

Hatching Eggs.

W. H. Todd, the veteran poultry breeder of Vermillion, Ohio, writes to the *Poultry Bulletin* an account of his experience with eggs that have been set and do not prove good for chickens, the experience may be valuable to some breeders and has been as follows:

"I began to set eggs the middle of February. Set Light and Dark Brahmas, Buff and Partridge Cochins. Kept breeding-stock on high dry ground, in comfortable quarters, with open fields for a range; five to eight hens with each cock, according to his vigor and activity. Dark Brahmas hatched an average of 75 per cent., Light 50 per cent., Partridge Cochins, 33 per cent., Buffs, 12 per cent. Nest boxes were 16 inches square, with 3 or 4 inches moist ashes of earth in the bottom; nests of fine short oat straw, and placed nine eggs under each hen. Continued setting a large number of hens through February and March. Light Brahmas soon hatched as well as Dark, 70 to 90 per cent. No improvement with the Cochins eggs.

"February and March were very cold and severe, especially March, during which fowls would not venture out doors; hence they got little exercise. Being confined myself with illness much of this time, the feeding and management of my fowls fell to others, who I found cared well for them in every particular, except over-feeding.

"Learning the failure of my Cochins to hatch, I determined to ascertain the cause and correct it if possible. The fowls were all laying well and had a good variety of grain, vegetables, shells, meat and soft food. A visit to my yard soon convinced me of the cause of unfertile eggs. I found my Cochins—the Buffs in particular—not enough for Christmas, and the appearance of the fluff indicated a looseness, caused by constant overfeeding, obesity, and want of exercise. I ordered them to be put on "half rations" at once, with very little meat or corn, but plenty of broken bones and shell. Fed twice a day, cooked mush in the mornings, of oat-meal, bran and turnips, and a little corn-meal; in the afternoon, corn, oats, buckwheat and wheat mixed. No more at each feed than would be consumed in five minutes or less. My feeder said the "fowls would starve, they acted so hungry," but I persisted; I kept my fowls lightly and lively. Looseness disappeared, and after spring opened and the fowls had plenty of exercise, eggs hatched better. Those set in two weeks after changing feed did better; in four weeks one-half hatched, and in six to eight weeks 75 to 100 per cent. hatched. In the case of my own fowls, I know that where hens and cocks are healthy and vigorous, bad hatching, whether from unfertile eggs or partially developed chicks, may be caused by over-fattening, and the inactivity resulting therefrom, and steady cold weather; or too few hens with an amorous and over attentive cock. The same feed and treatment was given to Brahmas and Cochins. The Dark Brahmas being less voracious and more active and venturesome in inclement weather, took more exercise and kept in good breeding condition. Light Brahmas exercised less and fattened more while Cochins feed more greedily and grew fat. I noticed that many eggs had partially formed chicks in them which died in the shell, and I find that nothing so weakens the vitality of eggs, or chicks, in Asiatics, as high-feeding and want of exercise. Such is also the case with horses, cattle and all quadrupeds. Besides Asiatics, I had no failure with the eggs of other breeds, though I did not begin to set them till spring opened and the fowls had free range. Throughout the season I had chicks, ducklings and goslings hatching two or three times a week under sheds and in buildings, and May and June exposed to the effects of thunder, in all stages of incubation, without perceptible injury; and in these months of frequent thunder storms, eggs hatched the best, ranging from 50 to 100 per cent., with seldom a dead bird in the shell. I noticed one instance in particular; nine good eggs were set under hens, in box nests on the ground; two days before hatching there was a severe storm with very heavy thunder—result—seven fine goslings, and none dead in the shell. So far as I have noticed, hatching was not affected by changes in the weather, except by extreme cold, with too many eggs under a hen, and extreme heat, dryness, where a hen was setting in a close, sweltering lot or chamber, but dryness can be avoided by using grass sods and moist earth, and occasionally sprinkling the nests. The season has been dry and hot since April, but with the proper construction of nests, and care of eggs (keeping them from drying too much) my success in hatching all varieties has been good."

Sick Fowls.

There is probably no farmer or house-wife who feels more helpless when any class of animals are affected than when the fowls are ill. There needs to be much information disseminated on this subject. A very common disease among fowls is thus treated by a writer in *Land and Water*:—"All the feathered tribe are naturally liable to take cold, more particularly whilst very young, and the adults during the trying season of moulting. The earliest symptoms are slight loss of appetite, drooping of the tail, and a clear limpid discharge from the nostrils. It is entirely due to damp, exposures to cold winds, and imperfect housing; but there are inducing causes frequently combined, improper and insufficiency of food is one which materially aids it by rendering the system poor and weak and incapable of resisting or shaking off any kind of hardship, however light. Breeding in and in, that is from stock related to each other, is another means by which artificially reared families are certain to become weak and the seed of various diseases quickly sown, and the constitutions degenerated with an inevitable certainty. Seeing therefore, the means by which the stock is to be prepared for resisting the simplest disorders should an attack come upon them in the form of a cold, take a few cautions for removing the cause, if it can be found, by extra dryness of the soil upon which they rest, and taking special care that they are not in the vicinity of stagnant moisture. There are few cases of simple catarrh that will not speedily yield to a little more generous feeding than they have been used to. Crusts of bread soaked in spiced ale is wonderfully efficacious, and should be given in addition to other meals if they will partake of so much. If the birds have not been carefully looked after in the first stages of the complaint it invariably runs into worse condition. From the clear discharge from the nostrils as before mentioned, it here takes the most offensive forms; becomes thick and clotted, stopping up the nostrils; and the cavities of the air passages being highly inflamed, continue to secrete the discharge. The eyes also become inflamed, and a frothy secretion exudes from the eyelids. The face and eyelids at length become swollen and the bird cannot see to feed. Here we have a troublesome case, and if the bird is valuable it should be at once removed to warm in-door quarters. We do not hesitate to say that there is no more contagious disease known to the feathered tribe; and any bird so attacked should be immediately removed from the rest. There is no doubt the disease is communicable in various ways, such as drinking out of the same water-vessel, the liquid being contaminated by the discharge. In the same way the food they peck off the grass in their runs holds upon it some of the matter coughed or sneezed up. It is only with birds of value that real attempts at cure should be made, which should be to purge out with a dose of castor oil first. Bathe the head and nostrils with a warm, weak solution of carbolic acid, keeping it from the bird's eyes. When the matter is free from the nostrils, slightly syringe (with a small syringe) some of the solution up the same. Well dry the feathers about the head and neck. Pills of the following parts should be always at hand, and one, night and morning, administered while the birds are ill; Quarter of an ounce valerian, quarter of an ounce of cayenne pepper, quarter of an ounce of lobelia in powder, quarter of an ounce of gum myrrh; make into forty-eight pills."

Carrier Pigeons.

The following observations will be welcomed by our readers, as they are from the pen of Col. Hassard, who contributed so ably to our Poultry Department for some years, and we hope will do so again:—

The variety of pigeons known as carriers are now bred entirely as fancy birds, and are of no use except as such. Their value being dependent on their points as laid down by fanciers, which standard it is very difficult to breed up to. I have proved they are very strong on the wing if allowed to fly, and I believe that if trained, the third or fourth generation would "home well." They would probably lose their fancy points and hence be valueless on that score.

The carriers as a bird used for the purpose of conveying messages is an entirely different bird, being probably a cross with the owl pigeon and an English dragon, or carriers of former days, and are crossed again with the owl, or a very similar bird in many respects and generally known as the "Antwerp car-

riers," or in England now, for shortness, often called "homers." Mr. Tegetmeier has written a very able work, price one shilling, on this subject, which I recommend all concerned in this very interesting bird to purchase.

It is well-known that in consequence of the use found for pigeons during the French war, both French and Prussians have established pigeon stations where the birds are under the orders and care of the government officers—engineers I believe. Possibly the English Government may begin some day, but the telegraphic communication throughout England being so perfect, it is thought it could hardly be of use. I am not of this opinion; but think that certainly in Canada pigeons might be of use in many ways, as there is a vast extent of country without telegraphic communication. Accidents happen to trains, and a pigeon let fly might explain the whereabouts in a cold bright day after a snow storm. In places where no telegraph exists they could be trained to fly to the nearest station, so that if at a few telegraph stations pigeons were kept, places not yet wired could keep up news across the lakes also, and in many other ways.

I am willing to admit that they would run risks from hawks and gunners, too numerous to mention; but if the late magistrate of Margate, Kent, as narrated by T. M. Eaton, could get (before the telegraph was invented) the leading articles of the *Morning Post* every morning from London, (70 miles or so), a good deal could be accomplished by birds similarly trained, and when once used to the journey and under way, hawks would have enough to do to catch a bird flying at the rate of a mile a minute, and gunners would have to shoot quick.

Homing birds require no more attention than common, unless to be used as flyers, when they would require a room, loft or aviary with traps; but they breed well and often are very hardy, and last, some may say, not least, make good pies. If people keep a few birds, even in an outside box against the wall, they might find it useful to keep homers, even if they do not train them long distances. 900 miles has been done; 500 is done every year by the Belgians, and shorter distances can be relied on perhaps with more certainty.

Embsen or Bremen Geese.

These beautiful aquatic birds, were first introduced into this country in 1821, at which time they produced quite a sensation and for years thereafter brought fabulous prices. They were imported direct from Holland; but the appellation of Embsen is said to have been obtained from the town of that name in Hanover. In conversation some time since, with the editor of the German agricultural paper of New York city, we learned that a similar breed of geese are bred in or near Stettin, Germany, and have their origin in that neighborhood.

We have seen, on several occasions, very fine specimens of these geese at the New York State and other fairs, but the most magnificent birds of these breeds we ever saw, were shown at the New York and Connecticut State Poultry Exhibitions last year. If we mistake not specimens were shown at the former show which weighed, dressed, at nine and ten months old, from twenty to thirty pounds.

The flesh of these geese is very different from that of our domestic variety, neither does it partake of that dry character which belongs to other and more common kinds, but is as tender and juicy when brought to the table as that of our wild fowls, and is less liable to shrink in the process of cooking. Epicures aver that the flesh of these geese is, when properly cooked, not inferior to that of the Canvas-back duck.

They are the most beautiful of all geese, and, excepting the Toulouse, the largest. Indeed, the rivalry between the two breeds is so close that many contend that the palm of size as well as of beauty belongs to the Embsen. The young are easily reared, with very little care, in almost any section of the country. They have been bred to weigh, at eight months of age, from twelve to sixteen pounds when dressed for the table.

Mr. Hewitt, an eminent breeder, who favors this variety, says:—"The Embsen goose has prominent blue eyes, is remarkable strong in the neck, and the feathers, from near the shoulder to the head, are far more curled than is seen in other birds. The plumage is pure white throughout; bill flesh color, and legs orange. One of their great advantages is this:—That all the feathers being perfectly white, their value, where many are kept, is far greater in the market than is ever the case with colored or mixed feathers. The quality of the flesh is about equal with the Toulouse; but the Embsen is the earlier layer, and frequently rears two broods in one season, the young ones proving as hardy as any with which I am acquainted."—*Rural Home*.