

POULTRY.

ORIGIN OF RHODE ISLAND REDS.

Answering a question as to the origin of the Rhode Island Red breed of fowls, the editor of Farm Poultry says:

The Rhode Island Red is a fowl that has been produced by several farmers in and about Little Compton, Rhode Island. This community is largely engaged in the production of eggs for market. Rhode Island Red is the fowl kept by nearly all of them, but you occasionally see a few Light Brahmas and Barred Plymouth Rocks, and we are told that at one time you could see some R. C. Brown Leghorns. All these varieties, and more, have been used in making the Rhode Island Reds. Some Red Malays are said to be chiefly responsible for the color of this breed. Years ago these males were introduced and crossed on different birds in this vicinity. The poultry farmers took a fancy to the red color, and always bred from red males. Whenever they introduced a cross, they always saved the red males from this cross and bred them. In time, the breed established had this red color, no matter whether the foreign blood introduced had been Light Brahma or Barred Plymouth Rock; but whatever it had been, the red always predominated, and these poultry-raisers always clung to it. It should be borne in mind that this was years ago—twenty, thirty, or, in some cases, even fifty years ago. The introduction of the R. C. Brown Leghorn blood is said by many to be responsible for the rose-comb variety. The fact that these farmers were not as particular in the selection of the females as they were in the selection of the males, is undoubtedly what has caused this breed not to breed as true as others, until possibly very recently.

ARTIFICIAL INCUBATION PROBLEMS.

The liveliest question in poultrydom to-day is the problem of artificial incubation, particularly that prevalent fatal disease of incubator-hatched chicks called white diarrhea. Speculation is rife concerning its cause, but it cannot be said to have yet been satisfactorily solved. A good many thousand dozens of eggs have been used in experiments in connection with it at the Ontario Agricultural College, with no really final conclusions, but with apparent grounds for the presumption that the use of one of the coal-tar dips is of advantage in some way not exactly understood. A symposium of the tentative deductions arrived at, and the much larger number of things wondered at, by the coterie of experts investigating the subject at Guelph, is published in Bulletin 163, on "Incubation of Chickens." It is divided into four parts, treated separately, as follows: "Hatching and Rearing Chickens," by W. R. Graham, Poultry Manager and Lecturer; "Humidity in Relation to Incubation," by W. H. Day, Lecturer in Physics; "Carbon Dioxide in Relation to Incubation," by C. C. Thom, Demonstrator in Physics; and "Chemical Work in Incubation Problems," by Prof. R. Harcourt and H. L. Fulmer. Whoever thinks he understands the white-diarrhea problem is advised to procure this bulletin. He will not know very much by the time he has read it through.

TRIBUTE TO AMERICAN HEN.

"Poets may sing the glory of the eagle, and artists may paint the beauties of birds of plumage," says Congressman Dawson, of Iowa, "but the modest American hen is entitled to a tribute for her industry, her usefulness, and her productivity. The American hen can produce wealth equal to the capital stock of all the banks of the New York Clearing House in three months, and have a week to spare. In less than sixty days she can equal the total production of all the gold mines of the United States. The United States proudly boasts of its enormous production of pig-iron, by far the greatest of any country in the world, and yet the American hen produces as much in six months as the iron mines of the country produce in a year. In one year and ten months she could pay off the interest-bearing debt of the United States."

CONTENTS STUDIED AND DISCUSSED.

"The Farmer's Advocate" is thought very highly of in this house. My three sons and myself, also my daughter, in the poultry and garden departments, look for it weekly, and study and discuss the contents thereof. As an Old Country farmer for nearly forty years, I have thought many times since coming to this country how much such a publication would have helped me in my young days.

J. J. BEAUMONT.
Muskoka, Ont.

GARDEN & ORCHARD.

ODE TO THE POTATO PLANT.

Potato plant! Most welcome guest,
Thy home is in the far, far West;
But, since we've got thee climatized,
Thy tubers are most highly prized.

Sir Walter Raleigh, from Britannia,
Sent Colonists to fair Virginia,
Who brought thee back to Erin's Isle,
A distance of three thousand mile.

He placed thee in his garden there,
And tended thee with greatest care;
He cooked thee, placed thee on his table,
And now they call thee vegetable.

Thou thrive on light and heavy land,
But best of all on that small band
Of old red sandstone round Dunbar,
Whose "Red Soils" are known near and far.

We grow thee largely for thy tubers,
Which some call roots; but learned Doctors
Maintain they really are not roots,
But swollen ends of special shoots.

Oh! blest be he who did discover
That thy green leaves, in sunny weather,
With dung and potash in addition,
Could starch build up and tubers fashion.

But when there comes dull, muggy weather,
Disease spores form—blow like a feather;
Thy shaws are blackened in a night
With that grim scourge, "Potato Blight."



"Dousing the Bugs."

An old-fashioned plan, wasteful of material and more or less injurious to the potato foliage. The spray pump is the proper implement to use.

But, happily, a fine prevention
Can save thee crop from this infection,
For Bordeaux sprays exterminate
The spores whence'er they germinate.

They eagerly did hybridize,
To raise some new varieties;
They planted plums, and, by selection,
Said that the offspring was perfection.

We class them into three divisions,
According to their growing seasons;
The "Earlies" first lie on the plates,
Next the "Mid-Season," last the "Lates."

We've Findlay's Date and Chapman's Factor,
Midlothian Early, Davie's Warrior,
Palmeny Radium, Sharpe's Express,
With Epicure raised by S. & S.

And how we love the name of Niven,
Who for "right quality" has striven;
Who fought for long, and, nothing daunted,
Produced Langworthy and What's Wanted.

An awful boom soon spread afar,
With Eldorado, Northern Star;
Men said that these had come to stay,
And purchasers should not delay.

So speculators and bravadoes,
Huge figures paid for Eldorados,
They treasured up their Northern Stars,
And kept them safe in iron bars.

They wildly thee did propagate,
And worked from morn until quite late;
Planted forced sprouts and bits of shaws,
And whittled sets 'gainst Nature's laws.

But oh, that evil express culture
Was quite contrary to thy nature;
Thy quality was much impaired,
And merchants fairly then despaired.

How oft must one the method mention
Of sprouting sets by "first intention,"
In boxes, lighted all along,
To green the sprouts and keep them strong.

Yes, boxing is a real boon,
You plant them late and lift them soon;
Cold, frosty nights are much avoided,
And safer crops are thus provided.

The public eye decide thy lot
By cooking thee in iron pot,
If flavor's poor and soapy texture,
They'll use thee little, I conjecture.

But if thy quality's perfection,
And doesn't give folks indigestion,
They'll tend thee like their best tomatoes,
And bless Sir Walter and Potatoes.

—John Porter, B. Sc., in Scottish Farmer.

A wheel-hoe is a wonderful help in a garden, enabling the owner to give it shallow cultivation promptly and often. This destroys weeds, conserves moisture, aerates the soil, and prevents that hard, unfavorable, baked condition which results from allowing a surface crust to thicken downwards. Don't let the crust form.

It is entirely unnecessary and unwise to hill potatoes in the old elaborate, laborious way. Unless they have been planted very shallow, all that is necessary is to reverse the shovels at the last cultivation or two, so as to throw the soil towards the vines, thus preventing sunburn. In a wet time, hilling may be of assistance in drainage, and may also tend to lessen rot by reducing chances of the blight spores finding their way down to the tubers. This may be more thoroughly secured, however, by spraying the tops with Bordeaux mixture, without the disadvantage of unduly drying the soil, which happens more or less when potatoes are steeply hilled in a dry season.

Every tree in the orchard, every stalk in the garden, is a powerful pump, drawing moisture from the soil, to be transpired through the leaves, and thence evaporated into the surrounding atmosphere. If, in addition, evaporation is occurring from the crusted surface of the soil, the soil supply of moisture becomes rapidly depleted, and the trees and garden stuff will not only wilt for lack of moisture, but will be stunted for plant food, since all the elements of fertility drawn from the soil are taken up in solution, and if there is insufficient moisture to serve as a solvent and carrying medium, the plant must hunger, as well as thirst. There are other reasons why cultivation is beneficial, but the foregoing is one phase that will bear a deal of pondering. Keep the cultivator going.

What solid satisfaction, joy and comfort there is in a thrifty, well-attended garden! Even he who does not particularly care for vegetables, cannot help relishing the crisp onions, radishes and lettuce; the fresh, delicious peas and corn; the luscious strawberries and melons provided daily from his own garden, which his own hands have planted, hoed and weeded, and his own eyes have carefully observed day by day. A thrifty garden is a thing of beauty, an object of interest, a spring of hope, and a source of pride—pride in the honest toil, so truly, if not unsparingly, rewarded by Dame Nature; pride in the results of conjuring with nature's laws and moods. All men are better for contact with the soil. Every hour so spent must be diligently employed, honestly applied, and intelligently directed, if compensation is expected. There is no cheating nature. The counting-house and the market may offer opportunities for aggrandizement, chicanery and fraud, but whoever wrests a living from the soil must secure it by honest means. The farm and the garden are great schools of discipline, splendidly adapted to instil into our being ethical principles, as well as deep-based economic truth.