

**PRACTICAL POULTRY TALKS.**

**XXVIII.—Suggestions that May Help in Selecting a Breed.**

Messrs. Editors: The most important question that arises with the beginner in the poultry business is, What breed shall I select? While this question is asked hundreds of times daily, it is answered equally as often, but instead of assisting the beginner to select the best breed, it invariably gets him entangled to such an extent that he cannot make up his mind definitely, and very often he becomes dissatisfied after getting a good start.

**Two Classes of Poultrymen.**

The collection of a breed depends largely on the object to be attained, whether it be poultry for pleasure or profit. In the first class men who have other occupations or professions and keeps a few well-bred hens for the recreation in attending them, and having some strictly fresh eggs for the table and occasionally a show specimen; while the latter class includes farmers and their good wives who raise poultry largely for the money there is to be made out of it. And as the farmers and their wives supply at least two-thirds of all the eggs and fowls that are consumed, I shall devote this article to them, as I am not after the fancy but the utility breeder.

**An All-Purpose Fowl.**

The great majority of those who want to produce both eggs and meat for market will want a fowl of the all-purpose class, one giving a fair number of eggs and supplying, when killed and dressed, a large meaty carcass. This can be found in the American breeds of poultry. Rocks, Wyandottes Javas or Rhode Island Aeds, and one or two others not so well known. But to meet the requirement of the American market, the breed having yellow legs and skin must be selected, for leaving all together out of consideration the question as to whether the quality of meat is or is not as good in yellow-skinned fowl as in a white-skinned one, the fact is that the dear people of this country, with very little exception, prefer yellow-skinned poultry; and if you want to command the best price for your fowls and build up a trade, you must consider what the buyers want.

**Mediterranean and Asiatic Classes.**

For egg production, Leghorns and Minorcas of the Mediterranean class, which includes all the non-setting varieties. These all lay white-shelled, good sized egg, and are considered good all-year-round layers. The Leghorns (especially the whites) and the Minorcas are the breeds most extensively used on the large egg farms.

None of the Mediterranean class make poultry of the kind and quality called for by our markets, except that the Leghorns make good broilers, but are very poor as roosters.

The Asiatic breed, which is composed of all the larger breeds having feathered legs, and includes Brahamas, Cochins, Langshans, etc., are good layers and quick growers, yet they do not seem to do so well in a very warm climate, and have not received the same attention in the South that some of the other breeds have.

Any of the Asiatic breed make fine capons, and when this branch of poultry culture becomes more thoroughly understood in the South, this class will become more popular, and will be given the little extra care needed for their health and comfort during the warm day of summer.

**Prepare for the Fairs.**

Commence cooping this week all birds intended for exhibition pur-

poses this fall. Handle them daily and feed fattening foods so they will be in plump condition by the date of the Fair, not forgetting a cup of grit in one corner of the coop, as chickens will not fatten without teeth to masticate their food. If convenient, give butter milk instead of water to drink and a little charcoal. "UNCLE JO."

**A PROGRESSIVE STOCKMAN.**

**A Visit to a Stock Farm—and There Should be Ten Thousand Like it in Our Territory.**

Messrs. Editors: Yesterday I wandered around some in the foothills of the mountains and found there an ideal spot: a restful shady place where one could get some slices of bread and butter and a glass of icy rich milk.

This was upon the stock farm of Mr. R. C. Shuford. (Good-natured Bob, the neighbors call him.) His farms nestle back upon a pretty stream of water where the screech of the mile-whistle and railroad trains do not disturb his morning nap. Mr. Shuford is a breeder of Jersey cattle and Berkshire pigs. He is a careful, painstaking, conscientious man and devotes every bit of time and talent, brain and muscle, to the improvement of his already fine herd of cattle and swine.

There is in his herd some of the finest blood procurable. His barns and silos are of the most approved style and in his silos are packed more than enough ensilage to winter a hundred head of stock. His pasture lots stretch out in different directions and over these are scattered those pretty mild-eyed Jerseys with their patrician bearing, and pedigrees as long as your arm. The pedigrees do not seem to worry them as they brouse about on the succulent grass or stand contentedly in the streams ever and anon flicking a fly from their sides. Did you ever notice that a well-bred animal is in many respects much like a well-bred person? There is a genteel simplicity about them that separates them from the common herd.

The dairy is built on a green undulating slope. The first story is of rocks built rustic fashion. Around the upper side of this runs a silvery stream of water which pours over a water wheel from which the power is obtained to operate the separators. Churn and butter working machines, ordinarily speaking, there is very little poetry in churning, but here with the musical cadence of the water gurgling over the wheel and with the white-capped, white-aproned lassies with the bloom of perfect health on their cheeks, busily moulding the golden butter into prints, and singing merrily the while—well, that's poetry among the classics.

Mr. Shuford is a very busy man and has many details to look after in the management of the growing crops, the care of the live stock, and the sale and shipment of both the products of the dairy and breeding animals; but his business is methodical and well regulated, hence he has ample time for the enjoyment of the good things around him. His local reputation sells the greater part of his products and a modest little ad. in The Progressive Farmer moves all the surplus.

The greatest attraction, however, on this farm, is a youngster of four with nut-brown curls a foot long which flow luxuriantly down over the shoulders and apron of the tiny blue overalls. He is a great example of

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**Improving the Corn Crop.**

Messrs. Editors: That corn can be grown profitably in Virginia is shown by the fact that the value of the crops per acre is \$11.55, whereas, in Illinois for a much larger yield it is only \$11.59. Therefore, by increasing the yield through systematic cultivation and fertilization, there is a decided profit in sight for our farmers. The selection of a variety and its adaptation to the soil and climatic conditions in which it is to be grown will influence the yield of corn decidedly. Ten varieties grown for three years showed some of these remarkable differences. The height varied from 90 to 115 inches; the yield of green stover from 5.86 to 9.99 tons; the yield from 26.95 to 46.89 bushels; the per cent of cob from 13.09 to 25.07, and the weight per bushel from 64.43 to 74.77 bushels. Selecting the right variety is therefore a matter of great importance. A mechanical selection of ten bushels of Leaming corn showed that only one-half of the ears shelled out 82.26 per cent, yet this variety had been grown with more or less care for several years.

Some of the thoroughbred ears sown on the experimental plats the past season shelled out 91 to 92 per cent. The selection of an ear showing a high per cent of grain and a small per cent of cob is thus a matter of vital concern in the improvement of corn. The best type of ear to use is one weighing from 10 to 16 ounces, having from 16 to 24 rows of grain and uniform in size from the butt to tip. If great prolificacy

is desired, select a smaller type of ear and choose the seed grain only from those stalks containing two ears. One grain were selected from sixteen samples of corn and weighed with the following results: The lightest weighed twenty-six grams, or less than one ounce; the heaviest fifty-two grams, or almost two ounces. The variation in germination was represented by 53 and 100 per cent. Here, again, the question of individual selection for type, shape, weight and germinating power comes in for consideration.

The permanent improvement of corn depends, first, on the careful preparation and fertilization of the soil; second, on the selection of a suitable variety; third, on the systematic improvement of this variety with regard to shape and type of ear, the size, height and character of the stalk and leaf and the shape, quality and condition of the grain. Any farmer by making a careful selection from the best individual plants in his field from year to year can secure a uniform type of ear which will shell out a high per cent of grain, show a flintier type of kernel and possessed of a desirable type of stalk neither too large nor too small. By attention to these points, the yield of corn on Virginia farms can be increased from five to ten bushels per acre. Surely this is a reward worth striving for.

ANDREW M. SOULE.

Dean and Director Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, Blacksburg.

There is a place for Christ in every heart and in every home; and Christ gives you a place—a sphere of duty in His Church.

There are two freedoms—the false, where a man is free to do what he likes—the true, where a man is free to do what he ought.—Charles Kingsley.