

Sheep Husbandry.

Cotswold Sheep.

The late test of the Wool Growers' Association, as to the comparative loss of different wools by thorough cleansing, will have its good effect on the public. The Merino Wool Growers have, through the Agricultural press, by their reports of enormous fleeces in the grease, made the impression on the public that the fine wool families were as much superior to the English Combing wool breeds, in the *quantity* of wool they produced, as in the *quality*. This test puts all such assertions in their proper light before the Wool Growers of this country, and the introduction of new machinery, and new forms of fabrics for want of cotton supply, has enhanced the value of all combing wools in England and America, and has placed their commercial value nearly equal, pound for pound, with the ordinary felting or fine wools. The latter fact, in connection with the late test, must have a great tendency to increase the flocks of Cotswold and other combing wool breeds in America, in all proper situations, viz., where the pasturage is rich and the soil strong, and population most dense, and butcher's meat in most demand. Let the Merinos be consigned to cheap and thin soils and grasses, and to remote localities far away from the great centres of trade and population, where no demand exists for butcher's meat; here let them live and increase during their natural lives, producing wool alone, and they will be found in their appropriate and most profitable sphere.

The Cotswold is a highly improved animal, having to perfection all the high feeding qualities of the best short horn cattle, and will make from a given amount of rich food as much return in butcher's meat as any other animal of any species, and of more value per pound in the city markets when made, than the first class beef. They thrive only in small flocks and with high handling, rich food and plenty of it. With the sheep family they occupy the same class that the short horn does with cattle, that is the very best and cheapest machine the farmer can employ to manufacture his grain and grass into meat and manure. The percentage of wool produced in the late test *relatively* to the weight of carcass is not a fair one so far as this particular breed is concerned. *It does it more than justice.* The specimen selected is the lightest carcass-yearling I have ever known, whilst its fleece is fully up to the average of yearlings. As a breeder of Cotswold sheep, I have never owned a yearling purely bred and well kept, that did not exceed the weight of this specimen from 25 to 60 per cent., and many yearlings might have been found weighing 160 lbs., and producing *no more wool*. I have weighed buck lambs from the test, weaned in March, in the following August, drawing 140 lbs. live weight. The heaviest fleeces ever produced by this breed is by yearlings, if well kept.—*Cor. Country Gentleman.*

SHEEP CROSSING.—A recent Essay, by Mr. Clutterbuck, contains the following remarks as to a cross between the Cotswold and Down sheep:—"The first cross, as a rule, is confessedly the best. The question now arises—what is done with the ewe lambs which ought to furnish mothers for future flocks? As a rule, the lambs are sold as they fall, and very generally are bought by those who fat them all. As an instance, a farmer of much experience sold 100 wether tegs at a market away from home, where they were pronounced the best sample of such stock (that is, the first cross between the Cotswold and the Down) that had been seen there. Contrary to his custom, he kept the ewes, and was tempted to breed from them; though his rams were well selected the produce was of a very inferior character, and wisely he returned to his former practice, crossing the best draft ewes of the Hampshire breeders with the Cotswold ram. It might be said breeding from the draft ewe is in itself a gain; sometimes it may be, but what is contended for is that even the best cross breeding leads to the indiscriminate sacrifice of the ewe, which, in flocks like those of Sussex, Wilt, Hants, Gloucester, Leicester, &c., is not the case. The half-bred sheep just now is in great request, from the large price of wool and the fattening qualities said to belong to this class of animal. 'Breed from the best natives, cross for fattening,' is a recorded saying of Mr. Frost, bailiff to his Majesty George the Third, at a time when the first great movement in the improvement of sheep stock seems to have had its commencement; and the saying, founded on the experience of that day, is, doubtless, true now."

SMALL-POX IN SHEEP.—On the occasion of the outbreak of this disorder among the flock in 1862, the Government justified an inquiry into the value of vaccination as a preventive. Mr. J. F. Marston, resident surgeon of the Small-pox Hospital, and Professor Simonds, of the Royal Veterinary College, were appointed to carry this out. After patient investigation and experiment a report was subsequently made, the substance of which may thus be summed up: That sheep-pox is only known to have existed in England on three occasions, namely in 1760, 1847, and 1862; that it is highly infectious, and, like the small-pox in man, occurs but once in the same animal; that the deaths from natural disease often amount to seventy-five, and are seldom less than 25 per cent., while many of those spared are left in a worthless condition; that vaccination cannot be relied on as a preventive or a mitigant; and, even if it was protective, not more than 35 per cent. would be influenced by it; that the inoculation of sheep with human virus is equally ineffective; that cows are not susceptible to the action of sheep-pox, so that viraion cannot be resorted to as a means of furnishing lymph; that separation although sometimes available in arresting the disorder, is impracticable with large flocks; that slaughtering and burying the bodies are only justifiable at the very first outbreak; and that the only remaining conservative measure is inoculation, which, if rightly carried out, offers considerable advantages. First, it gives security against a natural attack of sheep-pox; secondly, it limits the period of the existence of the disease; thirdly, it mitigates the severity of the attack; fourthly, it saves the lives of many animals, and produces but little loss of condition; fifthly, it contracts the extension of the disease, for one confluent case would do more harm than fifty inoculated cases would do; sixthly, that the mortality among the animals inoculated with those taking it naturally is as 3 per cent. in the one case to 50 per cent. in the other.—*London Field.*

Poultry Yard.

Poultry Items.

FROM THE "FIELD."

DISINFECTING AFTER ROUP.—Could you kindly tell me if any disinfecting liquid that I might put over a small house and grass run in which I have had one or two bad cases of roup? The house is of wood, and the run is thirty-five feet by twenty feet. I used to keep one cock and four hens in it.—**TORMENT.**—[If the house is well cleaned, and then brushed over universally with a solution of chloride of lime-water, it will be effectually disinfected. The grass may be mown, or the ground dug over and resown.—*Ed.*]

LICE IN POULTRY HOUSES.—My hen house is infested with myriads of small insects, some red, and others white, very small—a species of fowl lice. I have had the house whitewashed, and also burnt brimstone in it, first closing up the apertures; but they are worse than ever; indeed, so bad that the fowls have deserted the house, and will neither roost or lay in it. It is a large building, and far larger than the number of fowls that I keep require. Please give me a recipe that will cure this.—**LECCUS.**—[We should recommend a trial of chloride of lime and water, washing and brushing the solution into the cracks and crevices, the house to be thoroughly cleaned out before the application. Should this fail, we could recommend nothing else but brushing the whole interior with mineral turps, which can be obtained at about 3s. to 3s. 6d. per gallon.—*Ed.*]

WANT OF SUCCESS IN HATCHING.—I shall feel obliged if you will explain in your next paper a curious circumstance which has happened in my yard. I have not been able to hatch a single Braham chicken this year; when the eggs were examined they had no chickens in them (being quite rotten,) and thinking it was the fault of the cock, I bought another of a quite different strain, when the same circumstance occurred again. I then changed the hens, but this not having the desired effect, I am at a loss how to account for it, and shall feel extremely obliged if you could give any solution of the difficulty.—**COCHIN.**—[The circumstance of the eggs being rotten proves that they were originally fertilised, as unimpregnated eggs remain clear, and do not stink. As the want of success has continued after the stock has been changed, the cause is most probably in some local conditions affecting the birds.—*Ed.*]

CHOLERA IN POULTRY.—I shall feel very much obliged if you or any of your numerous correspondents can suggest a remedy for the following complaint, by which I have lost twenty-three out of my stock of thirty-five duckling chickens. The symptoms are, I

imagine, very similar to those of Asiatic cholera in the human subject, and the disease, as the result shows, quite as contagious and fatal. About a fortnight ago I had as handsome a lot of three-parts grown chickens as could well be imagined; most of them being of the same blood as the bird I took first at Birmingham with 1862 and 1863. They were almost all seized at once with excessive purging, and became gradually weaker and thinner, until death supervened, in the majority of instances in from two to four days. Thinking that nothing but poison could effect such wholesale destruction, I had several cut open, and found excessive inflammation and enlargement of the bowels, with a quantity of mucus in the intestines. They had no appearance of cold or roup about the head, but the eye became dim, and they walked "all in a heap." To show the malignant nature of the disease a batch of nine younger game chickens (belonging to a friend of mine,) which happened to come in contact with mine, all died in one night; and another of sixteen Hamburgs is reduced to nine, with a prospect of further diminution. Curiously enough, the old fowls are not affected by it in the slightest degree, and the older chickens appear to get through it better than the younger ones. They have all had an unlimited range of grass-fields, and have always been extremely healthy. I must add that I have tried rue, oil, butter and chalk, with little or no success. Any suggestion in the event of a recurrence of this most fatal malady will be most welcome to—**A SEVEN YEARS' SUBSCRIBER.**—[We should be disposed to try the effect of a strong dose of calomel and opium—say one grain of each two or three times a day. The remedies mentioned in the letter would be quite worthless in a malignant complaint.—*Ed.*]

FROM THE MARK LANE EXPRESS.

Onions are said to be an admirable food for fowls, or rather an adjunct to their ordinary food. If given regularly, it is said that they will prevent attacks of the more ordinary diseases of poultry.

Meat is said by some authorities to be an essential food for poultry, especially in the winter, when they cannot get the worms they pick up in summer. Others again, maintain that the habit of giving meat to poultry is productive of grave evils—the cause of many of the worst forms of disease which affect them. By these authorities it is called an unnatural food, inasmuch as the digestive organs of the birds are not fitted to assimilate them. There must, we think, be some mistake in all this, for we know of a surety that fowls do eat when they can get it, and entirely of their own accord, an enormous quantity of animal food: here it is not cooked; the game found in nature's garden is raw. If meat is an unnatural food for poultry, they certainly have a most unnatural appetite for it. Throw in one lump of meat amongst a lot of fowls; if not literally a bone of contention, it is something vastly like it, so eager are all to get a grab at it.

We believe the habit of giving much food in a short space of time to poultry is a very bad one. If you notice their habits you will perceive that the process of picking up their food under ordinary, or what we may call the natural condition, is a very slow one. Grain by grain does the meal get taken, and with the aggregate no small amount of sand, small pebbles, and the like, all of which passing into the crop assists digestion greatly. But in the "hen-wife's"—we by no means are personal in using this now celebrated distinctive appellation—mode of feeding poultry, a great heap is thrown down, and the birds allowed to "peg away" at such a rate that their crop is filled far too rapidly, and the process of assimilation is slow, painful, and incomplete. No wonder that so many cases of choked craw are met with under this treatment.

THERE is a poultry pestilence raging in the suburban hen coops round Paris. Fowls are found dead in scores, without any perceptible cause.

FRENCH EGGS.—The number of eggs, fowls and game, imported into France in the first half of this year was 2,009,800, as compared with 1,680,729 in the first half of 1864, and 1,601,041 in the first half of 1863. The exports of eggs from France to June 30 this year, were 13,979,186, against 11,568,136 in 1864, and 9,903,913 in 1863 (corresponding periods).

LICE IN CHICKEN-HOUSES.—We hardly know what to advise to rid the houses of this pest. We have always found lime-washing effectual when thoroughly done. It must be well worked into all crevices; holes which the brush cannot reach must be stopped, and the operation must be repeated till the desired result takes place. If the fowls are supplied in the house and in their run with a couple of bushels of dust, or better still, of wood ashes, with which should be mixed four or five pounds of black sulphur, they will use it as a bath and rid themselves of their visitors.—*F. B. in Agricultural Journal.*