



## Poultry Yard.

### Domestic Ducks.

THERE is a prevalent belief among farmers that ducks are not profitable poultry. This arises naturally from several causes. The habits of indolence which some possess—the tendency not to hunt their food, but to depend on being fed and the scraps which they pick up about the house—lead farmers to contrast them unfavourably with the wandering turkeys, which find their living and rear their young often in the woods, depending only in winter upon the farmer for their food; and scarcely less favourable with dunghill fowls, which during the summer months require but little food except what they hunt for about the farm. The ducks, besides, though some kinds are excellent layers, are heedless birds, exposing themselves, their eggs and young to crows, rats, turtles, and other vermin, dropping their eggs about, shifting their place of laying if disturbed, inconstant as sitters, and chilling their young by taking them too soon, and too often to the water. Still all these objections may be obviated, in a measure, and ducks really pay very well both in flesh and eggs for the amount of food they consume.

The duck is an omnivorous animal eating almost everything vegetable and animal that comes in its way. Insects of all kinds, worms, pill-worms, fish shellfish (dead or alive,) meat, even that which is partly decomposed, and many green vegetables, grass, seeds, grain, etc. Withal, its appetite is voracious, hence it grows rapidly and fattens easily. The common tame duck is supposed to have descended from the wild Mallard duck, *Anas boschas*, common to this country and Europe. It breeds freely with this species, and also with several other species of wild duck; in some cases the progeny is capable of reproduction of its kind, in others male birds or "mongrels" result. The fact that a very different class of birds are produced where the Mallards are crossed with other species and where the common duck is so crossed, with other points of difference, throws some doubt on the assertion that the Mallard is the parent of our common ducks. Besides efforts to domesticate the Mallard have not been successful as a general thing. We have, however, many wild ducks capable of perfect domestication, and the experiment ought to be well tried with all, for thus our stock of domestic poultry may be essentially increased and improved.

The "Rouen" is a tribe of ducks of great beauty. This breed is the most highly esteemed of all domestic ducks, by many duck breeders. Its habits are quiet, and so it does not wander about and get lost, as ducks often do. It attains a great weight, and is unsurpassed as a layer. An English writer reports that he has frequently known a pair of young drakes nine or ten weeks old to weigh 12 lbs. Sundry writers report very remarkable laying performances of the Rouen ducks. One laid an egg a day for 85 days; three ducks from February to July laid 331 eggs, besides a few soft ones and five double eggs. One of these laid every morning for 92 days. The young ducks often lay in autumn a good clutch of eggs, and it not unfrequently occurs that a duck which is a first-rate layer will manifest no tendency to sit. This variety of ducks has in common with many other kinds great beauty of plumage, which varies somewhat in different individuals. The drakes are heavier than the ducks, but the difference is slight in comparison with the disparity between the sexes in most varieties. The beautiful green heads and necks of the drakes, iridescent with purple and copper hues, set off with a clean white collar and claret-coloured vest, give them a distinguished air which the various colours and distinct markings of the back and wings does not detract from. The females are brown, each feather being marked with black, which gives them a speckled look.

The only variety which really rivals the Rouen as a useful and economical bird is the Aylesbury. These, a purely white English variety, are beautiful birds, and highly esteemed in the markets of Great Britain, as also in the United States where they are known. They are good layers and nurses, not noisy, good feeders and by some decidedly preferred to the

Rouen. The eggs are white, sometimes inclining to blue while those of the Rouen duck are blue, with thick, strong shells; of the two the Rouen has the reputation of being the most hardy. Where ducks are raised for breeders, it is a practice—founded perhaps on prejudice—to set ducks upon their own eggs; but if the young are wanted for market simply, the eggs are put under hens. Hens will hatch a clutch of duck's eggs some two days quicker than ducks will, but it is thought that the young have not such good constitutions. Young ducks raised for market often get injured by being allowed to go freely to the water. They grow faster and stronger if they only have enough to drink, at least for several weeks.—*Am. Agriculturist*.

### Value of Hen Manure.

We saw on the premises of a first-class farmer, the other day, a well constructed hen-house, though not at all complying with the conditions which hen-fanciers would impose. It was designed only for laying and roosting in, and it at first seemed strange to find, at mid day, with a cool atmosphere, turkeys and chickens occupying it. They had free egress and ingress, and were not fed or watered in it, yet the chickens always went there to lay.

The secret was revealed, however, when the proprietor informed us that he had it cleaned out every week. All the droppings of the fowls were scraped from the floor, which was an inclined plain, into a trough or receiver, from which they were shoveled and heaped up, and the place whitewashed once a week. This required but little over half an hour, and the manure from last season was estimated at one hundred and twenty dollars, and quite sufficient in quantity as an application to his entire crop of corn.

As a rule we do not think farmers pay as much attention to their hen houses and the manurial product, as their real importance demands. Here was a most valuable amount of fertilizing material, obtained with little labor, upon the premises, ready for use when needed, which would have cost a heavy sum to provide; besides, from the excellent arrangement of the house, which was by no means expensive, an increase of eggs was obtained, which more than covered all the additional expense in labor, &c.—*German Town Telegraph*.

707 ENGLAND imported a hundred million eggs in the last four months, against eighty million in the same time last year. In the single month of April she imported 12,650,000 eggs, while the number in April 1863, was 28,510,000 only.

A STRANGE BIRD.—The editor of the *Essex Journal* was shown last week a chicken having four legs and four wings and but one head. It was in the possession of Mr Alex. Ouellette who resides in the Grand Marais. It was quite a curiosity, and if it had lived, would have found its way to Barnum's Museum, New York. Mr Ouellette keeps it preserved in spirits.

A CAT HUNT. When a cat is seen to catch a chicken, tie it round her neck, and make her wear it for two or three days. Fasten it securely, for she will make incredible efforts to get rid of it. Be firm for that time and the cat is cured—she will never again deign to touch a bird. That is what we do with our own cats, and what we recommend to our neighbours; and when they try the experiment, they and their pets are secure from reproach and danger henceforth. Try it.—*N. E. Farmer*.

IMPORTANCE OF GRAVEL STONES FOR FOWLS. Reader did you ever dissect the gizzard of a hen, turkey, goose or duck? The gizzard and gravel stones in it, serve the purpose of teeth, in reducing the food to small particles, in order to facilitate digestion. The feed is swallowed in chunks, or the grain is received into the crop unbroken. Here all such substances are softened, and passed, a little at a time, through the gizzard, which is surrounded by strong muscles; and when food is passing through it it dilates and contracts similar to the motion of a bellows and the food, kernels of grain, coming in contact with the gravel stones is separated and torn to pieces. After the process is completed the food is digested. These little mill stones, as it were, do not remain long in the gizzard; they are carried out with the food, and a new set is brought along, from the crop, to be thus ground. Now if fowls are confined, as they often are, where they cannot have access to all the sharp gravel they need, their digestion must be imperfect and they cannot do well, especially if fed on whole grain. Fowls need sharp gravel stones within their reach to swallow every day, and if they do not have a range gravel should be kept by them in their inclosures.—*Boston Callator*.



## The Household.

SCOURING KNIVES.—A subscriber to the *American Agriculturist* writes that the ashes of hard coal, un-mixed with any from wood, are a better article than Bath brick for scouring knives, forks, &c.

A SIMPLE Suet DRESSING. One pound flour, half a pound of chopped suet, a teaspoonful of salt, a quarter do. of pepper, moisten with water until a stiff paste, and use when required. They may be rolled in small balls, and may be used in savory pies, hash or stews.

A FRENCH paper says that by an accident charcoal has been discovered to be a sure cure for burns. By laying a piece of charcoal upon the burn the pain subsides immediately. The remedy is cheap and simple, and deserves a trial.

REMEDY FOR TOOTHACHE.—Oil sassafras and oil cloves, equal parts, is a simple, safe and effectual remedy for toothache that can be cured by any application—mix and apply frequently until the pain ceases, by rubbing upon the gums with the finger each side of the tooth. It will not make the mouth sore nor in any way hurt the teeth. J. H. T.

CEMENT FOR MENDING GLASS, MARBLE, CHINA, EARTHENWARE, &c.—White shellac, 1 oz., dissolved in 2 oz. of spirits of wine 10 grains of borax dissolved in 2 drachms of sulphuric ether. After the ingredients are dissolved, put them together.

Put it on the edges of the broken ware with a brush or feather; then burn it off with a spirit light. Put the pieces together, hold them until they set, and they will be as firm as they were before they were broken.

DEATH IN THE SWEET-MEAT JARS.—A child was recently poisoned in Pennsylvania so that death ensued, from eating apple-butter which had been kept in a glazed jar. This glazing contains an active poison—the oxide of lead—which is dissolved by fruit acids and is extremely dangerous to life. All such substances as apple-butter and the like should be kept in wood or glass vessels, so as to avoid the possibility of mischief. The above is not a solitary instance, as many similar ones have occurred.

CURE FOR POISON IVY.—I have twice cured myself, when poisoned with ivy, by immersing the poisoned parts in soft soap for thirty or forty minutes. The first time I tried this I merely put my feet in the soap, because it made them feel better; the second time, it being on my hands, I put them in soap to cure them, and it did it. Let every one so afflicted try this remedy, and I assure them they will be glad they took the *Genesee Farmer*, and feel their obligation to make known any similar discovery which they may make.—E. D. W., Pierpoint, Ohio, in *Genesee Farmer*.

RUSTIC PICTURE FRAMES.—Rustic work for this and other purposes, is in great favor now-a-days in the fashionable world, and many and beautiful are the imitations of bark, rough wood, leaves, vines upon bark and twigs of trees, etc. They are cast in bronze, zinc and iron, for picture frames and similar purposes. Papier-maché is also pressed into a multitude of rustic forms of great beauty, and the wood carvers exercise their skill in producing in oak, black walnut, and butternut, devices representing rural things.

With a little care in selection, and skill in handling tools, we may frame our photographs and engravings and crayons with rustic work as much more beautiful than the costly product of the bronze foundry, as nature is superior to art. Oak wood denuded of the bark, presents a beautifully corrugated surface, out of which the knife easily removes the few fibres which adhere, and it is ready for varnishing as soon as it is seasoned. The "season cracks," should they occur, may be filled with dark brown putty, and will even heighten the general effect. Pieces, of suitable diameter, sawed carefully in two, lengthwise, are very easily worked, matched at the corners, etc., and make strong durable frames. Wood having beautiful bark, not too rough, covered partly perhaps, by close clinging lichens, is very pretty, wrought into frames in the same way, and when one once begins to make such things, it is remarkable how many beautiful objects he will find ready to his hand.—*Scientific American*.