

fowls to finish them off with a fortnight's close feeding, which is calculated to increase their weight considerably and give them a flavor which is at the same time rich and palatable. This is done in different ways. Some raise a lot of birds together, picking them up from their runs once a week and shutting them in a house together, where they are crammed with prepared food, which generally consists of ground oats and suet, or fat of even a cheaper kind. The birds manage to digest this soft food very well without exercise, put on flesh rapidly if in good health, and are soon ready, the period being ascertained by the feeder by handling, when they are at once killed. Some birds will not fatten as it is called, although chickens do not really put on much fat at any time, but rather flesh, while if they are kept too long, or their food or drink be allowed to get sour, they sometimes go the other way. There are men in Sussex who are fatteners or finishers by trade, buying up hundreds of young birds from the cottagers and farmers, feeding them at home in the way described, and then killing and plucking them and sending to market. Some of these people do a tremendous trade, especially at those seasons of the year when prices rule high. They have the usual advantages enjoyed by middlemen; thus they always know the prices they are likely to obtain for their goods. The salesmen depend upon them, or always endeavor to suit them, because they are compelled to work together with men who really stand in a position as customers to them, or in one which is at least as important. This being the case, the fatterer, whose business is large and money always ready, is depended upon, to a great extent, by the little people in his district, who really breed for him, and are in reality compelled to receive his price. Thus he actually has a good margin which secures him from loss and enables him to do very well indeed. It is safe to say that as a general rule the breeders seldom get the benefit of high figures or anything more than a sensible advance when London prices are very high indeed.

Not very long ago, we were at a farm where many hundreds of birds were bred each year, and a system used which differs something from the above. At about 16 weeks the chickens were taken up and put in rows in little compartments, the floors of which were composed of a few slats of wood, so that the manure could fall through into the drawer beneath, which was sawdusted. In front of each little cage was a trough of wood, into which the soft food was placed, and this was composed of milk and meal boiled, or fine greaves⁽¹⁾ and meal also cooked. It was given in a thin, sloppy state, in order to prevent the necessity of giving water as well; but the birds did well, although some difficulty was experienced in keeping the troughs absolutely sweet. Here some two or three hundred were caged and fed at once, and their places filled up as fast as they were taken out for market.

In France another system is adopted in some places where chickens are fattened by a machine, the invention, we believe, of M. Odèle Martin. A nozzle is put into the bird's mouth, and, with a slight pressure of the foot, a quantity of soft prepared food is forced into the crop. This is, of course, regulated by the length of pressure and the state and size of the bird. Each bird is placed in a similar cage to one of those above named, but it stands on a perch to which its feet are fastened by a trap, and more room is given to admit of its body being grasped by the feeder. In one large machine, however, which the maker has invented, the tiers of cages are placed in a circular form and revolve, the man taking up a position and simply pushing the cages past him as he proceeds. The food used in France is generally buckwheat meal and milk, which is very much relished, and is believed to be

as good as any food which is known. We certainly believe it to be equal to ground oats, both, however, being difficult to obtain in England, although they are about the best foods for the purpose. It is difficult to know why it is the case, but except in Sussex, where ground oats are used—and they are ground up finely, husk and all, and command a good price—they are hardly to be obtained in the country, whereas buckwheat meal is sold by very few persons, indeed. Oats are cheap enough, and so is buckwheat, and if corn merchants won't sell it, we advise feeders to grind for themselves, which they can do now without any trouble, there being plenty of mills in the market suitable for the purpose. It seems strange to us and yet it is true that while breeders neglect such grand foods as the above they will give 50 per cent. more money for compounds which are not one-half their value; but the public like being gulled, and it would perhaps be easier to sell ground oats a little spiced at 20s. than at the usual price. Another good food is maize meal mixed with fine sharps—to give the nitrogen which the maize is deficient in. This is used very largely in the North of England, and is very much appreciated. If a man would succeed with his poultry he must use good food and that fresh. Stale meal is dear because many of its properties have departed; hence meal should be always fresh ground—another example of the value of a mill at home.

DROVER AND COLLIE SHEPHERD DOGS. (1)

EDS. COUNTRY GENTLEMAN—I have learned by observation a few of the merits and defects of the Scotch collie dogs when used for driving live stock, and it seems to me they are of sufficient importance to note down and publish. In England, perhaps chiefly in the central and southern counties, there is a short-tailed, or stump-tailed breed of dogs that has for years, perhaps for centuries, been employed by cattle dealers in driving cattle, though in frequent instances they are used in driving sheep. These stump-tailed drover dogs are from twenty to thirty per cent. larger than the Scotch collies. They are usually black, but frequently have a white stripe in the face, or a white nose, and generally they have white feet as high up as the dewlows, or higher. In some cases these dogs are of a uniform grey color, with short curly hair, the black dogs in most cases having smooth hair.

From his greater height as well as weight, the English drover dog is much better adapted to driving cattle than the smaller Scotch collie. Being taller, the short-tailed drover has a better chance to pinch the cattle higher up and farther from their hoofs, by which he is in less danger of being kicked on the head. Moreover, his greater weight enables him to "hold fast" in degrees impossible to the smaller collie dog. The drovers are not, perhaps, quite so active in their movements as the collies, but are more effective when driving or penning cattle. Their stump tails, which range from two to six inches in length only do not hinder the dogs in their work. The long brush tails of the collie dogs (so long that they frequently drag on the ground), are often trodden upon by the cattle they are driving, in this way causing hindrance, and often laming or maiming the dog just when his services are most required. As collie dogs are much in use at present in western cattle herding, it may be well to take these facts into consideration.

For sheep, the Scotch collie is a very effective, and perhaps unexcelled, helper. Sheep prefer the higher altitudes for the sake of the sweeter herbage they can gather there. At such altitudes, the winds are frequently prolonged and strong. In

(1) Greaves; the residue of tallow-melting.

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(1) "Nec tibi cura canum fuerit postrema." Vergil.