

## ON FEEDING HENS.

The following rule for feeding hens at night are laid down by a contributor to the *Rural Press*:

"Monday, wheat; Tuesday, corn; Wednesday, wheat; Thursday, oats; Friday, wheat; Saturday, soaked barley; Sunday, buckwheat or Egyptian corn." Perhaps it would be just as well to substitute wheat for the barley and buckwheat, and also leave off the corn entirely for Brahmas and Cochins. The Asiatics are so sedentary in their habits and so inclined to take on fat that it is safer to avoid corn altogether in their case. A fat hen is not only incapacitated for laying but is also very liable to liver complaint and other diseases. But in all small and active varieties, such as Leghorns, Black Spanish, etc., will do very well on corn and wheat, alternated at night. But Egyptian corn is an excellent egg food and should be used more than it is. It can generally be bought for 1½ to 2 cents. But it is not safe to pay more than two cents per pound for any kind of grain for chicken feed. When you go above that you are cutting down your profits seriously, and the profits are what we are after, for there is no use in keeping a large flock of chickens for the fun of the thing. But *nota bene* never buy screenings nor any cheap or inferior grain for chicken feed, as in so doing you will be the loser every time. This remark will not apply, of course, to clean wheat that has been cut or broken in threshing, as this is even better than whole grain. But now, as to

## THE MORNING MEAL.

"Why not feed whole grain all the time?" Is asked by some. "Is not this following nature?" No, we say, it is not following nature at all. Nature's chickens have to work for their breakfast, and keep it up all day; their range is unlimited, the variety of their food is great and generally scanty, and its getting is attended with abundant exercise. All these conditions insure health and vigor—conditions which the poultry yard seldom furnishes to so high a degree. But, besides this, we are not following nature very much with our laying hens. Nature's hens lay fifteen to twenty eggs per year, and hatch and rear them all. But our well-bred hen is expected to lay twenty-five eggs per month, and to continue it through six or eight months of the year. She must therefore be excused from the needless task of grinding all her own grain, as this very hard and exhausting labor, would take much of the energy that should be applied to egg production. Therefore ground feed must be generously supplied to our laying hens, and this should always be for breakfast.

The table waste, sour milk, etc., should all go into a five-gallon can or bucket during the day, for the next morning's "feed," but no filth or soapy dish-water should be allowed. The feed can be scalded at night, when hot water is at hand. It will pay to scald or cook much of the morning meal. I have two large boxes or bins, one holding bran and the other wheat, middlings (not shorts), ground barley or oats, and corn meal, in about equal proportions. From

these two boxes I use in about equal proportions, by measure, not weight—as that would be too much bran.

Mix this ground stiff with the table refuse, making a rather stiff dough; sloppy feed is not good. Twice a week add a little sulphur and red pepper; the sulphur on dry and sunny days, and the pepper when cold and wet. Pepper will warm up the interior department and set the egg machinery in motion, while the sulphur tends to ward off disease and vermin, and adds germ force to the egg. A little salt in the feed is said to be good for chickens, but I seldom use it. If the flock tire of this morning meal—which they will if overfed—leave it off once or twice a week and feed a little wheat instead. Boiled potatoes mixed with sour milk and corn meal, and a pinch of pepper, makes a splendid breakfast, and will be greatly relished.

But do not overfeed. Never let feed be standing around untouched; it should all be devoured eagerly and at once. Then let the fowls go to work, if they want more, and hunt their own food. But this implies more or less range, which some cannot provide. In such case the morning and evening meals must be supplemented by chopped meat and vegetables of which I will speak in a later article.—*Rural Press*

## PRE-EMINENTLY A WORKING MAN'S QUESTION.

Below is a cutting from the *Edinburgh Scotsman*, regarding the federation of the Empire. By the advocates of this grand union of kindred people, it has hitherto been supposed that this measure would precede the Pan-Britannic alliance elsewhere mentioned in this issue. It now seems doubtful which will come first. The latter seems the easiest. "Blood is thicker than water." A conference was held in London on Wednesday to discuss Imperial federation and the depression in trade. Letters were read from Mr. W. E. Forster, M. P., and Lord Rosebery. The writers of both described colonial federation as pre-eminently a working man's question, and Lord Rosebery in his communication urged the maintenance and the strengthening of the connection between British Australian possessions and the home country. It was not possible, he said, to remain stationary in this matter; if there were no advancement there must be retrogression. He regretted that recent events had given a frontier towards Australia to the greatest military power in the world. Such an event tends to loosen the ties which it was desirable at this moment to make closer, because they meant relief to the overcharged labor market at home. The National Liberal Federation held a conference on Wednesday at Ipswich. A resolution expressing confidence in the Government, and satisfaction that in the Scotch Bill population has been accepted as the basis of representation, was unanimously adopted. It was resolved that the principles of popular representation should be applied to the local government of counties and rural districts; that a reform of the present system of land tenure is required; and that approval is given of the bill of Mr. Hopwood, under which a affirmation will be substituted for the oath which members of Parliament are now required to take.