

This partakes much more of the Dorking than of the Cochin, being deeper and longer than the latter. An examination of the fowls themselves shows at once their manifest superiority.

The American Agriculturist of Dec. 1877, says: "First among the good qualities of a fowl is size. This the Plymouth Rocks have in an unusual degree.

There are many excellent breeds of Poultry which are all that can be desired, except as to size, and the lack of this is fatal to their popularity; for, after all, profit is the chief object with most people in choosing a kind of fowl to keep. Hardiness of constitution, vigor, pleasing form and prolific production of eggs are all very desirable qualities in fowls, and these all belong to this breed."

We can vouch for the fact that this is a peculiarity which belongs in an especial degree to this strain, as we have bred from them for the last three years. That they are the best fowl for the farmer, is not saying too much in their favor, standing the cold of our climate better, maturing earlier, and producing more flesh in less time than any other fowl now bred for market and table purposes.

## POULTRY AND BIRDS

BY J. J. MECHI.

It appears to me that I must say a word on behalf of farmer's wives who have to keep poultry as a source of profit, and who sometimes get considerably snubbed by their husbands, who grudge the destruction of a few rods of corn or clover, and who evidently don't reason on the matter, and do not or will not understand either the habits or the profits of poultry.

A farmer will readily turn a flock of sheep to trample on and drag down a fine field of clover or grass, but he would be much annoyed to see half an acre eaten by his poultry. He will give his pigs barley and beans by the sack, but objects to the poultry helping themselves to their kernels. By-and-by, I will tell him which pay best for their food, for I am sure he has never entered into the question. Let us now consider the habits of poultry. Take my own as an instance; for some three hundred of them have access to all my field (no fences to obstruct them) from early morning, to dewy eve.

As soon as the fowl house is opened they receive their morning meal of barley, they then betake themselves to the fields—for what? Observe them. That wonderful eye of theirs examines everywhere, and, quick as thought, they appropriate every fly, slug, worm, or insect on every blade of grass or clover. This is their occupation during the whole day, except when at rest or when grazing—for poultry graze equally as do sheep or cattle,—and it is essential that a piece of pasture should be near the fowl house, otherwise they will and must, appropriate your young cabbage, turnip, or mangold plants; they must also have free access to water.

What a mistake we make when we cage up poultry and deprive them of their natural food—green food and insects, with some grain. They are first-class judges of weather, they know by instinct (where does instinct end and reason begin?) when and where their food—insects, worms, etc., is to be most readily found, they watch for every load of green tares or green beans brought home to be passed through the chaff—outter, and they at once set to work upon the myriads of insects that infest almost every crop.

They are the most industrious and economical of creatures—their ready claw and keen eye are ever at work—not a seed of weeds or grass is wasted. In fact, fowls and birds are true farmer's friends, and the farmer can have no idea

how many enemies he has (invisible ones to him) in the shape of insects, until he devotes his attention to the operations of his poultry; although he can neither see his enemies nor know of their whereabouts, the fowls and birds at once detect them, as you may see by their eager darts and rapid movements, hither and thither.

Watch a company of ducks toddling along in regular line, for fair play, and they will show you slugs and insects where you never suspected them. In fact, within a week of leaving the shell the juveniles are on the alert for their natural food, the insect tribe.

I could write a small volume on the value of birds, for it is only by watching their habits and good work that the farmer can realize how many enemies he has, and how many friends there are ready to seek for and destroy these enemies.

It is a well admitted fact by all my laborers that my best and thickest crops are in immediate proximity to the fowl-house, commencing at only ten yards distance. Yes, but see how they are scratching up the seed corn, and what a mess they make! Well, I have seen them at work between the rows of young wheat (and I only put in a bushel per acre at nine inches apart), and I find, in nine cases out of ten, that they are in search of insects, and that they do find them.

Gardeners who are sensitively particular about the appearance of their gardens, and hate fowls, see, however, what takes place. An intelligent chemist took to a garden where insects had long and undisturbed sway, and devoured every thing; he was fond of poultry, and understood their habits, therefore he gave them free access to his garden; they cleared off the enemy, and he had plenty of everything. No doubt but there are times when you should protect your fruit, or your shallow sown seeds; in my case I sometimes employ a boy for a fortnight, immediately after drilling, close to the poultry house, but even when I have not done so, I have scarcely been inconvenienced if the grain was properly deposited by the drill. The hencoops and broods of chickens are always placed on a patch of grass edging the wheat or barley fields: and if, when the crops are ripe, they help themselves to a few ears, I know they are good customers, for they must be fed like sheep, or pigs, or cattle; and they always sell for double the price per pound, although they cost less to produce.

Partridges are great friends to farmers although they don't always believe it. There is no surer sign of imperfect tillage than when you hear of birds and game getting out the seed. What I call imperfect tillage is plowing the land and then merely scratching the surface with light wooden harrows, so that the seeds are close to the surface, and under them are unbroken furrow-slices, long, hard lumps of undivided and unbroken earth; in the case of strong soils almost as tough and impenetrable as weather-boarding. In my case I always use heavy iron harrows and deep-stepped teeth that cut the furrow slices into mould; or sometimes cultivate with the cultivator harrow before drilling, and generally the surface has been well scarified before plowing, so that the seed is not only properly deposited, but where it grows the young fibres find mould below to work in.

For want of this proper tillage I have seen great losses; the fine fibres cannot work into the great lumps of plow slices which, in stiff clays are nearly as hard and as whole as weather board. I do not believe that one farmer in ten can tell me what price per pound, live weight, he gets for his poultry, and for his beef and mutton, but I will tell him: 5 s., per stone of 8 lbs, is 4½ d. per pound live weight for beef, and nearly about the same for mutton. Now, as good poultry always sell for at least 9d. per lb. live weight (I mean wholesale) and as they cost no more per pound to produce than beef or mutton, it follows that we gain one hundred per cent, by