning, and that it only takes a relatively small number of the bugs to kill the chickens, certainly the only practical method of controlling the situation is to provide ways and means of practicaly keeping the chickens and rosebugs apart. This means, on the farm where chickens range at will, that during the rosebug season they must be confined to a restricted area. Small portable fences, built about a clear space on the lawn will control the situation. About the house and lawn of the average farm is an ideal place for rosebugs to appear in large numbers, especially if there are apt to be a great many daisies, rose bushes, grape vines, etc., present, on which they feed ravenously. The chickens must be kept away from these areas.

Where large numbers of chicks are reared, the range should be plowed from year to year, and seeded to a permanent sod, and the field or meadow where they are reared should be kept free from daises and other plants which the rosebugs relish. Placing colony houses out on an old pasture that has not been seeded down for many years, around which birches and wild grapes are growing and in which there are many daisies will mean that unless the chicks are confined by fences to a very small area, there will bean excessive loss from rosebug poisoning.

Plowing, cultivating and seeding the range every few years not only kills off the plants on which the rosebugs feed, but at the same time prevents ther colection in large numbers. If it is necessary to confine the chicks during the four to six weeks when the rosebugs are prevalent to limited area, it is a good plan to plow up a special area and seed it.

Professor C. S. Platt, Assistant Poultry Husbandman, of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, has recently reported in the annual report of the Experiment Station, and in the May report of the New Jersey Egg Laying Contests, a study of the relation existing between body weight of fowls and egg production from data obtained from the records of the first Vineland Egg Laying Contest. Both first and second year egg production was considered for 435 White Leghorns, 100 White Wyandottes, 52 Barred Plymouth Rocks, 65 White and Columbian Rocks, and 60 Rhode Island Reds. For the purposes of this study, the calendar year was divided into three equal parts; winter, from November to February; spring, from March to June; and summer-fall from July to October inclusive. This investigation showed that:

1. A reasonable heavy body weight was necessary for a maximum production during the spring and winter of both the pullet and yearling years, for all breeds.

2. The weight for maximum production during the summer-fall period of both years was found to be lower than the weight for maximum production during the other seasons of the respective years.

3. The weight for maximum production at any season of the yearling year tended to be lower than the weight for maximum production of the corresponding season of the pullet year.

4. The optimum weight for maximum production was lower in the yearling year than it was in the pullet year.

5. The optimum weight for maximum production in Barred Plymouth Rocks was higher than in other varieties of Plymouth Rocks.

6. The weight given in the American Standard of Perfection for pullets of the American breds is approximately the same as the optimum weight for maximum egg production in the pulet year.

7. The standard pullet weight for the Leghorn breed was lower than the optimum weight maximum egg production in the pullet year.

8. The standard yearling henweight for all the breeds was higher than the optimum weight for maximum production in the yearling year.

9. It was necessary to build up and maintain during the winter and spring, a certain weight essential for egg production in each breed.

10. Excessive body weight during the summer and fall and during the yearling year is secured at the expense of egg production.

11. Yearling hens not needing so much body weight for maximum production as pullets may be forced for egg production to a somewhat greater degree than pullets.

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WAS TOO OLD FOR DREAMS

By H. M. EGBERT

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"AW, COME off, Bill! I'm too old for them dreams!" said Dick Sittingwell to his fellow drummer in the train.

"No, but honest! I mean it! Why, Dick, you must be making your cool four thousand, and if your firm went bust you could get just as good a job anywhere. And forty-five if you're a a day. Ain't you never had a girl, Dick?"

Dick Sittingwell moved in his seat uneasily. "Cut it out, I tell you," he answered ferociously. "Hello! Bourne End! Here's where I get off. So long, old man! See you next week as usual."

Dick Sittingwell had had plenty of girls when he was a young man, but somehow all his romances had come to an untimely end. And it was only within the last two years that a new romance, sweeter than any, and more strange, had come into his life.

He never spoke about Miss Elsie Van Nugent. It had never entered his mind that he could speak to her without profaning her. That was his sanctuary, his holy of holies. And marriage with her was something of which he had never dreamed.

Their acquaintance had begun by an accident. Dick, toiling up the hill at Bourne End on a hot summer day, with his sample case in his hand, had seen the old maid standing at the gate of her garden. He looked up at the big house in the village, and, taking her for the housekeeper, said:

"Might I ask you for a glass of water, ma'am?"

"I'll get you one," stammered Miss Van Nugent, and ran away, or rather hurried away, returning with a glass as clear and cold as if it had come from some Olympian spring. Dick quaffed it at a draft.

"Much obliged, ma'am," he said, and raised his hat and went away. He did not imagine what a romance that was to Elsie Van Nugent.

Afterward, upon succeeding journeys, it often happened that he saw Miss Elsie at the gate. Then he would nod pleasantly and pass a remark. By degrees their intimacy increased. Dick Sittingwell would often stay as long as five minutes, talking and looking wistfully at the big house in the cool grounds. He learned Miss Elsie's name at the hotel. She owned the place, and was the daughter of the late squire. She was an old maid—and they said, maliciously, that she was forty.

II

Elsie Van Nugent had never married because she had taken care of her father until his death, when she was thirty-seven. No opportunities came after that. Opportunities for marriage are few in New England among women whom birth has made superior to the rest of the community. And, besides, Elsie was already growing into a typical old maid. She was becoming angular and thin, there were gray streaks in her hair, and she knew quite well that whatever beauty she had ever possessed was already gone beyond recovery.

Her life had been utterly cramped Her bookish learning had never been modified by contact with the world, for her father had always been a recluse, and, in his last days, a fretful invalid. When she met the drummer she thought him a typical man of the world.

The acquaintance was a wonderful thing to her. She felt guilty in stealing down to the garden gate when Dick was coming that way—Thursdays he always appeared in Bourne End. She invented little excuses at first to account for her presence there. Wistfully she thought how she would like to ask him in. But she never dared. It was not only fear of what the neighbors would say, but fear of what he would think of her.

It was odd that the uncouth drummer should exercise so strange a fascination over the old maid, but it was equally strange that he should find in her his ideal of womanhood. Two or three years passed, and their intimacy stayed exactly where it was. Neither dared to increase it, or to venture to speak of the thoughts in the heart. Dick was becoming balder and stouter, and Elsie more withered and lean.

Then came the day when Dick was amazed to see the house closed and a big "For Sale" sign in front of it. The town was buzzing with the news. Miss Elsie's lawyer, who had had charge of her property, had absconded, taking with him her whole available fortune, ten thousand dollars.

Miss Elsie had remained secluded in the house since the Monday before. Dick hesitated only a moment; then he went into the garden and knocked at the door.

III

Miss Elsie herself opened it and stood watching him through her tear-stained lashes. She looked less beautiful than ever at that moment, with her reddened eyelids and her disordered hair.

"It's too bad, ma'am," said Dick. "Just heard the news and called to say how sorry I was."

"I suppose it's what they call life," answered Miss Elsie.

"I hope, ma'am, you aren't planning to sell the place because of that?"

"I certainly am. It's all that I have left now."

"Might I ask your price, ma'am?" inquired Dick.

"Eight thousand dollars," answered Miss Elsie listlessly. "It ought to be more, but the house is very old, and that's what I'm advised to hold it for."

Dick thought hurriedly. He knew that would mean about three thousand cash and a mortgage. Dick was worth about three thousand; he could arrange the details.

"I'll buy it," he announced.

"You!" gasped Elsie.

"Yes, ma'am. You see, I've had my eye on the place for a long time, in the hopes you might some day sell."

The words struck her like a blow between the eyes. So that was the secret of his interest. The vanity of her dreams!

"I suppose you can have it, then," he heard her answer vaguely.

"Everything in it as it stands, lock, stock and barrel?" asked Dick.

"Why, I guess the furniture's not worth much," said Miss Elsie. "You'll have to see my brother, Mr. Van Nugent, at Staples. He has charge of the matter."

"But if he is willing, you are?" persisted Dick.

"Yes," she replied.

Dick withdrew. He wanted to hide the elation in his heart, that set it pounding frightfully as he reflected upon his maneuver. He clenched his fists as he thought of the lawyer. He had known Sharples well; the man was a convivial person at the hotel. "If ever I run across him, I'll break his head," he swore.

IV

And Dick ran across him the following week in the most amazing way. He was sent out to a western city to cover a territory left vacant by the illness of a fellow drummer. The business done, Dick retired to his room in the hotel.

A door opened softly, and Dick saw the head and shoulders of Sharples. In a minute he had leaped across the passage and entered, before the lawyer could draw the bolt.

Sharples stared at Dick in terror. "What do you want?" he snarled.

"You know," said Dick.

Sharples realized that it was no time to make pretenses. "It's not your business," he swaggered, "but I'll give you five hundred to get out and keep your mouth shut."

"You'll give me ten thousand for Miss Van Nugent," answered Dick.

"It never was ten thousand."

"It's going to be."

"D'you suppose I've got it about me, you fool?"

Dick went to the telephone and touched the receiver. The lawyer grabbed him by the arm. "I'll give you two," he blustered.

Dick turned and faced him. "I said ten, and meant it," he returned. "And see here! I promised myself the pleasure of breaking your head. However, I guess I can't have everything. Will you hand over that ten thousand, for the last time?"

The lawyer took a bill case out of his pocket and mechanically counted out the money. There were twenty bills of five hundred apiece. Dick examined them; they were genuine enough.

"I guess you've plenty more," he said.

"It's where you won't get it."

Dick smiled and slipped the bills into his pocket.

V

"So, you see, I guess I can't buy the place after all," Dick explained to Miss Elsie as he handed her the money.

She was crying softly. "I don't know what to say or how to thank you," she sobbed. "It's wonderful. It's wonderful!"

And in her happiness, more at the proof of his interest than at the return of the money, the years seemed to fall from Miss Elsie, and there was almost a girlish flush upon her face.

Dick breathed heavily. "I guess I'm sorry we can't carry out our arrangement," he mumbled. "It wasn't the place I wanted, but the contents, as we agreed."

"The furniture? Do you really want that?"

"No," stammered Dick. "I wanted you."

And with amazing daring he took Miss Elsie in his arms and kissed her.

Monk Parrakeets Live the Community Life

The monk parrakeets of southern South America join in bands that build in company a structure of sticks that forms a veritable apartment house in which each pair of birds lives in a separate cavity. These communal nests are used year after year and often grow steadily in bulk. Some are six or eight feet in diameter and contain enough sticks and twigs to fill a wagon. In early days in the Pampas these birds nested in the low trees that formed occasional groves on the plains. Man introduced Eucalyptus trees, which grow to a great height, and now the monk parrakeets build nests in the branches of trees, often 60 or 80 feet from the ground. A species of duck known as the tree teal, somewhat similar to the green-winged teal, pre-empts a chamber in this same communal structure, lines it with soft down, and hatches its own young amid the noisy chatter of its neighbors.—Scientific Monthly.

Powerless to Resist Sweep of Avalanche

There were several destructive avalanches in the St. Gothard region in 1925, when the railway was damaged at several points, and many peasants and workmen were killed. But one rainy Sunday in September, forty-five years ago, 150 persons perished when a large portion of the Plattenbergkopf split off and slid down on the village of Elm.

Early in the day great boulders began to come crashing down with disturbing frequency, and quite a number of men were out watching them. Suddenly they saw a whole cliff sway and topple over. Seventeen minutes later another cliff fell, and, to their horror, the doomed villagers saw that the mountain had thus been undermined, and was poised over thin air far above them. Four minutes later it fell, shattered into millions of fragments, and came sliding down at terrific speed. Through the village went the avalanche, across the tranquil meadows of the valley, and up the opposite mountain-side for a couple of hundred feet, when it diverged right and left, like the wash of a spent wave, for many hundred yards.

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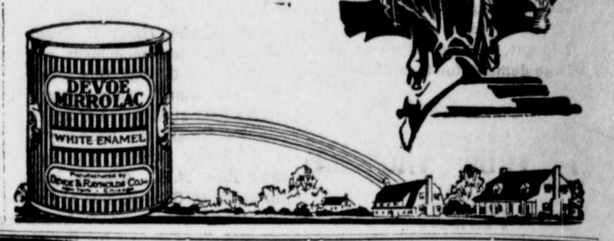

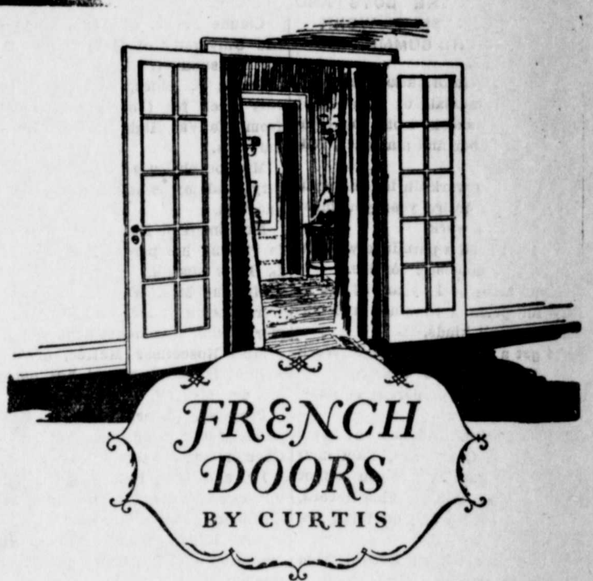

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