HATCHES TERRAPIN IN BROADWAY HOTEL

Largest Shipper from Georgia Carries His Sand Incubator With Him.

TEY THRIVE IN HIS BATHTUB

A. M. Barbee Has Spent 23 Years Studying Terrapin Growing and He Tells How It Is Done.

The birthrate at the Hotel Imperial broke all records last night before last. Wrong. Dogs, nor cats, nor even mice had aught to do with it. The responsibility rests on terrapins, the kind you pay $4 or $5 for, whether you buy them whole from the dealer or by the tablespoonful in a restaurant, a price which some have fancied in one way or another was the reason why they were called "diamond backs."

The producer of the terrapins at the Imperial is A. M. Barbee, of Savannah, Ga. Born in Savannah, he is connected with the real estate business, owns a grocery store and a few other things and raisies terrapin. He is about the biggest terrapin shipper in the country. He has been in the business twenty-three years, and he says he was the first to learn the first thing about the terrapin. Now he makes it his hobby. Every time he comes North he slips a young terrapin into his pocket, just for company's sake, and this time when he left home he not only brought along flap and full grown diamond backs, but a traveling incubator, filled with 100 terrapin eggs, and these eggs have been very busy ever since Mr. Barbee left Savannah. Mr. Barbee took out the traveling incubator to show to the conductor and porter of his Pullman, when pop! went one eggshell and the motion was seconded by another, and before their astonished eyes two perfect, infant turtles as you ever saw poked their heads out and began to wiggle.

Then Mr. Barbee spent a night in Philadelphia, and the terrapinnets in forty-eight eggs, like the old man of the Limbo, broke from their shells in protest against the quiet. Now what is left of them after the number which have been given away as souvenirs are depositing in glass tanks on Mr. Barbee's bureau and in other little shell-backed strangers. Mr. Barbee has given over his bathtub to the bigger five he brought with him, and he has paid his hotel bill and gone back to his room. It was that way yesterday. Barbee, the terrapin broker, is a business man, and the heaviest of his duties is to give him the hotel's vital statistics when Mr. Barbee passed by.

"Come upstairs," said the Georgian.

On a chair near the bureau lay a long leather card, with an air in oman.
It looked as if be to contain a particularly "dachay" dachshund. The top opened, revealed a wooden box containing a sand, in a number of compartments. Here and there you saw a little white mound.

"By George! here's another!" exclaimed Mr. Barbee, holding up a bursted shell, from which a tiny creature was beginning to get away with its house on its back. In the tanks on the bureau were a multitude of thing, and the examination resolved themselves into very young eponymous entertainments.

Hatching the Terrapin.

"When I left home on Oct. 10," said Mr. Barbee, "I had eggs of the proper age to hatch. I bought 100 of these, and I have thirty eggs a season. Between the first of January and the end of next January I shall have hatched about 7,000 eggs, and I am successful with about 95 percent of them.

"Of course, a terrapin egg, under proper conditions, hatches itself, but the difficulty is that the eggs of the wild terrapin are not protected, as I have pointed out. The incubator I use consists of sand in a box. I keep a sort of even temperature inside, but the most I do is to carry them. The terrapin is a living being that has to be kept in a proper distance from the radiator."

Opposes the Present Law.

"It would surprise you, perhaps, to be told that terrapins have a certain amount of intelligence. Mine all know me, and come when I whistle, though they will run away from a stranger.

"I have with me the first terrapin I ever hatched." Mr. Barbee opened the door of the bathroom and fished out one of the five terrapins that occupied the tub. It was about three inches long. Two others were of various lengths, and the third was long on the bottom. They were of various shades, depending, Mr. Barbee explained, on the color of the sand in which they were hatched."

"People up North make a great mistake," said Mr. Barbee, "and I understand the way is usually to plunge the live terrapin in boiling water. It is not only unnecessarily cruel, but is not the best way. You kill a chicken by chopping off its head and letting the fowl bleed. A terrapin should be treated the same way, and can assure you it loses none of its flavor.

"The laws says you must not have possession of terrapin under five inches long, but I assert that what I am doing is in the interest of the terrapin. By getting the eggs and hatching them I am certainly adding to the number of terrapin in existence, because the great proportion of these eggs would otherwise be destroyed."

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