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for Spring

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About the Farm.

THE SNOW BIRD.

A bright little snow bird was hopping around.
One cold winter's day on the snow-covered ground.
He was anxiously searching for food beneath the tree.
Yet all the time singing his chick-a-dee-dee.

I opened the window, more plainly to hear,
The sweet, thrilling notes of his bird-song, so clear.
As a token of courage, it sounded to me,
As he cheerfully warbled his chick-a-dee-dee.

He seemed to be happy, yet 'twas pitiful too,
To be searching for food, in the cold and the snow.
His bare little feet seemed half frozen, to me,
But still he kept singing his chick-a-dee-dee.

You dear little snow bird, Oh! where do you go,
When the fields and the forests are covered with snow?
When the cold chilling blasts of the stern winter's beat,
Oh! how do you manage to find food to eat?

You dear little songster, Oh! tell me I pray,
What you do to enliven the long winter's day?
If you'll stay here with me while the winter winds blow,
I'll feed you till spring, and then let you go.

"I thank you, dear lady, your intentions are kind,
But the storms that you dread so, I don't seem to mind;
I can stand the chill breezes, if happy and free."
And he sweetly repeated his chick-a-dee-dee.

"When the tempest is raging, I hide from the storm,
In some snug, quiet refuge, so cozy and warm.
But when the sun shines, then I come here, you see,
To pick up the crumbs that you scatter for me."

"There's plenty of food that the wise bird can find,
On the choicest of morsels, in the winter I dine.
Where the bugs hide the thickest, you'll often find me,
Busy, yet singing my chick-a-dee-dee."

"When I find a fat grub, Oh! I tell you it's prime,
So don't worry for me, for you're wasting your time."
Then casting his merry, bright eyes 'round at me,
He flew away, warbling his chick-a-dee-dee.

POULTRY DOTS.

Shovel away the snow from the front of the poultry houses, leaving a bare spot upon which the fowls can exercise in the fresh air on bright, sunny days.

Save all the meat trimmings, potato parings, scraps of bread, etc., from the kitchen and mix them with the damp mash, or if you do not feed a damp mash, give them to the fowls once a day in a trough.

Milk, whole or skimmed, sweet or sour, is good for poultry, but should not be fed in the water dish. A separate receptacle should be provided and water should be furnished as usual.

Some poultrymen prefer to feed a warm mash in the morning and others believe in feeding it at night, but many of the most successful breeders give a small ration at noon and this appears to us the better plan.

The hen or pullet which has not laid well during the past two months should not be kept and used as a breeder. Only those which have good records should be placed in the pens from which you will select eggs for hatching if you desire to increase the laying of your flock.

A very fat hen is not a good layer, nor is one that is poor. Try to keep your fowls in medium condition of flesh and supply a little more food than is required to keep them, so that they may have material from which to manufacture eggs.

If you find frost on the walls inside of your poultry house, it is a proof that you do not ventilate enough. Throw windows and doors open when the sun shines, even if the temperature is low outside. Keep the fowls busy scratching for grain in a deep pile of straw or hay and they will not suffer from cold.

TERM OF INCUBATION.

Chicken hens, 21 days; pheasants, 25 days; common ducks, 28 days; peafowls, 28 days; guinea-fowls, 25 days; geese, 30 days; partridge, 24 days; turkeys, 28 days. To this might be added: Muscovy ducks, 35 days; pigeons, 19 to 21 days. Notwithstanding that this represents the average time of incubation, fresh-laid eggs of all kind not to exceed two or three days from the hen, will hatch much sooner than will eggs a week or ten days old, or later. We have known Leghorn or Bantam eggs to hatch between the nineteenth and twentieth day; also have known the eggs of common hens to hatch near the middle of or later in the twenty-second day.

GREASE AND LICE.

Occasionally—about once a month—a few drops of melted lard or sweet oil should be rubbed on the skin of the heads and necks of the fowls, in order to kill the large lice, which never leave the hens unless driven off or destroyed by some oily substance. It is best to use but a few drops of oil, as all classes of poultry detest grease on any part of their bodies. A little on the shanks of the legs will prevent scaly-leg. Grease should be used cautiously, as too free use of it may kill them. But one drop of sweet oil on the head of each newly hatched chick will be of advantage in protecting it from the large gray lice, which leave the hen and go to the chicks.

TO KEEP EGGS FOR HATCHING.

To keep eggs for hatching you have only to follow these rules: First, they must be kept in a cool place, as cool as possible. Second, they must be turned over twice or three times a week. Third, they should not be packed in bran, sawdust, or other material, but simply laid on racks. Eggs kept in this way will be preserved for hatching at least a month. They have been kept six weeks in that manner.

GIVING TONICS.

It may be stated that a healthy fowl needs no tonic. The best way to use a tonic if it must be given (and some persons use them whether necessary or not), is in the drinking water. A teaspoonful of red pepper in a peck of food is sufficient, should it be used, but a better substance is a teaspoonful of tincture of iron in a gallon of drinking water. If any of the birds are sick, use a teaspoonful of solution of permanganate of potash to each gallon of water until the whole flock is healthy again, as it will at least assist in preventing the spread of the disease.

HENS CARRYING DUCKLINGS.

Ducklings are so easily raised by hens and require so little care, compared with chicks, that it will pay to have hens to set on ducks' eggs and bring off the young. Of the large eggs of the Pekin, eight will be sufficient for a large hen. It is not necessary to turn the hen and ducklings out or allow them to go near the water. On the contrary, they should be kept warm and dry. Young ducklings should not be given very cold water to drink, as it cramps them, and under no circumstances must they become wet. Feed them liberally and often, and give the hen and ducklings plenty of litter upon which to sleep at night. As they grow very rapidly, they soon become too large for a hen to hover over them, and for that reason they should be looked after at night and fastened up in a warm snug box.

SELECTING THE BREEDING FOWLS.

It has been the practice of a majority of farmers to select eggs indiscriminately from the whole flock from which to hatch the season's chickens. Now, this is not a progressive method nor one which will increase the quality of the flock and the profits that it will make for its owner.

As the male bird is one-half of a breeding pen, we should exercise particular care in selecting him. Primarily, we must so have a male which is strong and healthy and always has been so from the time of his chickhood. Then he must be well developed and of good size for the breed. A bright eye and alert carriage usually indicates a bird of good stamina which will give good service during the season.

In selecting hens (this written with the understanding that we are paying attention principally to the improvement of the fowls for egg production