

The Poultry Yard.

Non-Sitters.

The Black Spanish, the Polish, the Leghorns, and the Hamburgs are all great layers, and not inclined to sit. Some prefer one breed and some another. One cock to every ten or twelve hens is sufficient, at most, and some of our best poultrymen keep a less proportion than that.

In the egg-producing class, the Leghorns stand pre-eminently above all others. This variety consists of the white and brown. The browns appear to be the favorites, being hardy, easily raised, and maturing quickly—the pullets often laying at four months. Pullets of this breed frequently lay as high as 260 eggs during the year. Their large comb and pendants require a warm house during our rigorous winters.

The next in high favor is the Black Spanish; these, like the former, are non-sitters, and prolific, but not so easily raised. They do not, until nearly grown, get their full feathers, being generally half naked for a considerable time after hatching. These, like the Leghorns, require comfortable winter quarters, owing to their large comb and wattles.

The Houdans, a French breed, come next as layers and non-sitters. This is what they call a made breed, between the Poland and Dorking—showing the characteristic crest of the former, and the fifth toe of the latter. Although not as continual layers as the two varieties mentioned, yet they possess points superior to the others in size, delicacy of flesh, and hardihood, but are very liable to disease.

The small breeds, the different varieties of Hamburgs and Polands, have their admirers as fancy fowls. They are excellent layers, partially non-incubators, but are not recommendable, owing to their size, as likely to improve our present stock of common fowls. — *Western Rural*.

Choosing Fowls for Table.

It is a little singular that taste or fashion as to the color of the flesh of fowls varies at different large markets. In the London market yellow-skinned birds are not sought for, the pink or flesh-colored skin being the favorite there, while in New York the yellow is preferred in a marked degree. The questions naturally arise: What is the reason for this difference in taste, and which are the best for the table as to flavor, delicacy, &c.? There is no doubt that those fowls that are celebrated for their peculiar richness of flavor and delicate flesh mainly belong to the pink, or some people call them, the white skinned varieties. This is conceded by all authorities. Such fowls are the Games, Houdans, Dorkings, &c. Perhaps the reason for the preference for yellow in New York is that a proper discrimination is not made between the pink and dark or blue skinned fowls in choosing fowls for the table, the latter of which are generally poor in quality, such as Spanish, Hamburgs, &c. Another reason may be that all the pink skins are very tender to dress, tearing easily, and extra care is required in dressing to make them look attractive, and if they come from a long distance and are at all damaged they do not present as clean and nice an appearance as those with yellow skins.

Fall Work in the Poultry Yard.

At this season of the year, between sowing rye and corn husking, or topping turnips, the farmer is not quite so much driven with work as he has been since early spring. Now is the time to pay some attention to his poultry. This is just the time minks, weasels, skunks, and other fowl fanciers approach near buildings, looking out either for good, warm winter quarters, or something nice to eat. See that your half-grown chickens leave their old dirty coops or corners, where they huddle together at night to keep warm—sometimes near an old rat's hole or corners, where they fall an easy prey to enemies.

If any of the coops used during summer are laying about, gather them up, clean well and put them in a dry place, as they are harmed more in lying about after use than they are when in use. At this season, when hens have plenty of room, they are more likely to steal their nests than in summer. I suppose the reason is this: That, after having had the sitting fever broken up by their owners during summer, they begin to lay another brood of eggs, and, remembering being disturbed, seek for a hiding place for their next nest.

A farmer can now see the result of the year's increase—whether he has succeeded in raising as many and as good chickens as he expected; if not, try to find the reason. Have you been breeding in-and-in, year after year, with the same birds, without change of blood? If so, you shall

kill off your old cocks; procure young cockerels of some good breed to cross with your hens. A few dollars so invested will sometimes double the value of all your young poultry the next year—in some cases, increase the value to many times the outlay on the cockerels.

The winter quarters must also now receive attention, and as the fowls leave the trees and exposed roofs, see that they do not go into a dirty house. Clean up thoroughly; let the whitewash brush be assisted by a willing hand and a sharp eye. See that you have no tyrants that get up to roost first, and keep up a constant quarrel with all the other birds as they come in; quiet such a one in the pot. Also watch and see that no diseased ones get in the house with the rest, or they may infect the others. — *Rural New Yorker*.

GAPES.—A Connecticut poultry-raiser writes to an exchange: "Perhaps some of your readers who raise fowls will be interested in my experiment, tried last season on a chicken with the gapes. I gave it about a quarter of a teaspoonful of korosone, and as it seemed better for a day or two, I repeated the dose, giving nearly one-half a teaspoonful, for the second time. The chicken was about the size of a robin at the time, but is now full grown, weighing several pounds. I cured chickens affected with a disease we thought cholera, by giving powdered alum dissolved in water."

TREATMENT OF YOUNG FOWLS.—A correspondent of the *Country Gentleman* writes. "I have had fifty years' extensive experience with poultry, and can state positively there is no difficulty in keeping young and old healthy, and in raising ducks or geese, if they are not coddled to death. The only obstacles are vermin, lice (fleas in England), rats, hawks, weasels, &c. Allow the broods perfect liberty with the mother, free after being cooped on some healthy ground away from the haunts of the old fowls for a day or two. Take the coop first and place it, then put the hen and brood in so that the chickens can pass out and in again at pleasure; then on the second or third day let the hen run around with the young ones, and she will go in at night. The best coops have no bottoms, so that they can be moved into fresh, unstained ground daily. Water should stand all day in a shallow vessel let into the ground, so that nothing can be drowned."

THE AGE OF EGGS.—An egg is generally called fresh when it has only been laid two or three days in summer, and two to six days in winter. The shell being porous, the water in the interior evaporates, and leaves a cavity of greater or less extent. The yolk of the egg sinks too, as may be easily seen by holding it toward a candle or the sun, and when shaken a slight shock is felt if the egg is not fresh. To determine the precise age of eggs, dissolve about four ounces of common salt in a quart of pure water, and then immerse the egg. If it is one day old it will descend to the bottom of the vessel; but if three days it will float in the liquid. If more than five days old, it will come to the surface and project above in proportion to its increased age.

AN IOWA CORRESPONDENT writes the *National Live Stock Journal*. "We have in our farm-yard among the poultry, a turkey cock and two hens. Being desirous of raising more turkeys than we were likely to by letting them have their own way, we put the first eggs laid by the turkeys under some hens to be hatched. The first hen came off with eight fine young turks, and all went well for about two weeks, when the hen became dissatisfied and left her brood to scratch for themselves. The old turkey cock, seeing the forlorn condition of the young turks, at once resolved to take personal charge of them, and accordingly commenced to scratch, peck, and catch insects for them, all the time consoling them as best he could with his turkey-talk, and at night the old hero gathered them under his wings in a motherly manner. Since that time, whenever a hen weans her brood of young turkeys, he adopts them, until now his family numbers twenty large and small. At night he gathers as many of the smaller ones as can be accommodated under his wings, while the remaining larger ones sit close around him; and woe to the pig, dog, cat, chicken, or other animal that at any time offers to disturb him or his brood. He will not even allow the turkey hens or their young to come near him. It is quite amusing to see him march about the yard and stubble-fields clucking to his young, which are always in close proximity."

The Apiary.

Saving Weak Stocks of Bees.

In preparing the apiary for the winter colonies are often found that have not the requisite number of bees. The old plan was to destroy all such with brimstone and take the honey—a murderous operation. Though the combs in box-hives cannot be readily transferred from one hive to another, the bees may be saved and given to stocks that need strengthening. The same thing may be done with weak colonies in moveable comb hives, and with

more certainty as to the result. The stocks to be united should either be moved a distance of a half a mile or more at night and placed by the side of each other, or they can be moved about four feet each day until they stand near together. In the case of the box-hives all that can then be done is to drive the bees from the weak hive into the hive which contains the colony designed for wintering. For performing this operation select the middle of some pleasant day. Smoke both stocks, and wait a few minutes for the bees to gorge themselves with honey, then turn the hive containing the stock to be drummed bottom upward; set the other hive on this so the openings of the two come together, and then rap with a light stick on the lower hive until all the bees have gone into the upper hive; this can be told by the loud buzzing, and by occasionally lifting the upper hive and looking in. The bees will generally be so gorged with honey as to be peaceable, especially if they were well smoked, and were given time to fill their sacs with honey before the hives were lifted from their stands, yet it is well to have the face protected by a veil of some sort. The hive containing the bees is now to be placed on a stand so that its entrance will be midway between the points where the entrances to the two hives were, the two hives, of course, having been previously moved until they were side by side. Within a few hours one of the queens will be killed, and the remaining queen, together with her strong colony of bees will, with plenty of honey, stand a good chance of wintering.

When stocks in moveable comb hives are to be united, first get them moved together, then, on the day they are to be combined, remove enough combs from the two hives so that the remainder will just fill one hive, or will constitute the proper number to contain the winter supply of honey for the colony; at the same time remove one of the queens—the older or poorer one if there be any difference—and place the other in a little wire-cloth cage. (This cage is made by simply folding together the edges of a piece of wire-cloth about three inches wide by four long; ten or twelve meshes to the inch is the right size; stop the ends with bits of sponge.) Just at dusk smoke the bees in both hives pretty thoroughly, and, after letting them become filled with honey, remove the combs one after another and shake the bees into a third (empty) hive, placed just between the two; when this is accomplished, set the combs selected for the purpose into the new hive, slip the cage containing the queen down between the centre combs, and place the cover on the hive. The next day at dusk smoke them again, and release the queen, taking care to daub her well with honey, as well as to drizzle honey over the tops of the frames and down between the combs. *No honey should be left outside the hives where the bees can have access to it, for there is great danger in thus tempting the bees to commence robbing.*

Thus the bee-keeper possesses the ability to save all weak stocks, instead of resorting to the old plan of "murdering" them for the sake of what little honey they may have stored in the dark, tough brood-combs. Surely the saving, as well as the humane bee-keeper will at once recognise the advantages of uniting weak colonies in the fall of the year. — *Cor. Michigan Farmer*.

BEES IN OLD HIVES.—Pagden's "Bee Book" says.—"Never put a swarm of bees into an old hive, as there will almost certainly be the egg of the honey-moth deposited in the crevices of the hive, which will hatch out and probably destroy the swarm. Nothing is more to be dreaded by the bee-keeper than the moth, and when they once gain an entrance to a hive the bees appear as if powerless to expel them, although they will seize them savagely at the entrance. When the moths have once established themselves in a hive, and the maggots begin to eat their way through the combs, the sooner the bees are fumigated and put into another hive the better, as for them to remain with the moth maggots will be certain destruction to them. Moths as well as the large slug may be taken in great numbers, late on summer evenings, by spreading a mixture of sugar, home-made wine and rum, on the walls or the stems of trees."

COMB FOUNDATIONS.—The *American Bee Journal* thus answers the question, What are comb foundations? "Take a piece of empty honey-comb and cut off all the cells, until nothing is left but the division wall of wax between the two opposite sets of cells and you have a comb foundation. The latest production, however, consists not merely of the dividing wall but also a slight depth of the cell walls, themselves, on each side, and these cell-walls, although slight in depth, may be of such thickness as to contain enough wax, so that the bees may work out or prolong the cells to their full depth without any additional material. These comb foundations are given to the bees in their broad chamber, enough being put in a frame to fill it, in whole or in part, perhaps only a narrow strip being used for surplus honey, enough being given to fill the boxes, or merely enough to give the bees a start. The object is to save the time of the bees in secreting the wax, as also the honey used in its production. Another object is to secure all straight, worker comb, and still another to hasten the commencement of work in boxes when the bees are loth to enter them."