

the various waves of immigration have improved the human population.

Those of your readers who show so much spirit and perseverance in the improvement of Leghorns may be glad to know, that in the land of their origin, their favorites evidently have a pedigree.

Mistaken Ideas.

We give to our readers an article taken from the "American Poultry Journal," which we think will bear upon the subjects we have heretofore tried to urge upon them, and will stand reproduction in our columns.

"One would hardly suppose, nowadays, that any sane man of any practical experience in domestic live stock would be unwilling to admit the superiority of thoroughbred animals over the common or mongrel stock of the country. But, after all, some fossil comes to the surface; once in a while, clinging to the old fogey idea of his ancestors, that the breed is in the feed all through. Among a class of men who ought to know better, similar ideas prevail in regard to Poultry. We know there is no kind of livestock raised on a farm, or at the suburban home, or on the cottager's limited plot, that is forced to take care of itself as poultry are. It is no trouble to convince the farmer that the gigantic Norman is better than the Mustang, or that the Poland-China, or Berkshire, pig is better than the "prairie rooter." The stock raiser will easily yield to the force of truth when one points out the superiority of the short-horn to the Texan steer. After all, it seems to be an idea, with those who pay little attention to the cultivation of poultry, that there is little or no difference between the common dunghills and the improved breeds, as regards utility; and that, do as we will, hens will lay about so many eggs and produce as many chicks, let the care they may receive be what it may. Such a mistaken idea is founded on a grievous error, apparent in the raising of any kind of stock, simply because determined neglect and gross ignorance have prevailed, all along, with a certain class of our people, regarding the value of poultry stock as a productive and profitable industry. Those who consider poultry a worthless stock, must have kept the worthless kind, or else they know nothing about choice of fowls. What does the keeper of a flock of impoverished dunghills know about the real value of good fowl stock? Doubtless they are the very men who keep their fowls in the most wretched condition, by grudging every particle of sound food they may pick up, or steal from the adjoining pig-sty. Half the time, they are without any food at all, only what they may obtain from the stable floor, or the straw rack. They roost on winter nights under dilapidated sheds, on plough handles, or on old wagon trucks, and, are forced by sheer neglect to drink from the vile gutter, or of what is voided by animals. Is this way of keeping poultry in consonance with common sense? How can fowls be in a condition for the market under such slipshod treatment? How could they supply the table with the nice fresh eggs, while the owner wilfully refuses to give them the food required to make them.

Unfortunately, there are many such men keeping poultry in our midst, who never feed, care for, or house their fowls, from one year to another, and who still complain they do not get eggs. The man who expects a nice plump fowl for the table, and the luxury of a nice fresh egg for breakfast, from such neglected stock, is meaner than the sneak thief we read about, who stole acorns from his neighbour's blind pig.

The Coming Sheep.

As I have for some time been praising the Hampshire Downs and expressing, pretty pertinaciously, my opinion that they are of

all sheep the best suited to this climate and soil, I could not resist the temptation of laying before the readers of the Journal the high esteem in which they are held by Mr. Morton, editor of the *Agricultural Gazette*, England. Mr. Morton farms extensively, and can have no object except that of doing good to his brother farmers in stating what he thinks of this valuable breed. The following extract forms his leading article in the issue of the 13th of December last. I may mention that the best pen of Hampshire-Down lambs at the Smithfield-Club Show, last month, weighed 33 lbs. the quarter, at 9 months old: just 3½ lbs. a week from the day of their birth! A. R. J. F.

The philosophy of evolution and development appears to be supported by the history of our live stock. Those who have traced out the rise and progress have also had to record the decadence and the fall of races of cattle and sheep. The old Longhorn, brought to perfection under the skilful management of Bakewell, waned and vanished under the superior qualities of the Shorthorn. It would indeed be touching upon delicate ground to hint that this pet of the great ones of the earth could be displaced from her temple. All things, however, come to an end, and exorbitant sums of money given for individuals for no special excellence except what exists, or is supposed to exist, potentially in the mysterious virtues of pedigree, savours of that luxury which precedes decay and dissolution.

The history of our chief breeds of sheep affords more than one instance of improvement and abandonment. Take, for example, the Leicester. Fifty years ago this breed might appropriately have been said to "rule the roost." Now, except in a very few counties and among a small minority of farmers, the Leicester has been superseded. The Cotswold sheep is said to be going out, even upon his own hills, and does not seem to be spreading rapidly in any other locality. The Southdown was to the Shortwooled races as the Leicester was to the Longwools. Scarcely a breed was not improved by his touch, and for this reason alone, the Southdown will always hold a high position in the history of British flocks. Still, it must be confessed that the Southdown has ceased to be a rival for popularity with larger and more profitable, if less shapely, breeds of sheep.

One of the greatest advances in sheep breeding was made by Mr. Druce, of Eynsham, when he successfully crossed the Hampshire Down and Cotswold, and thereby produced the Oxford Down. The rise of this remarkable breed has been rapid, and it seems likely to extend further in its geographical distribution. It is undoubtedly a farmer's and a rent-paying sheep, possessed of great vigour of constitution, and it is in good hands. It has been hard run by the Shropshires, a race of mixed origin but of great excellence, which has also had its day. No doubt a future is in store for both these breeds, neither of which were known some forty years ago. An unfortunate predisposition to foot lameness is one of the weakest points in the favourite breed of the midlands, and a slowness in coming to maturity may possibly be also recorded as a frequent mark against him.

The last breed we have to mention is one which deserves very special attention. He has not as yet attracted a large share of public notice. Columns of show reports have been lavished upon Leicesters and Southdowns, but scant notes have been usually thought enough for the Hampshires. They have not been pushed, or taken up by the great. They have, however, been long carefully bred by a large number of first-class tenant-farmers around Salisbury, and tended by a good and faithful race of shepherds. We venture to assert that the Hampshire sheep is not sufficiently known and appreciated. There is no race in England, or in the world, which can vie with it in the production of large-sized lambs of from six to eight months old. Shropshire lambs are simply "nowhere" to them. Let any unprejudiced person attend the ram sales in