

Christmas Goose

► CHRISTMAS, COMING so soon after Thanksgiving, is rather hard on the poultry population. Many thousands of turkeys that escaped the late November massacre have lost their lives during the past few days and weeks, and sizzled on Christmas platters.

Although turkeys are popular for the holiday feast, the Christmas goose is coming back into its own. Long before America was discovered, and with it the turkey, the goose held undisputed sway as the bird of the day at Christmas and other festive seasons.

Even where turkeys are abundant, there are many who prefer goose, for its liberal natural larding makes it easier to roast and also makes the stuffing tastier.

As the turkey is the most recent addition to the poultry yard, the goose was probably its first inhabitant, though possibly the duck

might claim that honor. Both duck and goose, as well as the common barnyard hen, were man's domestic companions long before the dawn of written history.

The goose especially has had the esteem of primitive peoples, who dedicated it to one or another of their pagan gods. Even people so civilized as the Romans considered the goose sacred to Juno; the legend of the saving of the city by the alarmed cries of her flock at midnight is a well-known one.

In the old-world rural economy, the goose was as useful a bird as the hog was an animal. Nothing but the bones and the beak were thrown away. And the goose is still one of the most completely usable of all our domestic animals. Besides yielding a great lump of meat upon its involuntary demise, it gives us quantities of huge eggs before that event.

In the old days, the fat of the Christmas goose also used to yield a pot of "goose grease," sovereign remedy for colds in the chest, aches and pains, or whatever else ailed you, and the fat was good in cooking as well as in medicine.

The goose supplies whole snowstorms of feathers and down for cushions and old-fashioned feather-beds, and can be plucked alive without apparent inconvenience. If you travel in the Rhine country, you will at first be nearly smothered at night, for you will not merely sleep on a feather bed, you will sleep under one.

Finally, the heavy quills of the goose's wings were instruments of both peace and war, for they guided the shafts of the archers and formed the quills of the clerks. Whole wing-ends with feathers still affixed made excellent hearthbrushes. And even the bones became meteorological instruments.

The goose has been falsely defamed as a foolish bird, but it really is not.

Science News Letter, December 25, 1954

VETERINARY MEDICINE

Foot-and-Mouth Disease

► FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE, the dread virus that means slaughter for infected cattle, has been transmitted by inoculation to young chicks in the laboratory. Heretofore, it was believed that domestic and wild fowls were resistant to the foot-and-mouth disease.

Recovery of the virus from the blood and the characteristic lesions of the tongue in both newly-hatched chicks and birds from two to four months old were found by H. H. Skinner of the Research Institute (Animal Virus Disease) at Pirbright, Surrey, England.

Young chicks were inoculated with the virus intramuscularly, and chick embryos intravenously, with strains of the disease taken from cattle, mice and guinea pigs.

The scientist, who reports his findings in *Nature* (Dec. 4), states that in chickens of all ages, there was no severe systemic disturbance in the course of the infection. The

affected tongue tissue usually was flaked off in one or two days and the tongue left without a blemish.

Both the cardiac and skeletal muscles of the chicks inoculated in the embryo stage were observed to show signs of the infection, as is the case in the infection of the young of many species, Mr. Skinner states.

The English scientist also reports a successful attempt to infect chick embryos seven to ten days old with the virus of vesicular stomatitis, a disease with symptoms similar to those of foot-and-mouth disease.

"A repetition of the methods used for infecting chickens with the virus of foot-and-mouth disease showed that adult and young birds were highly susceptible to infection with the virus of vesicular stomatitis when this was inoculated intradermally into the tongue," Mr. Skinner reports.

Science News Letter, December 25, 1954

GENERAL SCIENCE

Haskins Is Elected Carnegie's President

► DR. CARYL P. HASKINS, president and director of research of Haskins Laboratories, New York, was elected president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington at the annual meeting of its Board of Trustees in Washington.

Dr. Haskins will succeed Dr. Vannevar Bush when he retires on Jan. 1, 1956.

Dr. Haskins, a biophysicist and geneticist, was born in Schenectady, N. Y., in 1908. He received his bachelor's degree from Yale in 1930, and his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1935.

The Haskins Laboratories is a non-profit scientific and educational foundation.

Science News Letter, December 25, 1954

Questions

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GEOPHYSICS—When was minimum reached in the 11-year sunspot cycle? p. 409.

MEDICINE—What steps can be taken now to avoid heat stroke next summer? p. 406.

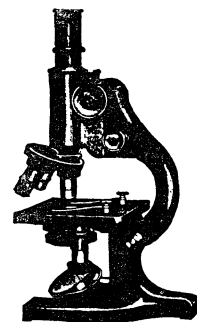
What might be used against polio if vaccines fail? p. 408.

OPHTHALMOLOGY—How can the way you read give clues to your personality? p. 404.

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