

What is Good Grape Culture.

A friend joyfully told us a few days ago of his anticipation in the grape way. He had bought a little place in the vicinity, and had made up his mind to have things right. His maxim was that what was worth doing at all was worth doing well, and he meant to do it. He had done it. He had dug out the dirt three feet into the clay, and had filled it in with light rich compost, through which the roots might push their way in ease and comfort, and live on the fat of the land. He had spent considerable money in doing the job well. He intended to get only the best vines, and felt sure such an expenditure would result in magnificent grapes and plenty of them. He had done his work well.

It is strange that such a course as this should ever have been recommended by horticultural writers, but it is a fact that they have. Grapes are now so easily and cheaply grown—fruit often four and five cents a pound—that we had wellnigh forgotten that this was the standard advice of the books years ago. But our friend produced it in black and white from the pages which he had chosen as an authority, and then we knew how it was in the olden time.

Now, our readers at least would know that instead of such a proceeding as this being an evidence of doing it well for the grape, it is simply an act of folly. The grape root needs to be warm and dry, but this deep well in the clay encouraging the collection of water from all around it has just the contrary effect. The roots are damp and cool and not warm and dry.

Indeed, it is only of late years when people have given up all this expensive foolery that grape culture has become a tolerable success. Under the old plan we have failure after failure, so that we came to believe only those varieties which were little removed from the wild fox or the frost grapes could be grown. But now we have the finer kinds getting quite common. As soon as we gave up this deep trenching nonsense, grape culture—real grape culture—took a fresh start, and this real culture consists in little more than planting a vine in good earth of less depth than we would say ordinary tree and see that it does not suffer for want of food. This is good grape culture in a nutshell.

Poultry.

Description of Farm Poultry.

(Continued.)

BY R. A. BROWN, CHERRY GROVE, ONT.

There are two varieties of Brahmas—Light and Dark. The Light Brahma is the farmer's favorite, being readily sought after on the market on account of their large size, yellow skin, and rich, juicy meat. Color of plumage white; neck hackle silvery white, with a dark stripe down each feather; tail small and color black; comb pea, or having three small combs joined in one, the centre one the highest; comb, face, wattles and ear lobe bright red; shanks yellow, and feathered on the outside down to the end of outside toe with black and white feathers. Weight of adult cocks from 11 to 14 lbs., hen 9 to 11 lbs. Chicks mature to lay in about nine months—seven eggs per pound, are good winter layers, but inclined to be broody in warm weather; are better enclosed in a small room and yard attached; will bear confinement well if not overfed on too much fattening food, as they put on fat very fast and are apt to become very dull and lazy if fed on too rich food.

Dark Brahmas are similar to Light, except in color of feathers, which have dark bars running across each feather, except on breast of cock, which is black, or nearly so—sometimes dotted with white. They are not quite as popular as the light variety.

There are four varieties of the Cochins family. The Buffs are the most popular. Head rather short for size of bird, color buff; comb single, perfectly upright and evenly serrated; comb, wattles, face and ear lobe bright red; neck and back of cock deep buff; breast and lower part of body light buff; tail tipped with brown; neck hackle of hen sometimes tipped with black; shanks yellow and feathers on two outside toes; carriage upright and stately. Weight of adult cock 11 to 15 lbs., hen 9 to 12 lbs. Eggs deep color, seven per pound.

Are first-class winter and fall layers; meat yellow, sweet and tender. Pullets, if well fed, will mature in seven months and begin to lay, but are inclined to be broody when warm weather sets in, if let run at large; are better confined to small apartments, and will stand enclosure the best of all the hen tribe. Are the tradesman's favorite, on account of their size and hardness, and excellent table qualities.

Partridge C chicks: Comb, face, wattles and ear lobe brilliant red; comb single, erect, small and evenly serrated. Cock—neck hackle and back rich red, orange color, with a black stripe down each feather; breast, wing-coverts and tail glossy black; shanks feathered down outside with black feathers; color of shanks dusky yellow. Partridge hen: Neck short; color rich reddish golden, with dark stripe down each feather; breast and body rich brown, pencilled with a darker brown mark across each feather; tail short, main feathers black; shanks dusky yellow and well feathered on outside to end of toes; color same as the body. Adult cock 11 to 13 lbs., hen 8 to 11 lbs.; are good winter layers and have their admirers amongst fanciers; eggs 8 per pound.

White Cochins: Plumage entirely white; comb single, erect and evenly serrated; comb, face, wattles and ear lobe brilliant red; beak and shanks yellow, well feathered on outside of leg and down to end of toes. Weight of adult cock 11 to 13 lbs., hen 9 to 11 lbs. Are good mothers and good winter layers, bear confinement well, but do better with a clean grass run on account of their plumage, which shows any soils; eggs 8 per pound.

Black Cochins: Plumage rich glossy black throughout; comb single, small, straight and upright; wattles and ear lobe deep red; shanks yellow, shaded with black; outside of shank and two outside toes well feathered. Weight of adult cock 10 to 12 lbs., hen 8 to 10 lbs.; eggs 8 per pound. Good winter layers, hardy and bear confinement very well.

Dorkings—White, Silver-grey and Colored.—White: Plumage pure white, except in adult cocks, in which it is sometimes tinged with yellow; comb is rose, bright red, square in front and sitting level on the head, running to a point behind; ear lobes and wattles bright red; good flowing tail, two elevated sickle feathers; shanks flesh-color, clean and with five toes. Good winter layers if given warm apartments; somewhat broody in warm weather; good mothers; will lay at eight months old if well fed; bear confinement well if they get an outside run of medium size attached to their house; eggs 8 per pound.

Silver-grey Dorkings: Comb single or rose; wattles and ear lobe bright red; head, neck and saddle hackle of cock silvery-white, striped with black; breast and tail rich black; wing-bow silvery-white, wing-coverts a metallic greenish-black; shanks white or flesh-color, having five toes. Hen: Head ashy-grey, neck silvery-white, back grey; breast robin or salmon-red, shading off to grey at the sides; wings grey, primaries dark brown, tail dark grey and carried at a moderate elevation; shanks smooth and flesh-color, having five toes. Moderate winter layers if given good apartments; do remarkably well where only one breed is kept, if they have a good run. Pullets mature early and lay at about six months old. Produce the best flesh of all fowls. No fancier thinks his yards complete without this variety.

Colored Dorkings are similar to Silver-grey in every point, except color of feather, which is deeper shaded, and may be from light to very dark as long as comb, wattles and ear lobe are smooth, clean and bright red; legs white or flesh-colored, being clean and smooth. Are well adapted for farmers, as they are not so hard to breed to the requisite color of feather.

(To be Continued.)

Feeding Poultry.

We have sometimes been amazed at the difference between chickens hatched from the same parents and at the same season of the year, but differently treated as to food. We do not refer to cases where the youngsters have been starved, or half-starved and otherwise neglected, but to instances in which food has been abundantly supplied, and the fault has been rather in the quality than the quantity.

Before entering upon the discussion of the best method of feeding the growing birds, a few words as to the treatment of the breeding stock may not be out of place.

It is obvious that the chief points to be borne in mind here are, that the supply of food be such as

shall promote a general, healthy and vigorous state of the constitution, which implies a freedom from excessive fat, and also such as will supply the necessary materials for the formation of eggs.

The egg of the domestic fowl, when deprived of its shell, consists of 71½ parts of water, 14 parts of albumen or flesh-forming material, 13 parts of fat, etc., and 1½ parts of phosphates, etc. The proportion of flesh-forming material to fat is far larger in the white than in the yolk, but that is not of importance for our purpose. The shell of the egg is mainly composed of carbonate of lime or hard chalk.

The secretion of an excessive amount of fat by the hen has by experience been found to be a hindrance to laying, but once hens are in full lay a larger proportion of fat-forming food becomes necessary in order to supply materials for the eggs.

There can be no hard-and-fast rule laid down as to feeding the breeding stock. The Asiatics are very different from some of the other breeds, such as the Spanish, Hamburgs, etc., that a course of feeding which is suitable for these latter sorts would be far too fattening for the Asiatics. The food must be selected according to the variety kept, and must also be varied to suit the season of the year. Indian corn, for instance, which contains a large proportion of warmth-giving materials (fat, starch, etc.) should be chiefly used in winter, and may be given to the breeds which are not apt to run to fat in larger quantities than the birds of fuller habit. It may also be given with less danger of evil results when the hens are in full lay than at other times. A change of food is beneficial, and for this reason mixtures of whole grain are not to be recommended. It is far better to give one grain for a time, and then change to another, than to give a mixture of several.

With regard to soft food the case is different. Here the means of varying the character of the food are numerous, and a judicious blend of meals, with potatoes, parsnips, turnips, etc., may with advantage be resorted to.

The soft food should, when possible, be cooked, just as much water as the meal will absorb being used. Cooked food is much more easily assimilated than raw, and the mixture of a moderate proportion of water helps the process of digestion. A liberal supply of fresh green food is indispensable, and if the birds be confined a small portion of animal food may be given with advantage. The supply of gravel or sand to keep the gizzard at work, and of lime rubbish in some form to make the shells for the eggs, must not be omitted.

The feeding of the chickens has, as we have already said, an important bearing upon their maturing early or late, and consequently upon their ultimate size. Where size is an object, food containing too large a proportion of flesh-formers must, after the first two or three months of the chicken's life, be withheld or given only in conjunction with other food containing bone-making materials. Bone-meal has of late years been largely used for mixing with chickens' food, and may with advantage be used from the first and continued till the birds reach maturity. About one-tenth of it added to soft food is sufficient. During the first three months of the chick's life no apprehension as to forcing the birds to too early a maturity need be felt, and food containing plenty of flesh-formers, as also a moderate supply of meat, may also be given.

Oat-meal should first form the chief food, varied with a mixture of Indian-meal and middlings; later on the quantity of oat-meal must be diminished, and bran may be added, while after three months buckwheat, wheat or barley may be given, as grain with barley meal, middlings, bran and Indian meal as the chief materials for forming the soft food. Pea-meal in moderate quantities is good at first, but should be avoided afterwards as being too stimulating.

Where size is not the object, and early maturity is desired, a diet in which flesh-formers are largely present may be adopted throughout.

A word of caution may be added as to breeds in which largeness of comb is a disadvantage. Here especial attention to the exclusion of all over-stimulants from the food is essential. We have seen more than one first-rate Brahma cockerel spoiled by injudicious kindness in the matter of feeding. A few scraps of meat gathered from the lunch table have been too much for a springing comb which was all right before, and the prize which would otherwise have been gained has had to go elsewhere.