

Mother's Hens

By Mrs. F. E. Shepherd, Stalwart, Sask.

Editor's Note.—Money is very welcome to the farmer's wife during the summer time. In this article the writer tells of a way to make some ready money by fattening broilers. There is nothing theoretical about these articles. They are just stories telling the actual experience of a wide awake farmer's wife who lives in Saskatchewan. Anyone of our readers can do the same if these chapters are closely followed.

CHAPTER VII

"Will! Will!" Margaret's voice floated across to Will as he sat on the seed drill, "stop, I want you."

He pulled up his team and waited as Margaret sprang lightly over the plowed land.

"Oh, Will," she panted, as she came closer, "they're coming out and running all over each other. Do come home and look at them."

Will leaned over and kissed the flushed upturned face. "What, the sheep?" he inquired. "Well, open the pasture gate and drive them back again, they drive easy enough."

"Sheep nothing," retorted his wife who was quickly picking up the Canadian expressions, "it's my chickens in the incubator, and they look so sweet; do come."

"Not on your life," was the decided reply. "What, leave off in the middle of seeding? I shall never make a farmer's wife of you I can see. There, now, don't be cross," as she turned pouting away. "Here's something that will make you smile. Jim Davis brought it out," and he drew a bulky letter from his jumper pocket and held it just out of her reach.

Margaret stretched out her hands for it with a little squeal of delight.

"Mother's letter, oh, do give it to me, don't be such a tease."

"There you are then," he laughed, handing it to her, "now run off or my team will go to sleep. 'Giddup,'" and he shook the lines.

Halfway back Margaret sat down on a huge buffalo stone and opened her letter.

"My dear Margaret," it began, "I have been thinking so much about you and your little downy chicks, which should be coming out by this time. They will soon be growing their feathers and not looking nearly as pretty, but you must not neglect them on that account. Try and imagine each little cluster of chickens is the only one you have got and feed and care for them accordingly. You will soon be able to tell which are the cockerels. Their tail feathers are shorter and their legs thicker and longer than the pullets. You must pick out a dozen or fourteen of the biggest and best from your earliest hatched broods and put leg bands on them; they are for your breeders next year. You may not need quite as many as that, but there is sure to be a neighbor or two who will want to trade one of their pure bred mongrels for one of your birds. I always oblige a neighbor in that way. I think one can do quite a bit of good by distributing high class stock in that way. Only—come closer and let me just whisper this: After your neighbor has departed with one of your pets, give Will the one she brought you in exchange, get him to take it around to the wood-pile and gently but firmly apply the axe. An extra chicken pie is better than letting him run around with your better flock and next spring have your chickens come all the colors of the rainbow. Now, after having picked out your breeders, take every coop you are not using and put them in a quiet spot, north of the plantation, down in the ravine, or back of the big granary, anywhere away from the other hens, and that night, after they are asleep, go the round of the chickens and pick out all the biggest cockerels you can find, putting four or six in each coop. Now you want to fatten them as quickly as possible. You will find several long shallow troughs around. Fill these with a thin gruel made of shorts and warm separated milk and a little sugar. Keep the coops as dark as you can. They fatten better if kept quiet. The last thing at night fill their troughs up again with the same mixture. Then, directly it is day-break they will be up and have their breakfast while you are still having your beauty sleep. Keep looking to them about every two hours during the day. They will generally be ready for something or other—a little oatchop mixed with buttermilk, some clean water, a little grit, or perhaps charcoal to keep them

in condition, meat scraps, or a handful of rolled oats scattered along their troughs. In about two weeks you will hardly know them, they will be so plump. It is quite a bit of trouble fattening broilers, but you cannot sell to the higher class shops and get the best prices if you simply pick them up just as they come from the farmyard. Besides, on a wheat farm like yours \$10 in July or August



A flock of Barred Rocks

seems worth much more than \$20 or \$30 in October when the wheat money comes rolling in. Perhaps you might like to get a few private customers for your produce. If so, get the paper published in your nearest large town. Choose about twenty names and addresses of hotels, restaurants and institutions. Write to them and tell them what you have to

sell and the price. If you enclose a stamped envelope for reply you will make sure of getting one. I followed this plan several years. Just sent weekly hampers to private customers. I used a thirty-dozen egg crate, putting fifteen dozen eggs in one side and chickens and butter in the other. You get better prices that way, but I really think it is easier to do as I do now. Just send a weekly consignment every week regularly, in time for their Saturday's trade, to the best store there is in your nearest big town. They send your cheque and return your hampers with clockwork regularity. Now about killing the broilers. I really can't tell you how to kill, pick, truss and pack them by letter. I tried to, but it took about three pages of foolscap. So you had better drop a postcard to Prof. Herner, Manitoba Agricultural College, Winnipeg, asking him for his Farm Poultry in Manitoba Bulletin, No. 6, and on pages 22 to 27 you will find out exactly how to do it, so much better than I can tell you. Write also to the Department of Agriculture, Regina, for W. A. Wilson's Bulletin, No. 25—Fleshing chickens for market. Will, of course, will have to do the actual killing. No woman should have to do that, and you had better get old lady Thompson to help you with the stubbing—I was able to do her a kindness once and I know she will return it. I don't want to put too much work on you, little woman, only it seems a pity to let such an opportunity for earning a good sum from the unavoidable waste on a large wheat farm slip by. When packing in the hot weather, see your birds are well fasted, and keep them in the cellar until the last possible moment. Be sure and let the party you are sending to know every time you send your crate off, then he can be on the look out for it and unpack it at once."

"Well," said Margaret, "that seems all about that subject. I guess I'd better be getting home to see if that lamp has gone out. It does seem too bad to

be making preparations for killing them the very day they are hatched tho."

A CO-OPERATIVE FAKE

In the last few days several readers have sent to The Guide copies of advertising literature they have received from a concern called the "Co-operative Union," Windsor, Ont. This "Co-operative Union" is trying to engage agents to sell shares in their organization at \$2.00 each, the agent to keep \$1.60 each and forward the 40 cents to head-quarters. Members of the union are then supposed to be able to purchase their necessities at very low prices. For instance, here are a few of the prices quoted in their list.

100 lbs. Redpath's best granulated sugar, \$4.00.

Christie's Soda Biscuits (2½ lb. box), 15 cents.

Old Dutch Cleanser, 6 cents.

1 lb. fresh roasted coffee (Moka flavor), 25 cents.

4 cans Baby Sweet corn, 25 cents.

These prices are very attractive, but there is a "nigger in the wood-pile" somewhere, because these prices are actually lower in most cases than manufacturers' prices to the largest wholesalers i.o.b. the factory. It is, therefore, safe to assume that this Co-operative Union cannot buy these articles at the prices quoted, to say nothing of selling them at such prices. The Grain Growers' Guide has called the attention of the Postmaster General to this concern and asked that it be investigated. No concern can do business on such a basis and farmers should save their money.

According to the Rome correspondent of the Amsterdam newspaper 'Tigd,' the German Embassy at Rome, has asked the Belgian government thru the Belgian legation to the Quirinal whether in the event of the German armies evacuating Belgian territory Belgium would continue neutral during the remainder of the war. The correspondent adds that Belgium's answer is unknown.

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