

AGRICULTURAL.

Breeders and their Characteristics.

The introduction of gigantic Asiatic poultry produces a great change for the better in our poultry-yards. The little, spare, bony fowls, we once called poultry, are now almost forgotten; for one or other of the improved breeds has left its impress on our poultry from Maine to California; but the greatest improvement for general use lies in the new breeds produced by crossing the Asiatics with our small, non-setting birds to produce a permanent breed that will hatch their own young, make fair table-birds, mature early and be fair layers. This has been tried in the Plymouth Rocks, with a fair degree of success; I say a fair degree, as I am not as well pleased as some people are with fowls of this breed as now bred, and here are my reasons: too much importance has been attached to size; this brings out the Asiatic feature, and the production of heavy, clumsy birds is encouraged at the expense of laying qualities. As I am certain the smallest Plymouth Rocks lay the best; they partake more of the Dominique characteristic in being prolific layers.

Another new breed from Asiatic crosses, which promises much if the "American Standard of Excellence" does not insist too much on size, is the Wyandotte. This is an Asiatic cross on the Hamburg, which is to small a fowl to be very useful in itself; but in this new form, we have a comely, clean-looking, closely feathered, small and flat-combed, yellow-legged, early-feathering and maturing, strong breed, which do their own hatching, and are quite peaceable birds, but they should keep them down to a fair size, or they may as well breed pure Asiatics, and have the fine laying characteristics of the Hamburgs, which is a great feature with fowls of that breed, though their eggs are small. The Wyandotte eggs are not large, but they are of a fair marketable size, which the Hamburgs are not. What we gain in this breed is a harder and larger bird than the Hamburg, combining the laying and other qualities enumerated above.

Another cross which attracted much attention at the New York Fanciers' Exhibition last winter, was one between the Dorking and Langshan. The offspring were immense birds, but both parents belong to large breeds; but the Langshan is harder than the Dorking, and the offspring of the two are very much earlier for Spring chickens than birds of either ancestral breed. - Henry Hales, in Rural New Yorker.

A Good Potato.

When cut into, the colour of a good potato, says the Irish Farmers' Gazette, should be yellowish white; if it be a deep yellow, will not cook well. There must be a considerable amount of moisture, though not enough to collect in drops and fall off, even with moderate pressure. Rub the pieces together, and if the potato is good, a froth will appear around the edges and also upon the two surfaces after they are separated. This signifies the presence of a proper quantity of starch—the more from the more starch, and consequently the better the potato; while the less there is, the poorer it will cook. The quantity of the starchy element may also be judged by the more or less ready adherence of the two parts. If the adherence be sufficient for one piece to hold the other up, that fact is evidence of a good article. These are the experiments usually made by experts when buying potatoes, and are the best tests that can be given; but even they are by no means infallible.

Wheat Sowing.

The practice of sowing wheat after the corn for the Northern farmer, a striking feature in Southern farm management, and in some instances, be adopted also in Northern sections to good advantage. Early in September, when the corn has come to maturity, three or four rows, in intervals of about sixty feet, are cut down. The open spaces are then thoroughly harrowed and sown to wheat with the drill. Afterwards the corn is all cut and placed in shocks on the ground. The drills are ready for harrow and drill. If the electric Appliances are used, the harrow is often dragged down with a short piece of timber or small leg, for the purpose of making a smooth and mellow seed bed. For ages wheat and all small grain have been sown broadcast, thus precluding the possibility of cultivation, and this practice still prevails. For many years, however, drill-sowing has been practised in the better managed farms of America and Europe, and the implement made specially for planting grain in drills, a few inches apart, is now considered as an essential article for the wheat planter to own. Experience has shown that the use of the drill is advantageous. It distributes the seed with great regularity, thick or thin, as may be preferred; the growth of the crop is more uniform; more sunlight and air goes to the roots of the wheat, and the crop is generally more and of better quality. In some instances the advantages are very marked; in others, not so manifest; but together it is found to be a great improvement on the old custom of seeding broadcast. There is every reason therefore to encourage it.

Ensilage Without a Silo.

Feeding without a silo—that is, stacking the corn in the open air—has been practised by M. Cormouls-Houies in France. An open air silo was constructed in May in the form of a stack of 30 cartloads of timothy, lucerne, and other grasses. No cover was visible, whether the stacking was in wet or dry weather. As to the corn which consumed the products, 60 cartloads were fed indifferently on ensilage from the stack and from the pits, and were turned into the fields for exercise alone. M. Cormouls-Houies insists upon the necessity of feeding the corn while freshly cut. His workmen, in his absence, placed in the middle of the stack four or five cartloads of hay cut days previously, and the result was a partial section of mould right across the stack exactly where the partially dried material had been placed. He is trying maize, and will pay to spend a little leisure time, in cold weather, in re-stacking every stack, and in battening up the cracks.

about the stables to shut out the cold and make them comfortable. It is simply barbarous to confine the stock in cold, bleak stables, and compel them to shiver out the cold winter on dry food alone; and any man who will be so cruel and inhuman, not to say shortsighted, should be doomed to live on hard-luck and sleep in an open garret with simply a sheet for covering. It may be such treatment would remind him of the proverb "A merciful man is merciful to his beast."

Taking A Chinaman Home.

Yesterday morning a solemn-looking Chinaman went west on the Union Pacific train. He was escorted to the depot by half a dozen of his almond-eyed countrymen, who parted with him with envy in their hearts, for he was bound to his old home in the Flowery Kingdom, while they are doomed for a while longer to mangle the Mexican man's linen. In the pocket of the traveller was a check for a leather grip-sack, which he was careful to see loaded on the baggage car before he boarded the train. There would be nothing peculiar about this were it not that the leather grip contained the bones of a good Chinaman being transported back to the Celestial paradise free of expense. Nine years ago Ching Lee, then a new arrival from Chinaland, strolled into Beindorf's bakery, and tackled his first dish of ice cream. Ching found it "belly good," and ordered a whole quart, which he ate on the spot. The day was oppressively hot, and not having a bill-proof lining like the average Omaha girl. Ching found his load very uncomfortable. While passing from the table to the street there was a Græco-Roman struggle between the iceberg within and the furnace without, and Ching was thrown. He fell on the sidewalk, and in five minutes he was a dead Chinaman. After Ching had been buried two years a party of Chinese officials who were en route home stopped in Omaha to get his body and take it with them. The grave was opened and the remains taken out, but they were not in shape for shipment, and were re-buried. Sexton Medlock, at the request of the mandarins, took from the casket at that time a hand mirror, an empty wallet, and about 80 cents in money, which had been buried with the corpse. The three suits of clothes in which Ching was dressed were also taken off and planted under a tree in another part of the cemetery. Sunday morning Ching's grave was opened the second time. Five or six of the deceased's countrymen were present with a "joss" man, and a number of Americans watched the ceremony from a respectable distance. After considerable blowing and scraping, a basket of eatables was produced, and a goodly dinner spread about the head of the grave. A chicken roasted with the head on occupied the post of honor, flanked on either side by large pieces of boiling pork and liver. Tea was made in a orous little Chinese caddy, and a number of cups poured out and placed on the ground. Then, after more blowing and scraping, several packages of cigars were strewn over the grave, and innumerable sticks of incense lighted. More incantations by the "joss" man followed, and when the mourners had bowed themselves tired the casket was opened and the remains shovelled out. The bones which were free from flesh, and perfectly dry, were rolled up in a piece of coarse sheeting and sewed up, after which they were placed in the valise. While Medlock was busy packing Ching's remains for shipment two of the Chinamen jumped into the grave and pried over the earth at the bottom with their fingers in order to make sure that nothing belonged to the deceased's anatomy was left behind. Satisfied that they had secured all of Ching's bones, the Celestials drank the tea that had been standing about the grave, gathered up the eatables and came back to town, chattering like magpies, and smoking the cigarettes they had offered up to their dead countryman. The valise was taken by the journeying Celestial to his lodging and put under his bed, where it remained until the custodian started with it for China Monday noon.

DREADFUL MURDER IN RUSSIA.

Six People Cruelly Butchered—The Murderers Escape.

The Novoe Vremya publishes some details of a frightful tragedy recently committed in the parish of Baakovo, on the left bank of the Volga, and in the government of Saratoff. The victims are six in number—viz., a merchant's widow named Krasnikoff, her two children, a seamstress, a man-servant, and a coachman. The murderous band was apparently acting upon a full knowledge of the house and personnel of the family. The third youngest child, which usually slept with the seamstress, was given by the latter on the evening of the murder to the cook, who slept in the kitchen. The cook and this child, an infant at the breast, were the only two of the household who escaped the premeditated general butchery. All the members of the household were asleep when the robbers and assassins scaled the courtyard wall. With an evident foreknowledge of the place, they proceeded to the coach-house, where the coachman was sleeping. The latter appears to have made a desperate resistance, but was ultimately dispatched. The murderers then ascended to the roof of the house, and entered by a skylight. Mrs. Krasnikoff, the two elder children, and the seamstress slept in separate rooms on the upper story, and were murdered simultaneously. In the case of the seamstress a bill-hook or chopper appears to have been the weapon used. The man-servant, who slept on the ground floor, and the cook with the child in the kitchen, were awakened by the cries above. The cook, with the infant in her arms, rushed out to arouse the coachman, but only to find his mangled corpse, and, being too terrified either to return to the house or to fly to the village, she concealed herself, and managed to still the cries of the infant. The man-servant, immediately following the cook's flight from the house, was cut down on the threshold. The murderers then made a search for the missing cook and child, but failed to discover the place of their concealment. After pillaging the house the murderers locked the door and left. The terrified cook raised an alarm, and messengers were dispatched to the police, who only arrived late the following forenoon, when, of course, the murderers had made good their escape.

Motto of the housekeeper who buys at market—"Measures, not men."

TRANSVAAL GOLD.

Another Addition to the Wealth of South Africa—Rich Quartz Discoveries.

For months past the late discoveries of gold in the Transvaal republic have been the principal topic of conversation throughout South Africa, and a large number of people have thrown up employment in the colony and Natal to proceed to the new E. Dorado at Moodie's. As a great many Americans are now coming out for these fields, it may be interesting to your readers to know where they are situated, and what the surrounding country is like. Moodie's holding, upon which the reef called after him is situated, is estimated to be 170 miles west by south from the Portuguese town of Delagoa Bay, and about the same distance northeast of Pretoria, a town of some importance, containing about a couple of thousand inhabitants. But the actual distances are not known, for there are no roads that few parties travel by the same route, and for the last twenty miles or so there are no roads at all, and from the nature of the country but little possibility of making any. There are two main overland routes to Moodie's and the fields farther north from Natal and the Cape Colony—one, the post-carriage route, through Potchefstroom, Pretoria, and Middleburg, the other through Utrecht and New Scotland. The latter is the shorter route, but it is unsafe at present owing to the unsettled condition of the natives. There is also a route by sea from Durban (Natal) to Delagoa Bay, and thence overland. This is the quickest way of getting to Moodie's, but the chances are that you carry your death-warrant with you in the shape of the deadly coast fever. The road from Delagoa Bay is only safe during the months of June, July and August, when the weather is cool and but little rain falls. The country near the coast is a succession of huge swamps, where the wagons sink up to their axles, and two, sometimes three, teams, of sixteen oxen each, have to be inspanned to get the blundering, unwieldy vehicles through. Several large rivers have to be forded, and here accidents are more the rule than the exception. One river, the Crocodile, is aptly named. A few weeks ago the sub-editor of one of the Durban papers, when crossing it, suddenly disappeared. It was subsequently discovered that he—or at least a considerable portion of him—had taken an involuntary berth inside a crocodile, which officiated as a rifle target shortly afterward. When the lower country is passed the traveller has to make his way as best he can over a range of lofty hills. The track here is incumbered with immense boulders, many of which are as big as an ordinary three-story house. Wagons generally break down on this section of the journey if they have not come to grief previously, and many parties have to abandon their wagons here and go to camp on foot, taking what goods and baggage they can carry on their mules and oxen. Horses and oxen will not live any length of time in this part of the country, and the only hope to get them through is to push forward as fast as possible. Mules fare somewhat better, but the donkey is the beast of burden for work in the Crocodile and Kooper river country. He is sure-footed, will live on scrub-brush if he can get it, and thrive on rocks when he can get nothing else, and the bite of the dreaded tsetse fly scarcely appears to inconvenience him at all, while to oxen and horses it is certain death.

Many travelers have asserted that this unpleasant little insect does not extend its deadly proclivities to the human species. Those travelers either wilfully lied—and being personally acquainted with the majority of them I may safely say that their capabilities for the economy of truth rank little, if at all, below those of the average Cretan—or they must have been physically psychodermatous. I do not pretend to be a great African traveler, though I have wandered over a considerable extent of the country. I have shot at an elephant, but I missed him, which, considering that my only weapon was a Winchester rifle of the old rim-fire, pop-gun make, was probably quite as well for me as it was for the elephant; and I once wounded a buffalo, which turned out to be a black bullock, and which I did not go after for prudential reasons that may easily be comprehended by the class of sportsmen to which I fear, I belong. But I have been bitten by tsetse fly, and I remember that bite for some considerable time subsequently. It is only, however, during the eight or nine hot months of the year that these pests are really troublesome to man or dangerous to cattle, and, once the high bush belt between the swamps and the very high country is passed, one need be under no apprehensions of loss or inconvenience from this pest. This fly, however, is not the only objectionable specimen of the animal kingdom with which the gold miner is likely to make acquaintance on his road to the Transvaal fields. Snakes are plentiful, and most of them are exceedingly venomous, and there are enough tarantulas, centipedes, and scorpions to furnish an unpleasantly liberal allowance to countries where these horrors are not included in the census. The climate, however, in the high country about Moodie's is probably one of the grandest in creation. In the winter months it is bright, bracing, but always dry, and sometimes exceedingly cold. In the summer the heat during the daytime is enough to melt a salamander, but it is a dry heat, and therefore nothing like so trying as the continual summer vapor-bath on the coast. There is water in abundance, but it has to be led some distance for mining operations. Wood is not over plentiful, but there is coal in the neighborhood of the mines, and this will be the fuel of the future. At present most of the diggers have to be content to use cow-dung—and excellent fuel it makes, too—though the aroma it produces in burning is not exactly the sort of thing that Eugene Bimmel makes his dollars out of. Life is necessarily the roughest; but the life of the pioneer miners generally belong to this category. Most things can be had by paying for them, but the prices are, in some cases, such as no sensible man would think of giving. However, any man who is not blessed—or cursed—with a gigantic appetite, can manage to exist tolerably well on £10 a month, and if he cannot afford this modest outlay, he is not likely to succeed as a miner.

With regard to the quartz, I may say that I have seen and handled a great deal of it. Some was fabulously rich. There was actually more gold than quartz in the specimens. But this was picked stuff, and went to England for the purpose of enticing capitalists to invest. Much of it would yield one hundred ounces to the ton. Of course this must not be taken as the average. The majority of the quartz, however, is certainly very rich, and the general opinion of old Australian and Californian miners is that from two to seven ounces may be accepted as a general average. There are at present about 1,200 men on Moodie's reef. Many of them are almost starving. The latter are mostly clerks who have thrown up situations in stores and gone up to the fields without either money or mining experience. The same class of men starved in the early days of the diamond fields simply because they did not possess the physique for hard manual labor and wanted to make fortunes by working at their claims. Men who understand mining are doing well. The country at present is entirely unsettled. The Transvaal legislature is powerless to protect the concessionaires, and the only law at the gold fields is that of Mr. Justice Lynch. Native labor is not over plentiful, but so soon as the Swaz chief finds out that the fields are being worked—as they eventually will be—by an exclusively English speaking population, they will be only too willing to send down their men in parties to contract for six or twelve months work.—[Port Elizabeth C. R. San Francis Chronicle.]

ALL SORTS.

A flat-head—The janitor. A sigh for nothing—a cipher. A last resort—The cobbler's shop. A sound reason—a fog-horn conclusion. An open question—who will shut the door? Young men don't often go wild over blonde hair, novelties to the contrary notwithstanding. It's the black locks they go raven over. The cold winds of autumn remind the farmers that it will soon be time to put their cattle under cover. Ye who have steers to shed prepare to shed them now. A new brand of cigar is advertised called "The kicker." We should think that a cigar would be more apt to be a butter than a kicker. The one who smokes it is probably the kicker. When a man's clothes come home from the laundry only half don up its but an other illustration of the irony of fate; and generally he gets so mad that it takes all the starch out of him. Westward the star liar takes his way. The Montana Sun says a gentleman in the vicinity recently killed twenty-four fish in a small pond with a buggy whip, the shortest measuring thirteen inches. At a recent Sunday school meeting, a long-winded clergyman consumed too much time with a wordy address. When he sat down the leader of the meeting unwittingly announced the hymn beginning "Hallelujah! 'tis D. n. s."

The truth is often spoken inadvertently. A French Bishop, in the course of a talk with a smart young man, mechanically opened his snuff-box and offered it to his questioner. "Much obliged, no, mon sieur," was the answer; "thanks to God I have not this defect." "Oh," returned the prelate, laughing, "if it were a defect you would have it." Mrs. Seeley, of Sardinia, N. Y., is a needle manufacturer. The doctors in one week took forty-six needles from her arm. She doesn't know how they got there. They keep a coming. Her husband wants the doctors to keep probing until they find a sewing machine or a Bessemer furnace, he isn't particular which. "Doesn't that man remind you of the sea?" said a pretty girl on Fourth street to her companion, as a very fashionable masher went by. "I don't know. How do you mean?" "Oh, because he is such a heavy swell." "Yes, dear," was the quiet response, "but you know the sea swell is salt."

Excavations in Greece.

Excavations are being carried on with great activity and more or less success in various parts of Greece. Upon the site of the temple of Asklepios, at Epidaurus, and upon that of the Amphiarion, at Oropos, in Attica, the diggings, which have been going on simultaneously for some time past, have resulted in the discovery of numerous pieces of sculpture and inscriptions of value. The excavations began several years ago on the site of the Temple of Eleusis have been resumed after a considerable pause. In all these cases the work is conducted by the Archaeological Society of Athens. The Greek Government on the other hand, has taken up a very extensive and important task in Athens itself, where it is engaged in thoroughly examining the Acropolis. Two years ago a portion of the ancient citadel, lying to the southeast of the Parthenon, was cleared by order of the Epor, M. Estratiades, and resulted in the discovery of numerous very beautiful and remarkable monuments and remains of ancient Athens. It was accordingly determined to thoroughly explore the entire site of the Acropolis. The work has been begun by the Epor, M. Stamatakis, on a large scale, and already a considerable portion of the masonry and Turkish fortifications surrounding and disfiguring the hill have been demolished and removed. The appointment of M. Stamatakis as Epor-General of the antiquities of the Kingdom of Greece is the best guarantee that this important work will be carefully and thoroughly executed. For many years past the new Superintendent has distinguished himself by his labors in bringing to light and preserving antiquities in all parts of Greece. The practical direction of the work of demolition and excavation has been entrusted to Dr. Pfeiffer, a German architect, who is well known for his labors in connection with Dr. Schliemann.

A Maine Farmer's Fish Story.

A farmer who was in town from Wells, Wednesday morning, related a remarkable circumstance which happened in his town one day recently. For some time past the herring have remained away from shore, and the fishermen were unable to obtain them in very large numbers. All at once they began to come in shore, even into the breakers, in immense numbers, probably being frightened by dogfish or bluefish. The number kept increasing, and when the tide went out it left a place of about an acre completely covered with the fish. In some spots, where there was a depression in the sand, the fish were piled in to the depth of about five feet. The farmers in the vicinity soon learned of the fact, and they flocked to the shore and secured cartloads of the fish to be used on their farms as fertilizers. One farmer obtained 60 cartloads.

SCIENTIFIC GOSSIP.

Very lately, and following up recent researches, Dr. Heineck, of Frankfurt, has detected the existence of bacteria upon half-mark pieces which had been in circulation.

An optical telegraph was established on Lecroix Peak, in Reunion, and Vart Peak, in Mauritius, on the night of July 12-13, when messages were freely exchanged between the two islands.

The eucalyptus, or Australian blue-gum tree, is now grown in every civilized country almost where frosts do not occur, but, being by nature adapted to act as an evaporating machine, it will not destroy malaria or keep off mosquitoes if planted in a dry and not in a marshy soil.

A chestnut at the foot of Mount Etna is believed to be the largest and oldest tree in Europe. It is hollow, and large enough to admit two carriages driving abreast to pass through it. The main trunk has a circumference of 212 feet. This gizzly giant is said to measure 92 feet in height.

Until lately most of the supply of sugar in Denmark was imported. Now the material for sugar is provided within the boundaries of the kingdom. Six years ago the Danes made 2,600,000 pounds of beet-root sugar, and four years later the figures rose to 8,600,000 pounds. The production of 1882 exceeded that of 1881 by fully 2,000,000 pounds.

It is stated that the Tehi Yuen, a powerful "protected" cruiser of 2,355 tons and 2,800 horse-power, carrying a 6 inch and 5.7.8 inch Krupp guns (mounted en barbette), built for the Chinese Government at Stettin, made several trial trips, without making the full contract speed of 15 knots an hour. But the result has been that the causes of the slow rate clearly revealed themselves, and proved to be easily remedied.

It is said that the French railroad companies are about to adopt an electric gate opener. A catch connected with an electromagnet keeps the gates closed. When a train approaches it closes the circuit, releases the catch, and the gates fly open. The last train as it passes through opens the circuit, and the gates are again closed. The same apparatus rings a bell violently on the approach of a train.

Lead tanks which withstood sulphuric acid perfectly, Mr. S. P. Sharples reports, were soon destroyed by hydrochloric acid. In some recent experiments undertaken to destroy cotton there by means of hot hydrochloric acid it was found that lead-lined vessels were soon rendered useless by it. Even the cold acid could not be kept in wooden tanks lined with lead. Most authors say that lead is only slightly affected by hydrochloric acid.

On brass, a technical journal says, a steel color is developed by using a boiling solution of arsenic chloride, while a careful application of a concentrated solution of sodium sulphide causes a blue coloration. Black being generally used for optical instruments is obtained from a solution of platinum chloride to which tin nitrate has been added. In Japan the brass is bronzed by using a solution of copper sulphate, alum, and verdigris.

Work on the Antwerp International Exhibition, 1885, is advancing rapidly. The buildings are convenient for foreign exhibitors and visitors, as the gironns can easily be reached from the docks quays, and railway station. Space has already been taken by Belgium, France, Holland, Great Britain, Germany, Denmark, Austria, Spain, Italy, America, Norway and Sweden, Russia, and Haiti. The buildings will be finished by the end of March next. Some remarks were recently made by M. F. Tisserand on the subject of the theory of the figure of the planets. His calculations and estimates of their present form were founded upon the assumption that the celestial bodies were originally in the fluid state, subject only to the mutual attraction of their constituent elements, and endowed with a rotary movement with very slight angular velocity. Their outer surface would thus be somewhat of a revolving ellipsoid.

Origin of a Few Oaths.

The courtiers of Louis IX. were wont to indulge in swearing to an extent that was both painful and distressing to the good king, their master, although the penalty prescribed in the statute book for the offence was no less than branding the tongue with a red-hot iron for every commission of it. The oaths most offensive to the saintly monarch were the "cordiens," the "tetediens," the "paradiens," etc., which still survive in Moliere and Rabelais. At this time there was at the palace, belonging to one of the ladies of the court, a little pet dog named "Blen." To evade the harsh sentence of the law, which might deprive them forever of the power of indulging in their favorite pastime, the courtiers determined to substitute for "dien" the name of the dog. So "cordien" became "corbleu," "tetedien" "tetebleu," etc., and the apparently meaningless words are preserved to the present day. "Sacredieu" became "sacredieu," and was finally contracted to "sacra." This last is the most common of French oaths nowadays (except "mon Dieu"). The dandies of ancient Rome used to swear by all the gods indiscriminately, though it was customary for each one to have his favorite oath. Castor and Pollux were the favorites among the demi-gods to swear by Gemini, they meant to swear by Castor and Pollux, the twins. This oath has come down to us, even to the present day, when the expression "By Jimmy!" is frequently heard. "The dence" is a very ancient oath, indeed, as will appear from the derivation to which it is referred—the Latin Deus—God. Nowadays it is considered a mild oath to say "the dence!" It is a curious thing that dence is generally supposed to mean the "devil." So people say, "go to the dence!" The origin of the phrase "by jingo" is traced to the word Jingo—the baser name for God.

Too Imitative by Far.

Mrs. Rensler of Madison Wis. killed a chicken in the presence of her little boys, using its head off with a hatchet. The boys became interested in the proceeding and while the mother was in the house the older boy prevailed upon the younger to play the part of chicken and actually had his head on the block and was in the act of chopping off his head when the older brother accidentally noticed the game and stopped the operation before any serious damages had been inflicted.