

this vicinity and sold for a Dorking, though it may be the most common dung-hill that walks. Perhaps one out of seven or ten of the pure breed have only four toes, so that to show five toes is by no means an evidence of purity of blood. We hope this observation will be remembered, to prevent imposition.

It is difficult to describe the Dorking fowl, or indeed, any animal, so exact as to prevent imposition, although a good one will be recognized at once by those familiar with the breed. The prominent points are a fine head with brilliant eyes, and single or double combs, in both sexes; a graceful neck, rather short than long; wide, deep, projecting breast: great length of body, which is round rather than flat or square; and fine short legs, when we consider their large size. The port is usually majestic, and a pleasing, quiet air of good breeding pervades their general appearance. The colours are various, from a yellowish white to jet black. Those, however, speckled with dark and yellow brown and white, or streaked with silver grey, are most esteemed. Cocks with dark speckled breasts, and reddish burnished wings, are most to our taste, though the silver grey are frequently preferred by others. They are thickly feathered, hardy, good layers, steady setters, and the best of nurses. They are very gentle birds, fond of being petted, and though far from cowardly, are not at all pugnacious. Their meat is excellent, being lean and tender.—They are preferred in England to all other breeds for capons. Well fattened, they usually weigh from 7 to 10 lbs., and often go as high as 12 lbs. or more. We speak of capons only as attaining these great weights.

Just as we had written the above, we received the following letter from Capt. Morgan:

St. Katherine's Dock, London, April 14, 1845.

My Dear Sir,—Your letter requesting me to get some more Dorking fowls, I have received, and assure you it is not so easy as you may imagine. I shall write to Mr. Courtney again, who lives near Dorking; and procured those last for me. He told me, and I have also ascertained the same from other quarters, that there is none to be obtained here, unless of a mongrel breed. The real Dorking fowls that you see in London, will not breed; you must therefore wait until I get them for you. They will cost about \$4 each, without freight and looking after, which would be about as much more, for a small lot; but this I will do for you with pleasure, for old acquaintance sake.

Yours truly,

E. E. MORGAN.

Soon after the reception of this letter, Capt. Morgan arrived here in his own ship, bringing a noble cock and five superb pullets of the Dorking breed. The pullets laid nearly the whole voyage, a thing unexampled, he says, by any other breed of fowls crossing the Atlantic with him. The pullets weigh $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 7 lbs., the cock $8\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. When full grown, the latter will probably weigh 10 lbs., in ordinary condition.

To conclude, neither Capt. Morgan, of the Victoria, nor Mr. L. F. Allen, of Black Rock, wish to be troubled with applications for Dorking fowls.—What they keep is entirely for their own use. Dr. Field, of this city, and the Messrs. Carpenter, of Poughkeepsie, have been furnished with some of our own and Capt. Morgan's first importation to breed from, and now have a few young ones for sale. The price is \$5 per pair, caged and delivered on-board a vessel either at Poughkeepsie or this city (New York).—*New England Farmer.*

STEEPING SEEDS.

We submit the following article from the *Agricultural Gazette* to our friends among the farmers, and would venture to recommend they should make the experiments therein suggested:—

In the present number of the *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture*, there is an interesting paper by Professor Johnston, on "the Manuring and Steeping of Seeds." The facts there recorded, and the manner in which they are shown to be, what the known laws of Vegetable Chemistry and Physiology would lead us to expect, combine to render this a subject to which the experimental Agriculturist may usefully direct his attention.

The advantage of steeping seeds in certain chemical solutions seems to have been first pointed out by F. H. Bickes, of Castel, near Mayence. He announced his discovery in a lately published pamphlet, "on the Cultivation of Soil without Manure." Notwithstanding the extravagance indicated in its title, and which characterizes it throughout, this publication records some surprising facts and testimonials on this subject; and these have lately been corroborated by the experiments of Mr. Campbell of Dundee. A letter descriptive of the method of doctoring seeds, adopted by the latter gentleman, and of their consequences as exhibited in the growing plants, has just been published in the Transactions of the English and the Highland Agricultural Societies—an extract from it will be found appended to this. Mr. Campbell's experiments were performed upon seeds planted in the clay, taken from eight feet below the surface of the ground; and though under such unfavourable circumstances, the wheat plants from them tillered into five or eight stems, while those from unprepared seeds had only two or three stems apiece. That, however, which is broadly asserted in the German pamphlet is also hinted at by Mr. Campbell—viz., that steeping seeds in suitable solutions, will render all future application of manure unnecessary. This is a statement which no practical farmer can for one moment entertain, and therefore, we are glad that it is not necessary to suppose it to be true, before we can believe that this process may sometimes be beneficially adopted.

It seems probable, that by some such means as those suggested by Messrs Campbell and Bickes, the period of germination, which is one full of danger to the young plant, may in many cases be shortened; and this is very desirable, for owing to the conversion of the starch of the seed into sugar, which is then proceeding, the plant is at that time liable to attacks from all sorts of vermin. In the case of the turnip, especially, any means which would hurry it through this period into the rough-leaved stage of its growth, would be most useful, as it is only when its leaves are sweet that it is liable to the attacks of the fly.

But from the results of some of Mr. Campbell's experiments, we may infer that the influence of his process extends into the future history of the plant, much beyond the period of its germination; and it is on this account that we would recommend it now, as a suitable subject of experiment for wheat growers. The mineral ingredients of wheat amount to about one-fiftieth of its weight; and, from the mere fact of their existence in the seed, it is probable that they exert an important influence over its germination and future growth. Any artificial addition to their quantity—and, by soaking wheat in certain solutions, we can double the natural quantity of its mineral constituents—will therefore increase that influence.

The following are the substances which, besides the four elements composing its organic structure, are to be found in wheat:—soda, potash, lime, magnesia, sulphuric acid, phosphoric acid, silica, alumina, and chlorine.

It would probably not be difficult to dissolve in water such matter in such quantities that the solution should contain in their natural proportions all these mineral substances; so that wheat, by being steeped in it, would merely increase the quantity of its mineral ingredients, without at all disturbing the balance among them which