

POULTRY FARMING.

"Stephen Beale" in Country Gentleman.

Hitherto the term "poultry farm" has been held to imply a place where the first object is to produce eggs and chickens. Any other work done, any crops grown, are subordinate to the main object. Many attempts of this nature have been made, but I am fain to confess that in this country they have been failures. The records of some of these are very interesting reading, but one and all point to the same direction, namely, that the first cost of houses, &c., is overwhelming, and that in order to obtain results to pay the interest on this cost, the ground is overstocked with birds, it becomes foul, disease attacks the stock, and a dismal failure is the result. I know personally of several failures which were due, in large measure, to want of discretion in choice of breeds, to impatience for returns, which led to birds being bought instead of bred, and to want of acquaintance with the management and treatment of poultry. These, at one time, I thought were the only causes, but the evidence in other instances, where they were not present, have shown me that in this country, where land is so scarce and dear, a poultry farm, pure and simple, is not practicable. Really good land, in suitable places, costs to hire from \$10 to \$20 an acre per annum, and can only be got with the greatest difficulty. Ten to twenty-acre farms are almost unknown, while the cottager, who could cultivate one or two acres easily, and keep a decent stock of fowls thereon, adding to his poor income and making him a contented man, is refused it, lest, I suppose, he becomes too independent. Thus, if land can be got, it is generally too limited in quantity to try the experiment properly; or if not, the cost for rent is so high that it is too heavy a weight to be borne; and also the cottager, who, by a unification of cultivation and poultry keeping, could make the speculation a success, is prevented by land-owners, who, in many cases, refuse land for the purpose of poultry keeping. I could write very strongly, for I feel strongly, on this subject, but a political dissertation would be out of place here. Often do I envy you in a country where iniquitous land laws have no existence, and where each man, if industrious and gifted with common sense, can sit under his own vine and fig tree, where

Landlords cease from troubling,
And tenants are *non est*.

But even with a wide extent of land at disposal, I do not think a poultry farm, accepting the interpretation of that term given above, would be a success. Apart from rent or interest on purchase money, fowls could scarcely be kept on a farm alone, or if they were, the labor in looking after them would be too great to pay for the results, and I think this will be the experience on your side the Atlantic as well as ours. I do not say that cottagers and owners of two or three acres of land could not succeed. These, by a judicious intermixture of fruit or vegetable growing and poultry keeping, can do what the larger farmer cannot, and it is persons of this class who are the great poultry keepers in France.

My own belief is that we must look to poultry becoming part of the live stock of a farm, and an important part also, rather than to the establishment of poultry farms. In the latter case all the eggs are put into one basket, and that not a very safe one; in the former it is just the carrying out of a natural law observed by all farmers, namely, that one part of the farm work shall aid the other parts, and that the combination of all shall make the whole a success. Great wheat farms or cattle ranches may be found in the Western States, but these

are not really farms, and the conditions which permit their existence are but temporary in their nature. On an ordinary farm, though stock-rearing may be the first object, as far as possible all the food required is there produced. By the rotation of crops, and the cropping of pasture land, the one part of the farm work conduces to the success of the other. What I believe we ought to seek is, that farmers shall pay more and more attention to their poultry, study their requirements, give thought and attention to the choice of breeds and selection of breeding stock—in short, take a real personal interest in this branch of the farm economy. That it will repay them, there is no doubt whatever in my own mind. I know farmers who are in this sense poultry farmers. They pay as much attention, in proportion to its importance, to the breeding and care of their fowls as to their Shorthorns or Leicesters, and while ignoring all merely fancy considerations, are as careful in buying a stock cock-bird as in selecting a bull or a tup. The time absorbed is small, but a little given now and then, and a constant interest in the stock, is sufficient. Poultry keeping is not an all-absorbing pursuit, and it has the faculty of dove-tailing easily into the other work of the farm, and taking its proper place therein.

There are right and wrong ways of keeping the poultry on a farm, and these I will endeavor to deal with later on. But meanwhile let me say that if your correspondent knows anything of fruit growing, that is a pursuit which can be amalgamated with poultry keeping very successfully. In the South of England such a farm is to be found. This is in the county of Hants, on the borders of the New Forest. It has been carried on for some five or six years, and is, I believe, a commercial success. The land is only moderate in quality, and is in a rather exposed position, but fairly dry. It is well sheltered by trees on two or three sides. The plan here adopted is to have movable wire fencing, and houses which can be lifted by a couple of men. Rapid growing fruit trees and bushes have been planted, and these are placed between the runs, and, except just when the fruit is ripe, the fowls have access below these bushes, obtaining shelter for themselves, feeding upon the insects found there, and contributing in return manure to the earth, thus nourishing the bushes. Raspberries are very largely grown here, as the bushes do not last so long as harder wood fruit trees, and strawberries also, but from where the latter are growing, of course, the fowls are debarred. Runs are changed very often. After two years, the ground which has been occupied by the fowls is dug up and planted with fruit bushes, and any of the ground either cleared by transplanting, or the exhaustion of the vines or plants which have been thereon, is made into runs for the fowls. In this way there is no danger of contamination or disease arising therefrom, the ground is never idle, and while the fruit growing takes out the quality the soil, this is renewed again by the fowls when turned into runs. The products are always in demand, and there is no fear of a bad market for either soft fruits or eggs. This plan could be modified in many ways. On land owned by the cultivator, it might be worth while to plant apple or pear trees over the ground. They would not produce so soon, but would last longer. Vegetables are also a good crop, or even roots. And where there is sufficient land some might be sown with grain to produce food for the fowls. There are, in fact, many ways in which the necessary variation can be secured, but such variation takes away the idea of a poultry farm pure and simple, which, as already stated, I do not think can ever be a success.

BASEMENT BARN.

H. Ives, in Country Gentleman.

A good basement is almost as necessary for making a complete farm barn as a kitchen for a farm house. The advantages of cisterns, root cellar, and silo, are all much easier had in connection with the basement barn. It gives the best winter quarters for keeping farm stock, the safest, cheapest, and easiest of all ways for storing apples, potatoes, and roots. If room is given for housing the farm wagons, they will last the longer, and their tires will not require re-setting as often. If rain-water cisterns furnish drink for the cattle, summer and winter, it is kept at a better temperature for that purpose than in almost any other way, when properly managed. It is the best as well as the most convenient place for housing the manure as it is made. As for storing the manure here, it will be objectionable unless rightly managed, when it will be the very best place for it.

The cattle stalls should be placed in such proximity to where the horses are kept that the manure from each will be well mixed, as it is thrown back from the animals; then the tramping down will keep it cool and moist, though it is a good plan to throw on a good lot of plaster once or twice a week. This will keep it from steaming and smelling, and help to rot it. It will be in condition to draw at any time as wanted. But one very important consideration in having this manure in good order at all times is, that the coarse feed and the bedding all have been passed through the cutting machine before using, to say nothing of the gain for feeding purposes, or for use as bedding, for all stock; to have all hay, straw, stalks, &c., thus chopped before using, would easily pay for all the cost of cutting, just for the better handling, quality, and condition of the manure from them.

Cisterns for such a barn should always be made in the bank outside and above the barn, with a pipe near the bottom to pass through the cellar wall, and a faucet and watering tub here for the cattle; it will seldom freeze, and should be as reliable a supply as a natural spring. A good root cellar is provided by partitioning off such a sized room as needed for this purpose, at one end, or in one corner of the basement, where the wall is well banked up on the outside to keep out the frost. This should be handy of access from below, by a common doorway from the basement; but the windows for such root cellars should in all cases be above the wall and the barn sill, and as that naturally opens to the hay floor, a section of this floor is cut out from before the window and housed over from top of window, slanting down to the floor, so as to connect the windows with the cellar below. The philosophy and economy of this arrangement is, first, that a window can thus be had without letting the frost into the cellar, as it will when set in the wall, and so much lower down; second, that in storing turnips or potatoes here, as the farmer usually conducts them by a shute or spout through the window from the bank above, if this can go over the sill in this way, it will deliver them near the middle of the cellar, so as to nearly fill it, if necessary, without much extra work of storing them away. A window placed in this way will need no extra attention in winter in guarding against frost. A few places, something like trap doors for each barn floor, will be a necessity in a barn with basement to put down fodder, and through which dispose of the chaff and the floor cleanings; but for the regular barn floors, these should never be made by making an opening through them; it makes too dangerous places to risk having them there; but an opening with a slide door