

## THE FARMERS DEPARTMENT.

## POULTRY.

The Turkey, (*Meleagris Gallopavo*, L.) is a native of America and was introduced into Europe by the Spaniards, according to Loudon; though some authors say that the turkey derives its name from the country from which it was first introduced.

**Breeding.**—One turkey cock is sufficient for six hens or more, and a hen will cover from 9 to 15 eggs, according to her size. The hen is apt to form her nest abroad in a hedge, or under a bush, or some other retired place. She lays from eight to twenty-five eggs or upwards, and her term of incubation is thirty days. She is a steady sitter, even to starvation, and therefore requires to be regularly supplied with food and water. Buffon says that she is the most affectionate mother, but Mobraay observes that from her natural heedlessness and stupidity she is the most careless of mothers, and being a great traveller herself, will drag her brood over field, heath or bog, never casting a regard behind her to call her ragged or empty, nor stopping to see what she is to follow. The turkey differs from the common hen in never scratching for her chicks, leaving them entirely to their own instinct and industry, neither will they fight for their brood, though vigilant in the discovery of birds of prey, when they will call their chickens together by a particular cry, and run with considerable speed. Hence when not confined within certain limits they require the attention of a keeper.

Turkey chicks should be kept very warm from the nest as soon as hatched, and withdrawn from by wrapping them in flannels, or putting them under an artificial mother in a warm room or other warm place. Various nostrums (says Loudon) are recommended to be given and done at this season, as a pepper corn, and a tea spoonful of milk, immersion in cold water, &c. Mobraay wisely rejected all these unnatural practices, and succeeded by giving curd and hard eggs or curd and barley meal kneaded with milk and renewed with clear water rather than milk, as he found the last often secured them. A sort of vermicelli, or artificial worms from pulling boiled meat into strings he found beneficial for every species of gallinaceous chicken. Two great objects are, to avoid superfluous moisture, and to maintain the utmost cleanliness for which purpose as little slopfood is given as possible. A fresh turf of short sweet grass should be daily given as green food, but not snails or worms, oats nettle seed, clover, or wormwood, is recommended by the elder Livewives. Water is generally preferable to milk. When the weather is favourable the hen is cooped abroad in the forenoon. During the rest of the day and night, for the first six weeks, she is kept within doors. After that the hen may be cooped a whole day externally, for another fortnight, to harden the chickens; and afterwards they may be left to range, within certain limits, being fed at going out in the morning and returning in the evening. Their ordinary food may be that of common cocks and hens. They will prefer roosting abroad on high trees in the summer season, but that cannot generally be permitted without danger of their loss.

**Fattening.** Loudon says, sodden barley, or barley and wheat meal mixed is the most approved food for turkeys, and the general mode of management is the same as that of the common cock and hen. They are generally fed so as to come in at Christmas, but they may be fattened early or late. Sometimes, though rarely they are caponized. The living and dead, weight of a turkey are as 21 to 14.

R. Weston, an English writer of reputation, in a work entitled *Treatise on Practical Agriculture and Gardening* has the following observations on fattening turkeys as well as other poultry?

‘Boil some rice in water tender, till it be plumped up, and very tender; add about two ounces of very brown sugar to every pound of rice just before it is boiled enough: let the fowls be fed with it three times a day; in ten or twelve days they will be fat, but if they were not in good condition when put up to fatten they will be ready in seven or eight days; they must by no means have any water given them in summer; too much rice must not be boiled together, because of its soon turning sour; nor is milk so good for that season as water only; besides, the milk is very liable to make rice burn to the pot.

‘Frequently offal rice is to be bought very cheap of the grocers in the city. The rice causes the flesh to be remarkably white, and to have a fine delicate flavor.’

Mr. Cobbett in a work entitled *Cottage Economy*, makes the following remarks:

‘The great enemy to young turkeys (for old ones are hardy enough) is the wet. The first thing is to take care that young turkeys never go out on any account, even in dry weather, till the dew is quite off the ground; and this should be adhered to till they get to the size of an old partridge and have their backs well covered with feathers, and in wet weather, they should be under cover all day long.

‘The things have been recommended, Haricots chopped fine with crumbs of bread, and a great many other things; but, that which I have seen tried, and always with success, and for all sorts of young poultry, is, *milk turned into curds*. This is the food for young poultry of all sorts. Some should be made fresh every day and if this be done, and the young turkeys kept warm, and especially from wet, not one out of a score will die. When they get to be strong, they may have meal and grain, but still they always love the curds.

‘When they get their head feathers they are hardy enough; and what they then want is room to prawl about. It is best to breed them under a common hen, because she does not ramble like a hen-turkey; and it is a very curious thing that the turkeys bred up by a hen of the common fowl, do not themselves ramble much when they get old; and that which a more complete proof of the great power of habit, is not perhaps to be found. And ought not this to be a lesson to fathers and mothers of families? ought not they to consider that the habit which they give children are to stick to them during their whole lives?

‘The hen should be fed exceedingly well too while she is sitting and after she has hatched; for, though she does not give milk she gives heat; and let it be observed that, as no man ever yet saw healthy pigs with a poor sow, so no man ever saw healthy chicken with a poor hen. This is a matter much too little thought of in the rearing of poultry; but it is a matter of the greatest consequence. Never let a poor hen sit; feed the hen while she is sitting; and feed her most abundantly when she has young ones; for then her labor is very great; she is making exertions of some sort or other during the whole twenty-four hours; she has no rest; constantly doing something or other to provide food or safety for her young ones.

‘As to fattening turkeys, the best way is never to let them be poor. Cramping is a nasty thing and quite unnecessary. Barley meal mixed with skim milk, given to them fresh and

fresh will make them fat in a short time. Boiled carrots and Swedish turnips will help and furnish a change of sweet food.

## SALT IN RURAL ECONOMY.

The importance of salt to animals is so generally admitted, that I shall not here dwell at great length upon it. When animals are in a wild state, it is observed, that at certain periods of the year they seek the salt water or salt spring inland with avidity; and every farmer observes that his cattle, horses, &c. are remarkable fond of licking the salt earth of the farm yard, stables, &c. In Spain they give their sheep salt with great regularity, 1½ lbs. in five months to one thousand sheep; as such, fearlessly assert, that the importance of salt for cattle is incontrovertibly established, however imperfectly it may be practised. I subjoin the statement of Mr. Curwen, M.P. for Cambridgeshire. He employed salt to his live stock daily for years—for horses, he gives 6 oz. per day; milch cows, 4 oz.; feeding oxen, 6 oz.; yearlings 3 oz.; calves 1 oz.; sheep 2 to 4 oz. per week—in or dry pastures; but if they are feeding on turnips or coles, then they should have it without stint. Some give it to live stock on a slate or stone—some lay lumps of it in the cribs or mangers. It is a fact indisputably proved, that if sheep are allowed free access to salt, they will never be subject to the disease called the rot. Is not this a fact worthy of the farmer's earliest, most zealous attention? Some recent experiments also led me to believe that I shall one day or other be able to prove it to be a cure for this devastating disease. I have room but for one fact Mr. Rusher, of Stanley Gloucestershire, in the autumn of 1823, purchased for a mere trifle, twenty sheep; decidedly rotten; and gave each of them for some weeks, an ounce of salt every morning. Two only died during the winter, and the surviving eighteen were cured and have now (says my informant) ‘lambs by their sides.’ Mr. Butcher, now of Brook Hall, Essex, for years employed salt for his cattle and sheep; on his farm near Burnham, in Norfolk. One of the fields was so very unfavorable for sheep, that before he used salt he had lost ten or twelve sheep in a night when feeding on the turnips; but after he adopted salt, he never lost one. He used to let the sheep have the salt without stint; and he remarked, that the sheep always consumed four times more salt on this particular field, than when feeding on any other on the farm. Mr. Butcher one year let this field to turnips to a neighbour, who did not use salt; and consequently, after losing ten sheep the first night, gave up the field in despair. Sir Jacob Astley, of Melton Constable, in Norfolk, gives about a table spoonful of salt per week to each of his foxhounds. It keeps away distempers, preserves them in the best health and vigor. Although the use of salt for live stock is now becoming quite general, yet the enlightened farmer must not suppose that its introduction, even for that important purpose, was the work of the day. The very magistrates were opposed to its use; for, only a few years since, some honest farmer's servants were taken before a justice of the peace at Winchester, charged by their ignorant master, with the dreadful crime of giving his horses salt in their corn. ‘I should not have suspected it said the farmer, ‘I had not my horses' coats become so fine lately.’ ‘Salt for horses!’ exclaimed the indignant magistrate; ‘can any thing be more poisonous? Let the rascals be committed to Bridewell for a month.’