

constant crie. We may observe it is the duck that quacks, not the drake. Some chroniclers of the fifteenth century, held that ducks were the produce of decomposed plants; as we find it occasionally asserted now that barnacles are produced from the shell of that name adhering to the sides of ships. As the child when asked what it was made of, replied, "beef," so the duck, feeding in marshes, may be said to be made of its weeds.

Spread over every country on the globe, and nourished alike on animal and vegetable productions, they are omnivorous. Reared with great facility, and maturing quickly, the attention for the poultry keeper is naturally directed to them.

The Aylesbury duck can be successfully reared where running water and gravel abound; the Rouen in any locality. In size and speedy growth, the former has a slight advantage; but the perfect white plumage and flesh-colored bill, now affected at exhibitions, cannot be perfected save in the neighbourhood of Aylesbury, where the soil and gravel are special.

The first eggs are usually infertile; wild birds desert theirs.

Abundantly fed and the eggs removed, the duck lays upwards of one hundred eggs, but requires solitude to hatch, and is best supplanted by the hen, which can be had earlier and managed more easily. Nine eggs will suffice for a sitting. Some persons leave space for a few hen eggs in the clutch, putting them down eight days later. They affirm that the little ones are taught better manners by their more astute faster brethren. As the eggs of the duck are more liable to a chill during incubation than those of other fowl, they should be covered with a cloth while the bird is feeding. When the young issue forth, at the end of twenty-eight or thirty days, they can be fed for the first week on worms chopped, rough crumbled bread, steeped in water or milk, then barley or Indian meal; and when about three weeks old, nettles or chopped vegetables may be added at discretion. Greaves or chopped meat may be given before killing or fattening for exhibition. Next to goslings, the rat prefers ducklings, so that care must be taken that this Norwegian invader does not skedaddle with them in his frequent raids. The cat, a penny for the rat's head, and careful poisoning will drive off this pirate.

Very young ducklings must be kept from getting into water, and thereby contracting cramp; daily renewed litter is imperative in their rearing, and a flat board with a ledge to spread their food upon, as it should not be liquid enough to run.

Mules, much bred in the south of France, are the produce of the Muscovy drake, and either Aylesbury or Rouen ducks. Their eggs are abundant and their flesh is delicate. The mule does not reproduce except with one or other of the parent species. The first cross is best adapted for use. Little water suffices them.

The drake may be allowed from six to seven companions, with more the eggs would be unproductive.

The black East Indian ducks, shining with a green metallic lustre, are very pretty. They usually pair.

The Cayuga or lake duck of America, is said to be hardy and of a good size. It is a good layer,

and its weight is equal to the Rouen, eight to nine pounds. The color, brown black, white collar, and white flakes on neck and breast, faint green on head, neck and wings.

Soft water is better than hard for ducks; clearness not a desideratum. When for immediate use, the duck is killed by strangulation; if for transport or long keeping, the throat is cut, care being taken not to soil the plumage, which is most useful to the careful housekeeper, as the feathers are considered nearly equal to those of the goose. They can be plucked like the latter bird, with moderation and are nearly as profitable. The time for molting is generally after incubation, which is the proper time to pluck.

Eider down constitutes a source of industry amongst many of the polar region inhabitants, who, at the peril of their lives, seek in rocky clefts nests made of sea herbs, where the Eider duck lays her eggs on a bed of down torn from her breast, and again and again renewed the male aiding if required.

On the canals and rivers of China, the raising of ducks is carried on in boats, from which they are sent to feed on the brink of the rivers, and recalled by the sound of a trumpet and a trained dog. As in bee-keeping, the boats change their locality at will, for a fresh field of nourishment. A boat is capable of lodging 2,000 ducks.

The mean term of the duck's life is from twelve to fifteen years, and it is of all birds of the poultry yard the most robust. Its eggs excel those of the hen for omelettes or pastries, but are not as easily whipped for creams, &c. by the cook, and are therefore not such favourites with that artist.

There are many varieties of duck which my space will not allow me to specify. Among them are the Bahama, a very graceful bird; the Carolina and Mandarin, both very beautiful, and the Canvas-back, which is computed by American consumers to have a most delicate flavour, and weighs about four pounds.

I condense from the *Standard of Excellence*, published by the Poultry Club, the following:—

Aylesbury.—*Bill*, long and broad; side view as straight as possible from top of head to tip of bill; flesh coloured, and free from black marks; *neck*, long and graceful; *body*, long and deep; *back*, long and broad; *wings*, well up and strong; *tail*, stiff, curled in the drake; *thigh*, short; *legs*, short and strong, light orange; *plumage*, pure white.

Rouen.—Drake's *bill* same in shape as Aylesbury; colour, greenish yellow, with black bean at tip.

Duck's *bill*, broad, long, flat, brownish orange, with dark blotch on upper end; *plumage* of both like the wild mallard and his mate. White in the flight feathers of either; clear yellow, dark green, blue, or lead coloured bills; and birds down behind from excessive fat, are disqualifications.

JAMES C. COOPER.

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#### LIVE STOCK GLEANINGS.

THE *Marshall* (Iowa) *Times*, says a cow in that vicinity recently dropped three living calves at one birth; and the trio are doing well, and likely to live.

MILTON MERRIFIELD, of Providence, caught fifty-