

BEES AND POULTRY.

FIRST STEPS.

Very few make the industry their only one. The majority keep them in addition to some other business. The former require special preparation by reading and practise, to reach best success, but the majority do not need such grounding. When ready the first thing will be choice of site, which should be within good honey supplies, and not near large bodies of water, ponds, etc.—returning heavy-laden, bees often drop into the water and are chilled to death. Shelter the hives from high and cold winds, if not by trees, then by a board fence, and when thus sheltered face the hives south or east.

The hives should be near the house where they may be always and readily in sight, and quickly reached in swarming, etc. They should not be too near the roads, and should be in as retired a place as possible, and safe from intrusion of animals, etc. The hives should not stand closer together than ten feet, then queens will not be so easily lost, and the bee-keeper has more room to work. Let the hives stand level, about three inches from the ground, and clear the space about them and cover with white sand, gravel, sawdust, etc. When high stands are used many bees are lost by missing the entrance and perish on the ground.

Buy your bees in spring, and get them in movable comb hive if possible, they costing about \$8 to \$10 for bees and hives. The "movable comb" hive was invented by Rev. L. L. Langstrath in 1850, and another form of it by the great German bee-keeper, Dzierzon.

This hive created a revolution in bee-culture, the chief points being these:

Each comb is put into a frame (itself movable), instead of being fastened to the sides and top of the hive, and the hives are in such form that you can examine the combs or bees at any time without trouble.

You can take out the frames at any time, and remove them to other hives, or extract the honey, and replace them for refilling. You can see how much honey is in store, the strength of the colony, and can increase or lessen it and can even regulate what number shall be raised.

You can prevent swarming, or rather can make swarms at your leisure and pleasure simply by dividing the colonies. And you can also detect the presence of any enemies, such as moth-worm, foul-brood, etc.

But you must not think that all that is necessary is to get one of these improved hives, full of good bees and, without further intelligent care, that honey will flow into a ripe shower of dollars.

LOST QUEENS.

This often happens when the queen flies to meet the drone, and the day after the bees will be seen greatly excited, flying and running about outside the hives, and from one to another. Some will go to other hives, but towards mid-day the rush cools down, only to reappear next morning in a fainter form, and it stops after the third day, the bees returning to their usual work of bringing in stores.

Sometimes a hive will contain two queens, at the same time, for weeks and months, although the rule is that only one reigns at a time.

COCHINS.

This breed has attracted more attention and brought higher prices for a longer time than any other, but its chief glory has passed.

It was the chief cause of the famous "poultry mania" that swept England and America nearly forty years ago—one of the most remarkable "crazes" of modern days.

For a single bird \$500 was often paid, or for a

pen of them, and an interest in poultry-keeping was excited that has steadily increased.

They were the first of the kind ever seen there (in 1847), and some peculiar merits were claimed for them among their true ones.

When the reaction took place people went to the opposite extreme and abused the breed unjustly, for they have many good points, which the present generation is cultivating with profit.

The varieties of Cochins are "White," "Buff," and "Partridge." The less common are "Black," "Grouse," "American" and "Cuckoo," all being named from colour.

The "Black" is difficult to keep colour unstained. The "Cuckoo" results from a cross with the "Gueldres," and the "Grouse" is simply a dark partridge. Their general form and appearance are the same—full, deep, and wide. The breast should be broad and full—neck very short, back short and very broad, and legs short and wide apart.

The cock should weigh ten or eleven pounds, and a good one thirteen pounds, hens eight to ten pounds.

The legs are heavily feathered to the toes and thighs well covered with downy feathers or "fluff" and when this and the other feathering is fine the birds are well bred.

The legs are yellow with sometimes a tinge of red, but white or green legs are not advisable.

The breast is smallish and neat—comb medium size, neat, straight and evenly cut, must not be notched or twisted if for show pen.

The ear-lobes pure red, without any white. The tail of the cock is small, but larger than the hens which is very small, and neither should stand very erect or stiff. The hens being nearly covered by the plentiful "saddle feathers."

The wings, in both, are very small and closely folded neatly to the body, and the saddle feathers form a cushion on the hind part of the back. The whole appearance is noble and striking.

The "White," must be pure in colour without a feather of any other colour.

The "Buff" varies in shade of colour, but the birds in a pen should agree, and a little black may occur in the tails of cock and hen without harm. The hackles, back, saddle hackles, and wing coverts of the "Buff" cock are of a rich gold colour. If the neck hackle is pencilled with black it is a bad fault, but a necklace not clouded is not a serious blemish.

The chickens of this variety usually come lighter in colour than the old birds, and the latter get a little lighter colour also after each moult, and this requires the breeding birds to be kept a couple of shades darker.

The "Partridge" hen's neck hackles are striped with black or bright gold, the body is light brown colour with very dark brown markings.

The cock's hackles and saddle, bright red, black stripe—back dark red, wings same colour, with a clear crossbar of green black—breast and under body black, but not mottled.

The Cochins are very hardy—thrive under very unfavourable circumstances, and grow fast, though they feather slowly. They bear confinement well; are quiet, and domestic, peaceable and easily made pets. They cannot fly over a two feet fence; the hens make the best of sitters and mothers, and are good layers, especially in winter.

The flesh is not as good as some other breeds, though pretty fair when young; the hens are also apt to get too fat for good layers, and every couple of dozen eggs they lay want to "set," which is awkward when eggs are wanted, but a blessing if chickens are in demand.

Cochins are subject to a disease called "White Comb," a powdery eruption on comb and wattles, if not prevented, spreading all over the body, the feathers falling off. This arises from dirt and

want of green food, and the remedy is plenty of the latter, and a few purges of six grains of jalap at intervals of two or three days; the comb, etc., being dressed with an ointment of four parts coconut oil, two oz. powdered turmeric, and one of sulphur.

The Cochin cannot be called a good market fowl (unless crossed with say Dorking or Creve-cœur), nor where eggs are the sole want is this breed advisable.

SUNFLOWER SEED.

A subscriber writes us to learn if sunflower seed is good for poultry: We have used it with good success this year, and find it gives the plumage of our birds a glossy and smooth appearance. At first, our fowls would not eat them, not seeming to distinguish them from sticks or stones, but in a short time they learned to open the shells, and devour the kernels as though they had not been fed, while corn and other grains were scattered on the ground. Their change was soon noticeable; and we would advise all breeders to feed sunflower seed; it is not necessary to use a large quantity; we feed a small quantity once a day, and find it sufficient. We think the amusement of breaking the shells will turn out just the thing when our birds are cooped up this winter, as it will divert their attention from egg-eating, feather-plucking and similar mischief.—*Fanciers' Exchange Bulletin*.

HANDLING BEES.

After we have procured our stock of bees, it is essential to know how to handle them, be they Italian, black or hybrid. To the practical hand it is no task to open a hive and "go through" it, as the bee-men say. But to the novice it looks like a great undertaking to open a hive with its thousands of stingers that seem each and every one of them ready to pass out and plant themselves where they will do the most good. Now, the secret is this: Bees when filled with honey are not inclined to sting unless they are squeezed. To cause them to fill themselves with honey it is only necessary to frighten them and they will rush to save their most valuable property. Closing the entrance and rapping upon the side of the hive a few times, or blowing smoke into the entrance or down among them from the top will make them load up and be docile. But the actions of the person have much to do with it also; it almost seems as though bees know a person who is afraid of them. In going to a hive and opening it make slow, deliberate motions, and keep your hands away from your face, unless put there slowly. I have known many persons to be stung by quickly throwing their hands up to their face when an angry bee came around, the bee taking it as a challenge to fight. First, get a good bellows-smoker to begin with, fire it up with dry, rotten wood; approach the hive from the side to be out of the way of the flying bees, and give one or two strong puffs at the entrance. Wait a minute or two for this to have effect, then move the cap with as little jar as possible, remove the quilt or honey board as carefully, blowing a little smoke as you do so, and give the bees a little time to fill themselves with honey. The little fellows will be seen with their heads stuck in the cells, lapping away for dear life.

Now, make slow motions, pry the frames over with as little jar as can be, and while looking at the combs keep the breath from striking the bees too much, or you will think you have been struck with a hot poker. Patience and practice will soon give the novice confidence. But do not abuse your power and smoke the poor bees out