

LET FRUIT RIPEN ON THE VINE.—Almost all fruits are gathered too early. With the Albany Seedling Strawberry, and the Lawton Blackberry, this is now well understood.—but it applies to all fruits. Mr. J. E. Mitchell has just placed on our table some Chasselas Grapes, that are quite equal to the best Frontignans in flavor, as we usually get them,—and some badly colored Hamburgs, that do no discredit to the well-earned reputation of that variety for good character. No doubt the good quality of many grapes when sent for Editorial opinions, beyond what one often afterwards finds from fresh fruit taken off, is caused by their ripening a little on the way.—*Gardeners' Monthly.*

HEALTH AND LONGEVITY OF THE APPLE TREE.—Rev. H. W. Beecher speaks of these characteristics of the apple, as follows:—"Healthier than the pear, no blight or disease, affects it; worms and insects may lodge upon it, but unbuckling its bark, it exposes them to the wind and storm. An acre of potatoes will not produce so much as the same area in orchard, with five times the labour. The grub only is a formidable enemy, but is so easily exterminated by a flexible wire, that if you have burers you deserve to be bored. Farmers never think of nursing their orchards. And as for longevity, I have a tree now growing on my farm at least five hundred years old. Two ladies, now eighty years of age, say that in their childhood it was called the old apple tree. At twelve feet from the ground it is fourteen feet ten inches in circumference; the fruit sweet and pleasant, though not large."

THUMB AND FINGER PRUNING.—This is the best of all pruning. It does not disturb nature. It is, in nearly all cases, done judiciously. It must be done when the shoots are in a soft and succulent state. It is done to regulate the growth, the form of the tree.—If a branch grows too rapidly—is likely to usurp too much space: it must be pinched back to allow the rest of the tree to come forward. Every tree can be made symmetrical and perfect in form by a little care in pinching in, if done when the tree is young. Every one can prune in this way. It requires no particular skill—only the exercise of a little common sense. The finest standard pear trees we ever saw, had never had a knife or saw about them. The thumb and forefinger had only been used. The trees belonged to Wm. Saunders, of Germantown, Penn., one of the first horticulturists in the country. He has now charge of the Government Gardens at Washington City.—Rub off all unnecessary buds that grow in a tree—and remove as they appear. This keeps the tree clean, and the growth in the proper channels. It is easily done.—*Colman's Rural World.*

AN ILLINOIS FRUIT FARM.—The following notice of the orchard of W. C. Flagg, Esq., near Alton, Ill., Secretary of the State Horticultural Society, is taken from a late report of the proceedings of the Horticultural Society of Alton:

"Mr. Flagg's farm occupies about 1,100 acres of land of which about 80 acres are in orchard, 220 under the plow, 200 in woodland, 300 in meadow and 300 in pasture. The following fruits are in cultivation:—4,500 apple trees, 150 pears, 1,200 peach, 100 cherry, 60 plum, 20 apricot, 12 nectarine, half an acre of grapes, and about 2 acres of small fruits. The most profitable thus far has been the Janet, which fourteen years planted has yielded 600 bushels per acre. The Newtown Pippin and Pryor's Red are also favorite varieties. 150 varieties of apples, 5 of apricots, 12 of cherries, 7 of currants, 14 of grapes, 5 of nectarines, 26 of peaches, 30 of pears, 14 of plums, 6 of raspberries, are under trial, but are mostly too young to judge of results.

CLIMBING PLANTS.—Mr. Charles Darwin, F.R.S., recently read before the Linnean Society a paper on the movements and habits of climbing plants, an abstract of which has since appeared in the *Natural History Review*. He describes the peculiarities of these plants as divided into three groups—viz. twining plants, leaf-climbers, and tendril-bearers. He presumes that plants become climbers in order to reach the light, and to expose a larger surface of leaves to its action and to that of the free air. This is effected by them with wonderfully little expenditure of organized matter in comparison with trees, which have to support a load of heavy branches by a massive trunk. Twining plants are furnished with revolving nodes; leaf-climbers possess the power of clasping an object with their petioles or sensitive tips, associated with revolving internodes; and tendril-bearing plants, Mr. Darwin considers to have been primordially twiners, or descendants of plants having this power and habit. "The perfection of the organization of plants," says Mr. Darwin, "is forced on our minds by the study of the many kinds that climb."—*Scottish Farmer.*

Poultry Yard.

On Breeding Poultry in Large Numbers.

The idea of rearing poultry in very large numbers has a great attraction for persons who have had but little practical experience in poultry-breeding; and in consequence, every few years some fallacious project is started for the establishment of a poultry farm. Not long since a paragraph went the rounds of the papers respecting the success of a large poultry establishment near Paris, where many thousands of poultry were said to be reared annually at a very large profit to the promoters. It will not surprise those of our readers who are practical men, to be told that the whole account was a pure invention, there not being, nor ever having been, any such establishment in existence.

A few years since Mr. Cantelo started a poultry establishment near Chiswick, and although he had the advantage of great experience and one of the best artificial incubators ever designed, the whole concern came to an untimely end.

During the time of the Cochin mania, when every Cochin hatched and reared had its value reckoned in pounds sterling, numerous speculators tried rearing in large numbers, but not one of them succeeded.

The Americans, who are at least our equals in poultry-breeding, for practical if not for fancy purposes, have tried the plan repeatedly, and each time it has failed. Not long since it was worked in connection with the Astor House Hotel, and the usual termination ensued.

There are two reasons for this inevitable result; one is, that when a large number of fowls are crowded together or kept in one place, the ground becomes tainted with the manure, and disease invariably breaks out. This is more particularly true of chickens; for in every attempt to rear a large number in a confined space, the mortality is excessive.

The employment of an incubator in this climate will always be found a failure, for this simple reason, that it is impossible to rear the chickens when they have been hatched. The hatching process is sufficiently easy; but chickens are of no value whatever without you have hens to brood them. The only manner in which an incubator can be usefully employed is by hatching an extra number of eggs, so as to give each hen a full brood of chickens. Used in this way, we have known small incubators very serviceable; but when employed to hatch chickens that are to be reared by artificial mothers, we have never seen them used with advantage.—*London Field.*

On Eggs.

I write on this subject in order to correct some erroneous ideas that have always been entertained in relation to eggs. The sex—how long an egg will retain its life and vigour enough to hatch strong chickens—whether an egg will hatch unless you have a cockerel with the hens all the time. What I shall say on this subject has been gained by actual experience and close observation with my own fowl. I deny that a round egg will always produce a pullet, and that a long egg will always produce a cockerel, and I do not believe there is any way of ascertaining to a certainty I have, by watching closely, observed that some hens always lay round eggs; others a long egg; now it is simply absurd to say from this, that one hen's eggs being round will produce all pullets; the other laying all long eggs, all cockerels. I do not wish to be understood that I would not select eggs for sitting—on the contrary I always select those for one nest that are the largest, and as near of a size as possible. Some contend that if a cockerel is separated from hens that the eggs will not hatch. I have tried this in order to test the point, and set one hen that there had been no cockerel with for two or three weeks, and twelve out of the fifteen had chickens in them; but I would not advise the trial after three weeks. Eggs that are to be set should be handled as little as possible; and not removed from where they are laid if it can be helped. The secret of a hen that steals her nest, as the saying is, they are not disturbed from the place they are laid, and the hen is perfectly quiet and seldom breaks her eggs.

As to the real value of eggs for market, they ought to be sold by weight, not that a large egg will weigh the most in proportion to its size, but it is often to the contrary. I have weighed Brahma eggs that were considerably larger than a Dorking, and a dozen of each weighed exactly alike. We see and read of great weight of eggs. I have eggs I think that go to the two extremes; one the largest by a Brahma, weighing four ounces, the other by a Spanish, at one-quarter of an ounce each. I think the grey Dorking will lay more weight of eggs and fatter, than any other fowl, and the Hamburg the most in number.—*Westbrook, in Maine Farmer.*

HENS EATING EGGS.—Hens may be cured of eating their eggs, by blowing out the contents of an egg, and filling it with mustard made into a paste. Make a hole in each end, blow the contents out, and when filled paste paper over the hole. One taste of the mustard effects a cure.—*Country Gentleman.*

CARE OF GOSLINGS.—On the first day after the goslings are hatched, they may be left out, if the weather be warm, care being taken not to let them be exposed to the unshaded heat of the sun, which might kill them. For food, grain is prepared with some barley or Indian meal, coarsely ground, bran, and raspings of bread, which are still better, if soaked and boiled in milk, or lettuce leaves and crusts of bread boiled in milk.—*Broune.*

SWELLED HEAD IN TURKEYS.—I notice in the *Co. Genl.* of Feb. 16, an enquiry as to a swelling over the eye of turkeys. My son, (age 15,) has been in the habit of curing it for several years, by opening it (when large enough to discharge) with a penknife and cleaning out the matter thoroughly. We have never lost any by this treatment. I do not know the cause of the disease. We have one now upon which we shall "operate" in a week or two.—*AARON HILL, in Country Gentleman.*

VERMIN RAPACITY.—The following extraordinary instance of the wholesale destruction of poultry by vermin is related by a British contemporary:—"On Thursday night Mr. Buckenham, miller, of Ashill, fed his poultry and secured them for the night by locking up the fowl-house; but on the Friday morning, on going to feed them, he missed a great number of chickens, although the door of the place was found locked, and to all appearance as he left it on the previous night. Mr. Buckenham, believing that some one had stolen the chickens, drove over to Watton and gave information to Inspector Watson, who returned with him to Ashill; and, after very carefully examining the place, and making certain enquiries, a hole was discovered between the ground plate and the floor of the building, large enough to admit his arms. He felt in this hole and pulled out one or two chickens. A pickaxe was then procured and the floor picked up, and in a large hole extending to some distance under the floor of the adjoining building he took out no less than 43 good-sized chickens, most of which were more or less gnawed upon the breasts and other parts. Some idea of the size of the chickens may be formed, when it is mentioned that when taken out of the hole they would more than fill a bushel, and were worth about one shilling each. It is supposed to have been the work of a polecat or other vermin of the kind."

PROFITS OF POULTRY.—"An Old Norfolk Farmer" writes to the *Mark Lane Express* on this subject, as follows:—"We are afraid that the good ladies of the homestead consider the poultry-yard rather beneath them as a source of profit, although many of them keep some choice specimens as fancy birds. If they, however, want a precedent as an example, we can adduce that of our beloved Queen, who has a splendid fowl-yard at Osborne, which she superintends herself, and takes great interest in it. The fowls, of course, are of the best breeds; and are tended with great care by her Majesty, as will be credited when we state that she has discovered a remedy for a disorder that attacked her turkeys, which she has made known to the public without obtaining a patent. The profits said to be gained are enough to make a farmer's mouth water. Twenty-one pounds for birds sold, less four pounds for fresh blood and [only] four more for keep, leaving a nice little balance for the good benefice of £13 for the half year, besides a plentiful supply of eggs and chickens for the house. This, too, was a small yard, and only one breed kept. It must be borne in mind, however, that fowls, as well as every other kind of live stock, will not pay with neglect, inattention, or parsimonious treatment. They require room according to their size and numbers. Cleanliness is also a condition of health to a fowl as well as to any other animal; and the better and more solid their food the more will they thrive. The fact is, fowl-keeping is like every department of husbandry—it must be well attended to, and a liberal economy practised towards them, or they will not pay. To feed them upon meal made from off-corn barley is a downright cheat, and potatoes are quite as bad. The best barley or maize is not too good for them; and they will pay if kept upon either, when with inferior food they will not pay. We are aware that, after all, it rests with the females of the farmer's family whether the system can be carried out or not, as the farmer himself has but little time to devote to it. Lord Byron's celebrated maxim holds good in this case as well as every other:—

'If she will—she will, you may depend on't;
And if she won't, she won't—and there's an end on't.'