

Evergreens need less pruning than deciduous trees, but they need some attention nevertheless, and especially when small, because thickness at the base can then be insured, and it never can when any considerable size is attained. When there is a scarcity of branches at the bottom, clip the leader, and also all side branches projecting over those at the base. The evergreen must be pyramidal—any other shape is an abortion. When there is a general lack of density, clip the ends of all the branches from top to bottom. Watchfulness and discretion in this particular when the plants are young, will generally render the same care in after years unnecessary.—*P.S., in Practical Farmer.*

### Poultry Yard.

#### How Much Hens Eat.

The *Prairie Farmer* says:—

We have before us the record of an experiment made in January, 1869, bearing on this subject. A flock of forty-five grown chickens—a few of them full Brahmas, the others half-bloods—were allowed all the corn they could eat. They were fed from a hopper so arranged that corn was within their reach all the time, care being taken that none of it should be carried off by rats or mice or other intruders. In eighteen days the flock ate 144 pounds of shelled corn, or an average of eight pounds per day for the forty-five chickens. At this rate, one chicken would eat 0.178 of a pound per day, and 100 would therefore eat 17.8 pounds per day. During the eighteen days this flock ate, besides the corn, nearly one peck of onions and turnips mixed, about two pounds of meat scraps and one head of cabbage. They were well supplied with water, lime, mortar, ashes and sand. The result of this experiment was that the hens became too fat, and toward the close of the term of eighteen days they laid fewer eggs than at the commencement, although as the season advanced the production of eggs should have increased. We prefer to give such an account of an actual experiment, stating the season, kinds of fowls, and manner of feeding, rather than to estimate, guess or theorize about the question proposed. This our correspondents may do at leisure. No invariable rule can be laid down. In the case here mentioned it was evident that a less quantity of food would have kept the flock in better condition, even during a winter month and in latitude 39.40 north.

#### Best Breeds of Poultry.

It is often asked which is the best breed of fowls to keep. This is like asking which is the best horse. If you want a horse to run for the Derby, you would not choose a cart horse; and if you wanted a dray horse, you would not choose a fine bred blood. The same with fowls: if you want egg producers, you want one kind; and if you want flesh or good hatchers you want another.

About common fowls, or mongrels, this is just the difference between them and pure bred—the one has no distinguishing properties, while the other has. It is impossible to combine the prolificacy of the egg producers to retain it with the feeding and hatching properties of the other. For the food that is converted into producing eggs will certainly not produce fat and flesh; and, conversely, the elements of nutrition which go to building up the body cannot be converted into supplying eggs. The properties and qualities of thoroughbred fowls have been attained by the same attention to breeding that has brought other stock to perfection—by observing the qualities most developed in the animal.

In the egg-producing class, the Leghorns stand pre-eminently above all others. This variety consists of the white and brown. The brown appears to be the favorite, being hardy, easily raised, and maturing quickly—the pullets often laying at four months. Pullets of this breed frequently lay as high as 260 eggs during the year. Their large combs and pendulous require a warm house during our rigorous winters.

The next in high favor is the black Spanish; these, like the former, are non-setters and prolific, but not so easily raised. They do not, until nearly grown, get their full feathers, being generally half naked for a considerable time after hatching. These, like the Leghorn, require comfortable winter quarters, owing to their large comb and wattles.

The Houdans, a French breed, come next as layers and non-setters. This is what they call a

made breed between the Poland and Dorking, showing the characteristic crest of the former and the fifth toe of the latter. Although not so continual layers as the two varieties mentioned, yet they possess points superior to the others, as size, delicacy of flesh, and hardihood.

The small breeds, the different varieties of Hamburgs and Polands have their admirers as fancy fowls. They are excellent layers, partially non-incubators, but are not recommendable, owing to their size, as likely to improve our present stock of common fowls.

The Dorkings, as a class, may be considered the standard English fowl, and combine more general qualities than any other; regular setters, large size, plump, square built, delicate flesh, and highly flavored. They lay a full supply of eggs, and are probably the best table fowl raised. They likewise have large combs and wattles, like the Leghorn and Spanish. They do not thrive well on damp soil.

The Asiatics are the most extensively bred and most fashionable class at present raised in America, and, on the whole, are probably better adapted to the rigorous winters of the United States and Canada than any other.—*Rural New Yorker.*

#### Management of Fowls.

You must, in order to be successful, have the proper accommodation for them, for in order for fowls to thrive and do well, they must have shelter from storms and cold winds, and that shelter or house must have proper ventilation and light. Next they must have space sufficient for exercise, and then look well to them and keep everything about their house and yard in a neat, clean and wholesome manner. Fowls need constant, everyday care; if you keep poultry free from vermin, their house and yards clean, feed good and wholesome food, keep them supplied at all times with clean, fresh water, and you will generally have a flock of healthy fowls. Time or space will not permit me to say or point out an exact bill of fare, neither is it necessary. A man to keep fowls must study their wants, and never try to force your fowls to eat what they do not like. Their food should be varied according to their tastes. I generally make it a practice of feeding in the morning; for young and adult fowls soft food, such as scalded bran or meal, and invariably for the evening meal, whole grain, such as wheat or corn. Small chicks can eat wheat, and I always keep them supplied with good, fresh well water. I allow them all the range my accommodations will permit, and the growing chicks I do not confine at all, unless I am compelled to. I consider it is, as a writer once said, the fore part of a chicken's existence that gives him size; therefore, if you expect to produce fowls of large size, don't coop or shut them up; they must have a great deal to eat, and, therefore, need exercise. Don't be afraid of over-feeding your growing chicks; it is an old and true saying that "money makes the mare go," and so feed makes the chickens grow. Care should be taken not to go for size alone. I like to see good, large, symmetrical birds, and we must have them in order to sell.

#### Cross-Bred Poultry.

We are gratified to find how well satisfied are those breeders of cross-bred fowls who took our advice and set up a yard of Brahma hens and Dorking cocks, and we doubt not that when the cold weather sets in or the March winds blow and eggs are wanted and not to be had from prettier but more delicate birds, our hints will be even more appreciated than now. The Brahma-Dorking is generally allowed to be an excellent table fowl. The superfluity of leg is done away with, and the absence of breast slices is not complained of by the Dorking cross, while the chicks partake of the strength and easy going, contented disposition of the Brahma.

Now that the end of the season is come, our experience again declares that no chickens have stood up against gales so well as the Brahma-Dorkings; when others seemed stopped in growth, they flourished and feathered. Doubtless they consume a quantity of food, but if they make meat in proportion, where is the loss? For some weeks, too, our birds were scarcely fed by hand at all; they lived on the waste corn which otherwise would have been trodden under foot, and which, picked up by them, made fowl and so—cash. To these who keep only a few fowls, who want eggs when they are scarce, and "cut and come again" chicken, we recommend half a dozen Brahma hens and a Dorking cock.—*Agr. Gazette.*

#### French Fowls.

The Rev. C. C. Ewbank writes the following in *The Country*, published in London, England:—

There are many books now in existence on poultry in general, written by men who have had far more experience than myself, and, as such, must always claim our greatest respect. I have been a breeder of fowls for many years, during which time I have kept nearly all the different varieties commonly seen at our shows; but I have often felt myself, and I have no doubt others have felt the same, the want of some short and concise practical work on each particular breed, containing information for those who are anxious to embark in the poultry mania, which is increasing daily. I have been often asked what is the best breed to go in for, and, having given my advice, I have seen people go immediately to one of our large shows, and give a long price for a first-prize cock and as much for a first-prize hen, and then give up in disgust the following season, because the expensive first prize pair did not produce birds as good or better than themselves. If some of our experienced breeders and exhibitors would only confer a boon upon the public by publishing their experience, I think it would induce more persons to enter the fancy; and, instead of seeing at our shows a few good birds and hundreds of bad ones, we should see a majority of the former, and the competition would be more even and interesting.

During the last eight years I have made the French breeds my special hobby, and it is now, at the request of a few friends and fellow-exhibitors, that I venture humbly to lay before the public my own ideas of these birds learnt from experience. In speaking of the French breeds, I merely include the three that are well known now in this country—Crevecoeurs, Houdans and La Fleche. I place Creves first because I believe them to be, if not pure, at least the purest of the three. I find, year after year, that Creves produce Creves. I find also that Houdans produce Houdans—"good" Houdans with Creve combs, Houdans with a strong resemblance to white Dorkings and white Cochins. It has always been my opinion that Houdans are the result of a cross between Creves and white Dorkings or Creves and a cross between white Dorking and white Cochins. I have bred from the former cross, and have obtained a result which has given me great satisfaction, and goes far to prove my conjecture is correct, viz., birds very like Houdans in every point but want of crest and enough black in the plumage. I have obtained a good comb, good beard, fifth claw, and laced grey legs, with excellent shape. I have also obtained a bird excellent in plumage, but with no crest or beard to speak of; and I am convinced that if these birds were again crossed with a Creve, the result would be excellent. I have seen prizes given to Houdans with feathered legs, and I believe these birds have been obtained by crossing a Creve with the offspring of a white Cochins and white Dorking, by which you may obtain nearly everything required in this now popular breed.

I have seen the result of a cross between Creves and Houdans, in some instances a Creve with feathered legs, in others a good Creve with perfect Houdan comb, or a good Houdan or a sort of white Dorking mongrel. I am, therefore, now more than ever convinced of the truth that the Houdan is entirely a manufactured breed, and that it has been, of late especially, crossed back with its original parent, the Creve, and thus it is we see so many Creves now with Houdan combs, and vice versa. Believing, as I have already said the Creve to be, if not entirely, at any rate very near, a pure breed, I think it should be treated as such, and anything that tends to show a cross with other breeds, such as Houdan, &c., should be a disqualification. As regards La Fleche, I believe them, from results I have obtained, to be bred from Creves and Spanish, and then from Creves and Creve-Spanish. I feel fully aware of the fact that these remarks may obtain severe criticism and disapproval of many of our French fanciers, but the old saying is, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating," and what I have asserted is not only conjecture but the result of experiment. In making these remarks I am not in the least anxious to undervalue the popular Houdan, because I well know their worth as well as their beauty; but I am anxious that Houdans should be regarded as, what I believe them to be, a made-up breed, and that breed, and that Creves should be valued and, above all, judged as Creves, and not as a mixed and made-up breed.