

days before she begins : and she then appears very restless, seeking about for a place to lay in, which after some time she will choose : but she will require to be well watched, and means must be employed, to induce her to lay in one of the nests prepared for this purpose, for want of which she will be apt to go to some inconvenient place, and it sometimes happens that it is difficult to discover the eggs ; but after she has settled herself, she will return again to the same nest. There is a considerable difference in the number of eggs that the different breeds will lay, as well as of the chickens in each breed: Some hens will lay an egg every day ; others every other day ; and others, only one in every three days. The best hens for laying are generally considered to be the dark-coloured, black, brown or tawny russet ; the white are not so good. Pullets, in their first year, if early birds, will probably lay as many eggs as ever after ; but the eggs are small, and such young hens are unsteady sitters. The best layers are the Poland breed ; the Dorking are likewise good ; the latter are remarkable for their tameness and good temper, and possess every good quality required in a small stock. Hens are in their prime at three years old, and after four or five years they lay eggs frequently, and cease altogether on becoming very fat ; it is not advantageous to keep them after that period. The eggs should be removed each day as they are laid, as they are liable to be spoiled by the warmth of the hen ; they are best kept for a short time in bran, with the large end uppermost. — *Pictorial Almanac.*

*Figs : their Origin and varieties, and Treatment under Disease. With Directions relative to the Curing and Preserving their Flesh.* By H D. Richardson. Dublin : James M'Glashan.

We notice with pleasure this valuable little treatise, forming as it does a series of a class of cheap and useful works in connection with rural economy. Mr. Richardson has given through his publishers, much valuable information for the benefit of the farmer and others interested in the breeding and rearing of domesticated animals. We give the following account of the Chinese Hog :

The Chinese hog is of small size. His body is very nearly a perfect cylindrical form ; the back slopes from the head, and is hollow, while the belly, on the other hand, is pendulous, and in a fat specimen almost touches the ground. The ear is small and short, inclines to be semi-erect, and usually lies rather backward. The bone is small, the legs fine and short. The bristles are scarcely deserving of the name, being so soft as rather to resemble hair. The skin itself is, in the Siamese variety, of a rich copper colour, and the hair black, a circumstance which gives to the general colour of the animal somewhat the idea of bronzing. In the Chinese variety the colour is usually white, sometimes black, and occasionally

pied. The white sort are deemed preferable, from the superior delicacy of their flesh. The face and head of the Chinese pig are unlike those of any other description of swine, somewhat resembling a calf ; hence, this animal, if once seen, will not easily be forgotten.

But the Siamese and Chinese hogs are very good feeders, and arrive at maturity (a most important particular in the consideration of any description of live stock,) and feed fat, so to speak, on less food, and become, so circumstanced, fatter and heavier within a given time, than any of our European varieties. Those kept in the temples of their native country become, from age and feeding, truly enormous masses of moving fat. The Chinese value the hog very highly ; indeed they live more upon pork than any other description of animal food.

The Chinese take great care of their swine, and pay particular attention to the quality and quantity of their food, feeding them also at regular and stated intervals. They do not permit them to walk, but when necessary, have them carried from one place to another. It is to this attention that we are possibly to attribute the excellent qualities of Chinese pork ; and when it is added, that the Chinese keep the beds and styes of their hogs scrupulously dry and clean, I think that no doubt can longer rest upon the matter. The Chinese hogs that we generally see in this country come from China, principally from the vicinity of Canton, having been brought thence as sea stock. It is scarcely to be regretted that this breed is not sufficiently hardy to thrive in our climate. From this circumstance we are compelled to limit the advantages we might otherwise derive from its introduction to crossing with our own coarser breeds of swine. For this purpose it is truly valuable ; and the improved race, thus produced, is infinitely superior even to its Chinese progenitor, the latter, in a pure state, being too small, and hence answering rather for pork than bacon, besides fattening even too easily. Both these objections are amply obviated in the cross, which has further the effect of restoring diminished fecundity.

The most profitable cross to be resorted to was, in the first instance, found to be between the old English, which is not unlike the present Irish breed, and the black Chinese. This cross at once produced a most capital breed, and a little judicious intermixture afterwards, with proper selection of boar and sow, has eventuated in the desired improvements.

Our author then alludes to the various breeds in the different counties of England, and the Continental varieties, from which we select the following :—

The Berkshire hog is of large size, and is usually, nay, almost invariably, of a reddish brown colour, with black spots and patches. The old breed of Berkshire is now, I believe, extinct, and has been so for many years ; it had maintained a high re-