

Fattening Fowls.

The French method of fattening fowls by cramming is to provide sparrow coops in which each fowl has its own compartment. The coop is a long narrow box in white wood, set on legs one foot and a half high; the outer walls and partitions are close boarded, and the bottom only is made with rounded spars one inch and a half in diameter, running lengthways of the coop, on which the fowls perch, their dung falling between the bars. The top consists of a sliding door, nearly as wide as the compartment, by which the chickens are taken in and out. The partitions are eight inches apart, so that the fowl cannot turn itself round. The length of each box may be regulated by circumstances, care being taken that the attendant has room to pass along and to sit down; and furthermore, that cocks, capons, and pullets, or the lean and the fat lots, be not mixed up indiscriminately. If fowls of different sexes are in close proximity, though nothing beyond vocal relations be established between them, the fattening process will be delayed, or again, fowls of different degrees of fatness should not inhabit the same box, because their rations will differ, and the new comers will disturb the old settlers by their noise. Young cocks will fatten, though not so readily as capons; their flesh is somewhat inferior in delicacy to that of capons, and yet more so to that of pullets. The floor below the boxes is covered with ashes or dry earth to catch the droppings, which are removed every two days with a scraper. The dung is equal in value to guano, and should be preserved from waste and moisture in old casks. The best food for fattening fowls is buckwheat meal—baked quite fine. This is kneaded up with sweet milk till it gets the consistency of bakers' dough; it is then cut up into rations about the size of two eggs, which are made up into "rolls" about the thickness of a woman's finger, but varying with the size of the fowls; these are subdivided by a sloping cut into "patons" (pellets) two and a half inches long. A board is used for mixing the flour with the m.e., which in winter should be lukewarm. It is poured into a hole made in the heap of flour, and mixed up little by little with a wooden spoon so long as it is taken up; the dough is then kneaded by the hands till it no longer adheres to them. Some say that barley or even oatmeal is a good substitute for buckwheat meal, but I have not heard of that opinion. Indian corn, the white variety, may do, but it makes "short" paste, unless mixed with buckwheat, which I answer will not do enough. The food is thus administered: The attendant puts on an apron which will stand being soiled or torn, and takes the pellets on a board with a bowl of clear water. She takes the first fowl from its cage gently and carefully, not by the wings or the legs, but by both hands under the breast. She then seats herself with the fowl upon her knees, putting its rump under her left arm, by which she supports it, the left hand then opens its mouth, (a little practice makes this very easy) and the right hand takes up a pellet, soaks well in the water (this is essential), shakes it on its way to the open mouth, puts it straight down, and carefully trams it with the forefinger well into the gullet. When it is so far settled down that the fowl cannot eject it, she passes it down gently with thumb and forefinger into the crop, taking care not to fracture the pellet, for if some scraps of it remained in the gullet they might cause inflammation. Other pellets follow the first, till the feeding is finished in less time than one would imagine. It sometimes happens, particularly in the early stage of fattening, that the tracheal artery is compressed together with the gullet; this makes the creature cough, but is not of any serious consequence, and with a little experience this mishap is easily avoided. The fowl when fed is again held with both hands under its breast, and is replaced in its cage without fluttering it, and so on with each fowl. The chicken should have two meals in twenty-four hours, twelve hours apart, provided with the utmost punctuality; if it has to wait, it becomes uneasy, if fed too soon it has an indigestion, and in either case, loses weight. On the first day of cramming only two or three pellets are given at each meal, the allowance is daily increased by one at a time till it reaches twelve to fifteen pellets. The stomach may be filled, but at each meal you must make sure that the last is duly digested, which is easily ascertained by gently handling the crop. If there be any dough in it, digestion has not gone on properly; the fowl must miss a meal, and have rather a smaller allowance next time, if too much food be forced upon the animal at first it will get out of health and have to be set at liberty. The fattening process ought to be complete in two or three weeks, but for extra fat poultry twenty five or twenty-six days are required; with good manage-

ment you may go on for thirty days, after which the creature becomes choked with accumulated fat, wastes away and dies.

When a fowl is to be killed, it should first be fasted for twelve or fifteen hours, and then held carefully (not hung up) by the heels, which would suffocate it), the mouth opened and either the under side of the tongue cut with sharp scissors, or the pointed blade of a knife thrust into the palate till it pierces the brain; or thirdly, a few feathers may be plucked from the left side of the head near the ear, and a good incision made at the spot. In any case it must be fastened up by the heels immediately afterwards, that it may bleed freely, for on this the whiteness of the flesh depends, but during the death struggle let it be held by the head. The chicken is then bled till cold to mould its form; and if the weather is warm it is plunged for a moment into very cold water. The fat of fowls so managed is of a delicate white color; their flesh is as it were seen transparent beneath a delicate skin. An average fowl takes about one and one-tenth of a peck of buckwheat to fatten it.

The King of Oude's Flying Pigeons.

A correspondent in the *Journal of Horticulture*, writes: "It will be known to most of your readers, that after the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the King of Oude was removed by the Government to Calcutta, where he still remains a state prisoner. He is allowed a liberal pension which he spends on a well kept menagerie and a host of human parasites from his former dominions. In one part of the grounds is a small mosque-shaped building, surmounted by a gilded dome, the apartments of which are floored with marble in inland designs, and hung round with pretty cages containing beautiful colored birds. In the centre room of the building the floor was hollowed out to contain water, in which there were a small number of small gold, silver and other fish, all so tame as to eat from the hand. In front of the building is an oblong marble tank, measuring, as far as I can remember, about forty by a hundred feet, containing a great assortment of aquatic birds, many of them of great rarity, and brought from great distances. Not far from the tank is a place devoted to the larger feline animals—a lion, tigers, leopards (spotted and black), hyenas, &c. I noticed three jackals, one of the usual color, a second pure white with red eyes, and a third a melanoid jet black. For any freak of nature of this kind the king will pay a good price. A cat fancier would have been delighted with the assortment of Persian and Afghan cats. The usual color of those brought down by the Cabul fruit-sellers, every cold weather, is pure white, but I saw pure black and tortoiseshell, one of great size and length of hair. Among the parrots, of which there is a splendid collection, especially of Australian, Bornean, and Sumatran kinds, I saw two Albinos of the common ring-necked Bengal Parrot-quet. They were of the most lovely canary yellow, with red eyes.

I must now come to the pigeons. His Majesty's fancy pigeons are kept in some of his best houses, the lofty verandahs of which are enclosed by wire netting. They were not on view, so I cannot describe them. He has recently acquired a good many European varieties, and his taste for them lies chiefly in Pouter and Jacobins, both kinds being entirely different from anything to be found in India. He had some very fair Jacobins, which were shown in cages on tables laid along some of the garden walks. They came from France; and besides having birds of the colors and markings known here, I saw very good Blue and Black self-colored ones. Bald-pated ones with feathered legs, and one pair of Reds (with feathered legs and a Trumpeters moustache of rose above the beak. This pair was very good in hood and chain. I must now come to the flyers, of which, I dare say, the king has four of the largest trained flocks in the world. Each flock contains about a thousand birds, and is kept in a separate house, at a distance of 200 to 300 yards from each other. I have no doubt these birds, which I shall endeavor to describe, have been bred for generations for flying. The first thing which strikes a fancier about them is the wonderful hardness and close lying appearance of their feathers, and the bold upstanding look of the birds. In this respect there is a great deal of the character of the highly-bred carrier about them; but they differ in the head and beak, which is something like that of an Archangel, being long and thin. And with reference to the Archangel, as I have seen it stated somewhere, that it originated in Germany, where it is still called the Bullfinch, I may correct this opinion by saying that it is well known in India, having been bred there for generations, and I believe many more of the German toys originated in the same

country, where a great many wonderfully feathered birds are bred. But to return to the flyer. In color it is invariably pied, and almost always the head and neck as far down as a Nun are colored, the other pieces of color being dispersed without regularity over the body. The color is never in mottles, but in splashes, and the eye is orange. Of these birds, the king has, as I said, four great flights, one each of Blue, Black, Red and Yellow Pies. For beauty of color—a deep metallic shining black, clear blue, rich mahogany red, and bright yellow—they are worth going far to see. Attached to each flight there is a keeper, whose duty it is to feed and fly them; and for the latter purpose he keeps beside him a jar of some small seeds, of which the birds are extremely fond, and a long bamboo with a small red flag attached to it. Throwing a small quantity of the seed on the ground, and at the same time uttering a peculiar call, the keeper of the flight, I watched, brought his birds out of the house in a heap, and in a few seconds the seed was gone, when he began to drive them on a large wooden rack, shaped like a green-house rack for flowerpots standing on, which stood near the house. They evidently understood him, for in a short time they all rose from the ground and settled the rack, which, though by no means small, was so crowded with birds, that there seemed no room for one more. All of a sudden, placing his first and second fingers in his mouth, the keeper gave a shrill whistle, and at the same time waving his flag, the great flight rose in the air. They neither flew very high, nor very far away, but they kept together in a compact mass with scarcely a straggler, so that each time they passed over the house they cast a great shadow on the ground, and the noise of their many wings was like music to my pigeon-fancier's ears. At the time I saw them flying, the other three flocks were going through the same performance, to the amusement, I dare say, of some of the other visitors, and more than once the flock I was watching mingled with another in their flight, and separated again. They were evidently lazy, being well fed and ready to come down when wanted; but the keeper had them well under command, and by the motions of his flag kept them going as long as he liked. At length I asked him to bring them down, which he did by lowering his flag and throwing a small quantity of the small seed on the ground, uttering his peculiar call as he did so. They seemed to stop instantaneously in their flight, and with a rush "like doves to their windows," the whole mass settled at my feet, moving the air with the fluttering of their many wings. As soon as they were on the ground, I noticed the man dart at and soon catch up one, which he shook and tossed up. It was a Yellow one which had got into the Blue flock as they mingled in their flight, and I dare say, a young one not yet educated."

Black Russian Fowls.

This rare breed has a rather obscure history. Their first introduction into America seems to have been at two periods, that of earliest date being into New Orleans, whence they spread northward as far as Iowa, and the latter importation being into Connecticut about 1850, by Capt. Kellogg, of Mystic. Lately another lot has been imported into Ledyard. Mr. Kellogg's importation is still represented by a few individuals in the vicinity of Mystic; and Mr. W. H. Brackett of Boston, showed specimens from the same at the Massachusetts Poultry Association Fair last February, and took a prize.

They are black, with a vivid glossy green, although the cocks were originally red on the neck-hackle, but this appears to have been bred out. The bottom of the feet is yellow, and sometimes the dark legs are nearly of the same color. They have rose combs, less acceptably single, and both sexes are heavily muffed. The flesh is yellow. They are round and compact in form, and not badly shaped. Cocks will, late in the fall, reach seven pounds; ten pounds has been reported; pullets about five. They appear to have useful economical qualities, prodigious reports having been made of their laying qualities, cases being reported where 200 eggs per year were produced. Probably such a high rate, if correct, was the result of recent importation, which seems to often act as a stimulus.

The egg is rather small. Their flesh is excellent. They make good sitters and mothers, and the chickens are hardy, and mature early.

It is reported that a cross between a cock of this species and a light Brahma hen produced pullets laying at four and a half months of age.

There can be no doubt that this race will prove to be a very valuable addition to existing ones, especially if other importations are made to infuse fresh blood.—*Poultry World*.