

Poultry.

Black Sumatras.

These were first introduced into this country from the Island of Sumatra, about thirty years ago, but have been bred only in limited numbers.

The illustration shows their peculiar characteristics, small heads, pea-combs, pheasant-like tails, broad and sweeping low to the ground in full-plumed cocks. Their plumage is a brilliant black, glossy and beautiful. Stout, active, rather small birds, they are good layers and juicy table poultry, being more like wild game than like common poultry in the latter respect. Although gamey in appearance, they are not ranked as fighters, but are known simply as "Black Sumatras." When first hatched the chicks are nearly white, and this abundance of white is retained till the first molt, after which nearly all will assume the solid black with green lustre. White feathers are retained by some, and red feathers also appear occasionally in some specimens. These are faults to be guarded against. Instead of being provided with a single spur on each leg, as most male fowls are, the Sumatra cocks have two or three, thus combining curiosity with beauty.

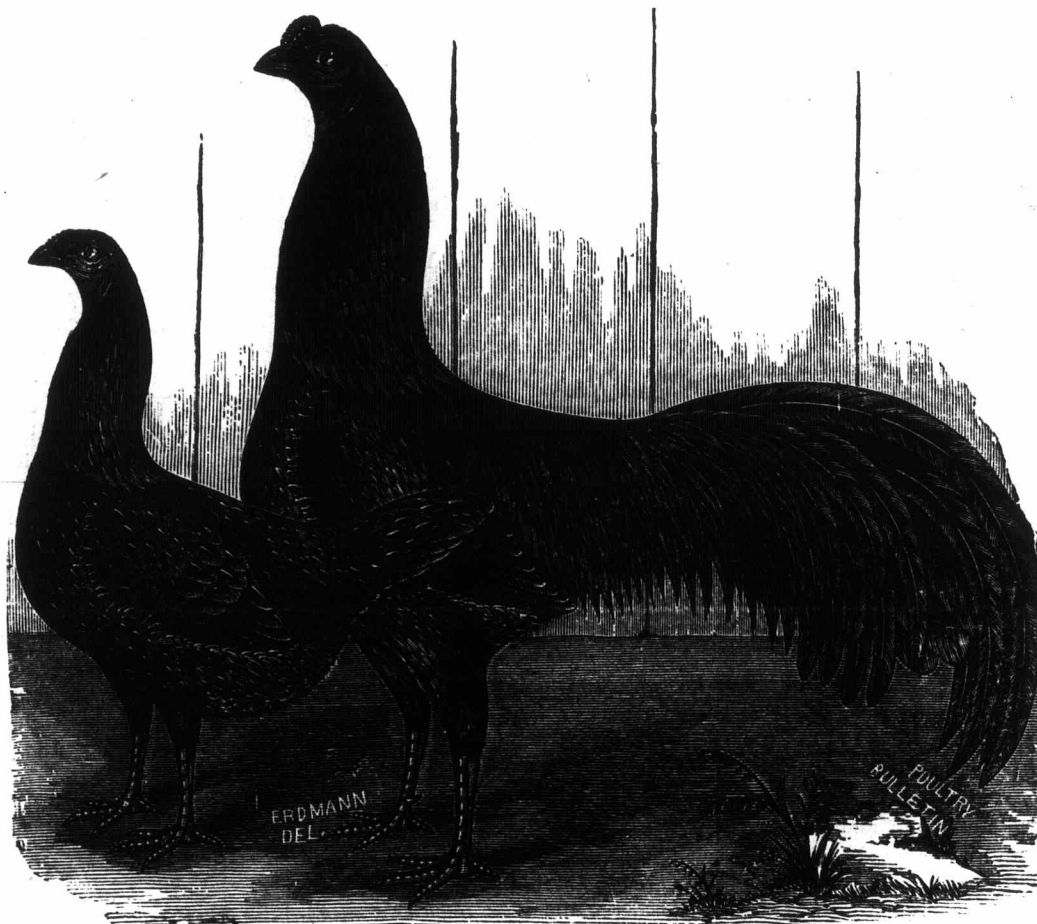
Old nails, etc., laid in the drinking fountain will do no harm, but sometimes good, as iron is a tonic for poultry. Old rusty iron may not dissolve in water, but if the rust is fine and mingles with the water, iron is sometimes taken into the system in that way. A solution of copperas, however, is better, as copperas is sulphate of iron.

EARLY PULLETS.—Do not forget that the earlier the pullets are hatched the sooner they will lay in the fall.

ROUP PILLS.—Here you are, and as good as any that are sold. Equal parts of asafetida, hyposulphite of soda and salt, mix well, and give a pill twice a day. Wash the beak and nostrils with a strong solution of copperas, and put a little copperas water in that used for drinking.

Effects of Shocks on Eggs.

It is a common belief among persons who keep poultry that the shocks and tremors to which eggs are subject during transportation on road and railway, affect the germ contained in the egg. M. Daresté, who has been studying this matter, found, a few years ago, that in eggs submitted to incubation directly after a railway journey, the embryo very generally died; but a few day's rest before incubation obviated this. He has lately inquired into the effect of shocks on the fecundated egg germ, with the aid of a tapoteuse, or machine used by chocolate makers to force the paste into the mills; it gives 120 blows a minute. Monstrosities were always the result of the



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tremors so caused. This cause is the more remarkable that it acts before the evolution of the embryo; whereas the other causes M. Daresté has indicated, as elevation or lowering of temperature, diminution of porosity of the egg shell, the vertical position of the egg, and unequal heating, only modify the embryo during its evolution. The modification impressed on the germ by those shocks did not disappear after rest, as in the case mentioned above, but it is not known why. A few eggs escaped the action.

OLD HENS FOR MOTHERS.—While it is true that young hens lay more eggs per year than old ones, they do not make so good setters nor so careful mothers. There is a great difference in the character of fowls in this respect, and a little watchfulness will soon teach the careful attendant which ones will be best to set.

Keeping the Sexes Separate.

A correspondent writes in the Country Gentleman as follows on this subject:

"From my limited experience, I am satisfied that laying hens, kept in confinement to limited quarters, will produce more eggs if no cocks are allowed with them, and that the eggs possess superior keeping qualities. The most prolific layers I ever had were Plymouth Rocks, taken when half grown and confined in a yard with a small house for shelter, and there kept, never having any cocks to run with them. They commenced laying when about five to six months old, and laid all winter and the next summer, producing on many successive days as many eggs as there were hens, and there never was a day when there were not some laid by them. When one does not care to breed chickens, on the score of economy, it is better, in my opinion, to keep the layers without any cocks. It saves his keep, which will average the profit of one layer at least. I had formerly supposed it essential to egg production that hens should have the attention of cocks, but from experience, I found that good, well-formed eggs are produced from hens which have never had the attention."

SCALY LEGS.—Scaly legs, or "scab," is the work of a minute parasite, and is easily removed.

Mix a tablespoonful of coal oil with half an ounce of lard, and rub it well into the legs. Do this twice a week for two weeks, and the legs will be clean. The coal oil changes the color to a white for a little while on some fowls, but, if preferred, a tablespoonful of sulphur may be mixed with the lard instead of the coal oil, which will remove the scale without discoloration; but neither remedy should be used in damp weather.

COCHINS AND BRAHMAS.—Hatch them as soon as possible, for they are large fowls, and require the whole season. An early hatched Brahma or Cochin always gives satisfaction.

EXTRA COCKERELS.—Keep them away from the others, for they do nothing but create trouble and annoyance. One cock with the hens is better than two.