

## HOME AND FARM.

This department of THE CRITIC is devoted exclusively to the interests of the Farmers in the Maritime Provinces. Contributions upon Agricultural topics, or that in any way relate to Farm life, are cordially invited. Newsy notes of Farmers' gatherings or Grange meetings will be promptly inserted. Farmers' wives and daughters should make this department in THE CRITIC a medium for the exchange of ideas on such matters as more directly affect them.

*Editor Critic.*—Straw is going to be very dear this winter, what can be substituted for bedding besides sawdust, which I know is used, but which I cannot very conveniently obtain?  
E. D. C.

Sawdust, if obtainable, makes, as you seem to be aware, very good bedding; perhaps the best as a substitute; but some attention seems to have been given to this subject latterly, and some other substitutes have been suggested. Dry sand for one, but that is not easy to get in many places, and, besides, would be deficient in warmth for winter use. But this objection would not apply to leaves, which could be collected and stored in a dry place before the snow covered the ground. They are excellent also in the poultry house, being good for the hens to scratch amongst, and, when scratched fine, making a good absorbing material. Gathering leaves into headless barrels, buckets, old sacks, or any other receptacles, would be capital work for children. Your question has, we fear, come rather late for this year, but the idea may be "doubled down," and would be found of considerable value.

We have also known shavings to be used, but, if used, they should be as fine as possible.

H. M.—It is always advantageous to cover rhubarb or other perennial garden vegetable roots with a dressing of manure. It not only fertilizes, but protects, and, although many such plants are hardy enough, they are all the better for protection. If applied early, the best constituents of the manure will be largely worked in by the fall rains before the ground freezes. Like our correspondent replied to above, your question comes too late, and it should be remembered that queries, unless they come to hand on an opportune day, cannot be answered in a weekly, as they might in a daily, journal.

The essentials for the preservation of onions are dryness, thorough ventilation, coolness and freedom from frost, or, if frozen, they must not be permitted to thaw and freeze again.—*New England Farmer.*

J. Y.—There is much difference of opinion as to the proportion of cocks to hens. Some persons think there should be one rooster to even four or five hens; some consider one to ten or twelve enough. What is advisable, however, depends on breed, and on the requirements of the poultry keeper. These points are noted in the paragraphs we subjoin from the *New England-Farmer*:—

"The freshest eggs are the best for hatching; and those from the second laying are better than those from the first. To insure fertility of eggs, the fowls must have exercise, green food, and the cocks and hens be together for at least a week previous. One vigorous cock to every fifteen or twenty hens is enough for the Plymouth Rocks, Dominiques, Wyandottes, and the non-sitting breeds, when they have free range.

If you desire eggs only, numbers, not size, select Hamburgs or Leghorns. If you want non-sitters that will lay good sized eggs, choose Houdans, Black Spanish or La Fliche. If you want winter layers or fowls to sell dressed for the fall or winter market, take Brahmas, Cochins, Langshans, or Plymouth Rocks. If you want chicks for early spring market select Plymouth Rocks, Dominiques or Wyandottes."

These remarks cover the ground briefly, but very comprehensively; and, while we are on the subject of poultry, we will once more, as the winter is about to set in, repeat one or two cautions we have given many times before.

We are inclined to think that poultry often suffer a good deal in winter from lack of attention in supplying them with water. Want of pure water may often sufficiently account for scarcity of eggs. Twice a day, morning and evening, we consider fowls should be supplied with fresh water, and unless in soft weather, it should be well warmed. It is no good putting down much at a time, or filling large vessels, as it only freezes, but if regularity is observed, fowls soon learn to drink all that is necessary for them morning and evening, that is to say, latish in the afternoon, as they go to roost early, and remain on the roost till late in the dark winter mornings.

Keep fowl houses as clean, dry and warm, as possible, and use kerosene if vermin become prevalent. On this important point we give another extract from the *New England Farmer*:—

"If the *Rural New Yorker's* poultry investigations have determined one thing more valuable than others, it is the use of kerosene and spraying bellows for exterminating lice in the easiest and cheapest way. A poultry house ten feet square can be thoroughly kerosened in a minute, the fine spray penetrating every crack and crevice. There is no need whatever of whitewash or the use of any other material for this purpose. The kerosene vapor is effectual."

With attention to these simple points, and a little care in feeding, fowls ought to do thoroughly well. As regards food, there ought always to be a warm breakfast, say boiled vegetables, or what comes from the table, crumbs, &c., mixed with cornmeal (not too much), oatmeal, bran, shorts, (wheat screenings if you want to promote laying) The mixture should not be sloppy, but stiff, and seasoned with salt (not too much) and pepper, as you would season your own food, or a little more. A little chopped up meat mixed in is always good.

For dinner give a few handfuls of sunflower seed, buckwheat, or what not, scattered among the litter where the fowls exercise. For supper, such grain as you have, and if you feed whole corn, supper is the time to feed it, as it has plenty of time to do all the good it can by thorough digestion during the night.

We trust our poultry-raising readers will note these practical hints, as we have given a good deal of our limited space to the treatment of poultry, and desire to have it more free for some time to come for appropriation to other matters on which we have been asked for information or comment.

**CLEANLINESS IN MILK.**—"Don't dip your fingers in the pail of milk to lubricate the cow's teats while milking," says a practical writer. "Good dairymen absolutely prohibit the practice, because it taints the milk, and consequently injures the quality of the product from the milk. Bathing the teats and bag in cool water in the summer takes off the dirt, and it soothes the cow. This cannot be done in winter or the teats will chafe and crack. Rub the teats and udder with the hand, and much of the dirt and scarf-skin will come off. The scarf-skin is very hard to keep out of the milk, and imparts to it that 'cow-barn' taste that is so offensive. Pulling down on the teats to get the milk from them is very painful for the cow, and not the best way to get the milk from the teats. Grasp the teat with the full hand, and squeeze without pinching, or the cow will kick. See that the finger nails are closely trimmed. A cow ought to kick when pinched by a long, horny finger nail. Hold the pail, in which the milking is done, away from the cows, and then there will not be so much danger from a kick, and the constantly falling hairs, dirt and dandruff will not get in the milk. John Gould, the experienced dairyman of Ohio, says truly that good butter is half made when the milk is taken from the cow in a cleanly manner.

Some farmers may get a hint as to preserving posts, etc., from the following method employed in Norway on telegraph poles, as given in the *Scientific American*. In each pole a hole is bored with a small auger, beginning at a point two feet above the ground and boring obliquely downward at as small an angle as possible until the point of the auger reaches the center of the pole. The hole thus made is filled with sulphur of copper, which is renewed from time to time. The hole is kept plugged. It is found that the crystals of copper sulphate disappear slowly, while the wood gradually assumes a greenish tint.

## OUR COSY CORNER.

When ivory-handled knives turn yellow, rub them with nice sand-paper or emery; it will take off all the spots, and restore their whiteness.

The *Delineator* is a monthly magazine, wholly devoted to fashion and the household, and furnishes a full and readable account of all novelties coming within its sphere.

A silver crumb-knife and a silver tray were once considered necessary for use between dinner and dessert. Then followed brass trays and crumb-brushes with brass backs; but nowadays a neatly folded colored napkin and a fancy china plate are fashionable, and form the daintiest of crumb-removers.

For evening gowns, especially those of net or tulle, are shown magnificent crush roses, great Japanese or white lilies and enormous chrysanthemums. These are arranged near the edge of the skirt and slightly at one side, their crushed air making them particularly popular for this arrangement, inasmuch as they do not suffer by wear.

It is again fashionable to serve luncheon and supper upon polished, uncovered tables; but not only is the first cost of such an article considerable, but much labor is required to keep them highly polished. When groups of glasses, delicate cups, plates, etc., are arranged upon them, each upon an embroidered or *damassé* doley, the effect is beautiful.

A tailor-made dress of white cloth, extremely simple in design, but of exquisitely fine material, is a new idea for the wedding costume; and as such a dress is a valuable addition to an lady's wardrobe, the innovation is likely to be well accepted. The dress need not be all of wool. A skirt of moire antique in a pearl-white shade, made with perfectly plain broadths, serves to relieve the long hanging draperies of white ladies'-cloth or serge. Silver braiding may be employed on the jacket.

Velvet ribbon is applied in straight lines on full skirts, as it was some years ago. With these skirts are worn round bodices, with cuffs, collar and belt of velvet. Round waists have a tendency to get above the belt and make its use seem a farce, and experience has proven that the only way to prevent this is to have a large eye at the back of the bodice and a hook correspondingly placed on the skirt. These little things can scarcely be counted as trimmings, but, after all, anything that tends to preserve the air of completeness about a toilette is a decoration of the best sort, for it keeps the gown what a sailor would call "taut."

Bridesmaids' gowns are frequently made of moire antique with floral stripes *jardinière* patterns. This material is to be had in white and all delicate evening colors with brocaded stripes, and the costumes are made up à la Dresden china shaperdees, with bouffant draperies, and a pointed basque cut with Pompadour square neck and elbow sleeves. A lace hat and a hand-basket of roses complete the toilet. Lace skirts with basques and sashes of moire also constitute pretty dresses for bridesmaids. The maid of honor may wear a costume similar to those worn by the others, or one of white surah or India silk, with full waist and shirred skirt, a sash, a corsage bouquet of yellow or pink roses, and tan-colored Suède slippers and gloves.