

## FLESH-MEAT AS FOOD FOR POULTRY.

## Fowls.

AN examination of the beak of a fowl, so different in formation to the beak of a pigeon, at once proves that the *Gallus Domesticus* is an omnivorous bird. It was not intended by nature to be a vegetable feeder only. It may be fed upon entirely vegetable productions for a time, it is true, and apparently remain in perfect health, but it is by no means certain that tuberculosis is not a result of a too restricted diet, a diet restricted too exclusively to vegetable food, in a damp and confined place; while roaming at large the quantity of insect food, and worms and snails which fowls find is sufficient to keep them in health, unless a large number be kept upon a small run. In the latter case it is necessary to supply them twice or three times a week with a small quantity of flesh or animal food. At the same time it is of great importance to so regulate the quantity as to prevent their having too much; experience is the best guide as to quantity. If too much is allowed, especially of raw meat, a disease is the result, very different to that terribly increasing scourge of the poultry yard—tuberculosis, which may possibly be an occasional origin of tubercle in the human subject, almost equally fatal to the fowl, namely apoplexy and hæmorrhage into some other vital organ than the brain, from an over blood pressure. This state of things is a common result of suddenly allowing as much flesh-meat to fowls as their appetites will take after they have been kept too exclusively upon a vegetable diet. If regularly supplied from their chicken-hood with animal food freely, they are much less likely to be injuriously affected by taking too much of it. Such feeding is indeed very conducive to a full

egg-basket, more especially in winter, when eggs are most valuable. At a small railway station in the country the station-master keeps about a dozen hens and a cock; they have a run to any extent upon which to roam, and no doubt get a fair share of the ordinary animal food so to be obtained. But once a week they have a grand treat, for a butcher in the district brings down to the station the hides of the cattle and the skins of the sheep he has slaughtered. These remain for a time thrown upon the ground awaiting the train for their removal. The fowls, apparently expecting the weekly recurrence of a feast, are always ready for its arrival, and make good use of the time at their disposal. These birds have the scraps from their masters house and a moderate supply of corn daily, which so far as I have been able to make out from careful inquiry, have not cost more than a penny a week for each bird. The result is most perfect health, an abundance of eggs all the year round, plenty of chickens when required, and everything else that is satisfactory in poultry-keeping upon a small scale. The value of a supply of animal food for poultry could not be better illustrated. The advantage of an occasional meal when regularly given is clearly shown, and although but few fowls are kept by the station-master, no reason can be assigned why this same treatment may not be equally successful when large numbers are kept. It proves that cooking is not a necessary process when meat is given to poultry, and suggests the possibility of utilizing a common waste of the slaughter house in a manner never before, or seldom at least, thought of. It should be noted that the meat food of the skins is taken raw, under such circumstances: no doubt goes further than if it were cooked, while it is quite as beneficial, and saves the expense and trouble of cooking.

If fowls are kept in confinement, of course more animal food should be supplied to them in small quantities at a time at regular intervals, about three times a week to make up for the loss of insect food which they would undoubtedly find if they had their liberty. If kept in large quantities, as upon a poultry farm, where they would necessarily be so thick upon the ground as to obtain an insufficient supply of animal food, unless supplied to them regularly, it must be given to them the same way as when they are kept in confinement to ensure a successful result. I purposely refrain in this article from recommending any specially-prepared foods, as I have no desire to recommend one preparation more than another equally useful; at the same time there can be no injustice done to anyone by suggesting that many useful scraps at present wasted may be obtained at a small outlay by making friends of the slaughtermen in towns and villages, who may be able to effect a saving of many fowl luxuries which are at present thrown away, or perhaps are with difficulty got rid of without creating a nuisance. Flesh-meat food in due proportion is quite essential in successful poultry feeding, but—and this is the most important fact in connection with the subject—it *must always be given fresh, and not putrid or even tainted*, or the eggs, although they may be increased in number, will have a very disagreeable flavor, and however fresh they may be, they will have a character of staleness, such as would spoil their market as fresh eggs. There are but few prepared meat foods that are sufficiently fresh for the production of well-flavored eggs.

Flesh food is not necessary for very young chickens, they are better without it till they relish the pickings of a bone; this they will do by the time they are three weeks or a month old,