

## Poultry.

## Aylesbury and Rouen Ducks.

The accompanying cut represents two kinds of our most profitable and leading ducks. The distinctive characteristics of the Aylesbury duck are great size, immaculate purity of white plumage, a large, broad, pale flesh-colored bill, a dark, prominent eye, orange legs stately carriage, and excellence in quality as market birds. Aylesburys are, if well fed, prolific layers of fine eggs, the shells of those laid by the best strains being of a clear white. As sitters, Aylesburys are better mothers than Rouens, not being so unwieldy in their actions. The former are also noted for their hardiness and early maturity. This is a large breed, weighing 17 to 18 pounds to the pair. By careful feeding they may be induced to begin laying by Christmas, and if a warm house be had and the eggs set, and the ducklings kept rapidly growing, in eight or ten weeks they will be ready for market. The Rouen duck is simply a variety of the common domesticated Mallard, increased in size by abundant feeding and the careful selection of breeding stock, and corresponding precisely with it in every respect in the details and marking of the plumage. The head of the Rouen duck is long, fine, and of a rich, lustrous green, the wings are of a grayish brown, mixed with green, with a broad ribbon-mark of rich purple and metallic reflections of blue and green, edged with white. In weight Rouens exceed that of any of the other varieties; they are more lethargic and consequently more speedily fed than any others. They lay great numbers of large eggs, the average weight of which should always be above three ounces. The color of the egg is a blue-green, the shell being considerably thicker than in the eggs of the Aylesbury breed. As regards the consumption of food, the Rouens require more than the other varieties.

## Poultry at the Western Fair.

This year the commodious building in which the poultry exhibit at this fair generally took place was literally given over to dogs, and the poultry show had to be held in a less convenient building, which does not speak very highly of the wisdom of the directors advancing the interest, to say the best of it, of a lot of dog fanciers, to the detriment of one of the best paying (although small) industries on the farm. The exhibit, on the whole, was very good, but the same defect noticeable at all the fairs was apparent here, namely, the smallness of the coops. The birds being shown in pairs, the cages were entirely too small; this was especially so in the large classes, particularly the turkeys and geese, which were cramped up with scarcely room to turn around.

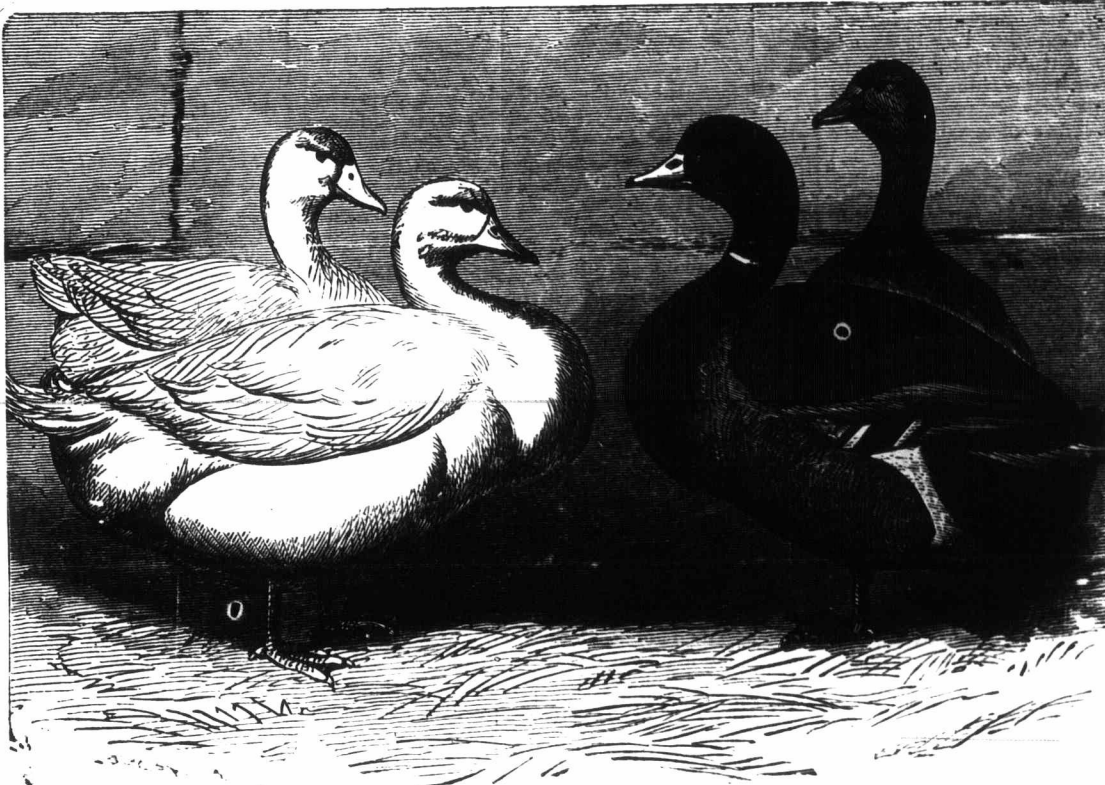
Showing the birds in pairs did not seem to be in much favor with the majority of exhibitors, many of the best birds receiving no prize because its companion was not up to the mark. It would be far better to adopt the plan of the Ontario Poultry Association, and award the prizes to single birds. The giving a third prize in most of the classes is unnecessary, to say the best; it is a doubtful

honor, and is frequently the means of a prize being given to a worthless bird. The fair taking place so late in the season, the majority of the birds were out of feather, and were frequently the subject of uncomplimentary remarks from the uninitiated, but if the same birds were seen in all the brightness of their plumage, a very different opinion would be expressed. The crowds which filled the building during the time the poultry was on exhibition, ought to convince the directors of its popularity.

## Green Food for Winter Use.

BY HENRY IVES.

In addition to the supply of green food put in store for poultry in the winter, as recommended in September number of *ADVOCATE*, under the above heading, I would recommend a practice which I followed for years in renovating my garden plots, which also proved to be of great advantage to my stock of poultry by way of "Green food for winter use," and as every lover of poultry must be also interested in good garden management, I will state how I made this one practice quite profitable



AYLESBURY AND ROUEN DUCKS.

for both. The greatest need of one's garden is to have a change by seeding down and lying more or less time under a dense growth of some grass, or grain, to well shade the soil, and green manure it either by top dressing it or by its being plowed under. I do this, besides having the full annual use of my garden, by putting all plants and vegetables that are to come off early into one section, or half of the garden; these will be cleared off, and the ground sowed to oats or rye, or both, as early usually as middle of August or first of September. This will grow to make a heavy vegetable growth, covering the ground, keeping it from going to weeds or barrenness, and will very much renovate the soil ready for another season's use. Then the next year to reverse the order of planting, that I can serve the other half of the garden in the same way; thus once in two years all the garden will have the change of a green crop for rest, and for plowing under. As I adopted this plan for my garden management, I found incidentally that it was a great source of "green food" supply for my stock of poultry in the winter. As most of gardens are near to the barn, the hens will delight to come out all mild days of the winter and get a good, fresh airing, while plucking and eating quite greedily of the leaves of such a crop growing near by within their reach. For this purpose, as well as for the stocking purpose, oats will make about

double the growth that any thing else would for the fall, and they usually keep green until after Christmas; then for the rest of the winter they stand stiff and erect, so as to hold the drifting snow and keep the land well blanketed from winter blasts, after this, for spring tillage. Land treated in this way will be more friable and cleaner for the following season's tillage, and the hens will commence laying earlier, and be more productive for being treated with this growing green winter food. But for all contingencies of "spells of weather" and the like, a stock of green food should be put in store besides, as recommended in article referred to.

## Poultry Past and Present.

In an address before the Indiana Poultry Breeders' Ass'n, Mr. A. M. Halstead, of Rye, N. Y., compared the poultry and poultry management and production of the past and present, as follows:

The extent and importance to which the interest has grown is almost incredible: especially so to those who remember how, in their boyhood days, the chickens were looked upon as a necessary nuisance; to be tolerated because the female portion of the household looked to them for a supply of pin-money.

In those days—and those, to us, by-gone days are still to be found exemplified in many sections of the country—the fowls were regarded as a species of freebooters, living by their wits and preying upon the industry of the men-folks. They roamed when and where they pleased. If perchance they made too free with the newly planted garden, the dog was called to oust them, and the children encouraged by their elders, pelted them with stones, sticks, or whatever was most handy. They roosted in summer in the trees around the dooryard; in winter, under hovels and sheds, on the carts, wagons, ladders, or wherever they could find a place.

For nests they had the whole farm. The manger in the stable, the hay-mow in the barn; the old sleigh under the cartshed;

the blackberry patch, in the corner of the hog yard; the brush heap, in the wood yard or the high grass in the neighboring meadow. Semi-prodigious egg hunts were made and the eggs obtained were sent to the country store, and traded off for needles, thread, or other etceteras, many of these eggs proving to the final possessors too old for omelets, and too young for broilers.

With the young chickens the chances were the same. If a hen succeeded in hiding her nest, so neither human nor animal foe discovered it, she usually brought out a brood of chicks nearly as wild as young partridges. Later in the season, as eggs became more plentiful at the stores, some hens were set, and as fast as the chicks got old enough, they were killed and sold as broilers those which were too wild to catch, and too late hatched to bring good prices, being left for stock for the next season. This was the only "survival of the fittest" known to the poultry keeper of those days. As to feed, the wood pile, barnyard, hog-pen and kitchen door steps, were the "restaurants" of the summer; while in winter a few handfuls of corn in the morning were thought to be all that was necessary.

The weight of the fowls of those days was from three to three and a half pounds. Occasionally a "bouncer" of five pounds caused the neighbors to inquire into the "why and wherefore" of its superior size.