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Mother's Hens

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

Editor's Note—Do you know that little ducklings require different food to that given to chicks? If you don't, just read what "Mother" advises as the best feed. Then the ducks require looking after to keep them growing all the time, and this week's article tells how to make a chicken "creep." Success with farm poultry depends upon attention to little things, and this story is full of odd pointers all of which help to make poultry profitable.

CHAPTER V

"Won't he mind?" enquired Margaret. "Will can't bear me to be away meal-times. If I am, he just goes to the cupboard and gets some bread and jam or a slice of cake and waits for his supper proper until I come home."

"Ah," sagely replied her friend, "don't you begin by spoiling him like that. You just make him wait on himself and hang up his own hat and jumper, too," she added, glancing round the immaculate room. "Old Ma Hazelton, she just used to wait on them boys hand and foot and made herself a regular slave to them."

Margaret smiled softly to herself as she answered quietly, "Ah, well, I don't believe a little petting and spoiling hurts anybody. I think all men like having a lot of fuss made over them. You see, if I tell Will what an awful good husband he is, why, he just has to be good—to keep up his reputation, partly because he would hate to do anything mean and so disillusion me."

And the cat jumped up in her lap and curled himself up comfortably as she reached out her hand for the interrupted letter.

"And now, my dear," she read, "I want you to try and make for yourself, what I call a creeper for the chicken to feed out of. You will need it all summer. Get a dry-goods box from your grocer—a good big one—about two feet square and eighteen inches high or thereabouts. Knock out all four sides, leaving the top and bottom—replacing the sides with laths about two inches apart. Find an old, firm-standing saucepan, one that will not tip over easily, never mind if there is a hole or two in it, and fill it with a mixture of bran, cracked corn and cracked or whole wheat and place it in the middle of your creeper. See the latter is big enough so that the hens cannot reach it when they poke their heads thru, or the ducks, either, when they happen to come around, as their necks are longer. You would never believe how soon the little chicks learn where to come directly they feel a little bit peckish, and if the old mother hens are always sure of finding food there for their little family they will hang around and not drag them all over the place trying to find a grain here and a grain there for each hungry brood. Of course, you will still feed them night and morning close to the coops where they sleep. You see, Margaret, what you are after is to get your cockerels into market condition as soon as you possibly can, and your pullets to develop properly. They cannot do this unless you feed them well. What I mean is, don't make them hunt all over the farm yard for their living, running every bit of flesh off their little bones and getting pushed all over the place and trampled on when you go and feed the older birds. You see, you want broilers and fryers before any of your neighbors have begun to think about them, and you will have them, too, if you keep your saucepan in the creeper always full until they are about six weeks old. I will tell you what to do with them after that time."

"Now about my ducklings. The old ducks have probably been laying some time. When you get two good big hens broody, put eight duck eggs under each of them. They will be four weeks before they begin to come out, but be sure and sprinkle lukewarm water on the eggs about two days before they are due. Do not disturb the hen on any account while she is actually hatching. It is often two days after you hear the first faint "cheep" before they come out of the shell, but don't take them out to see how they are getting along. Never help a duckling out of its shell, altho you may do this with a chicken occasionally, but not often even with them. When they have all been out about 24 hours, share them up evenly between the two hens and put them in their coops on the green grass with a little boarded run in front of them. This is necessary because they are so very apt to stray away and never seem to have sense enough to

find their way back again, for all their looking so wise. I make the run out of a box the same size as the front of their coop by knocking out the top, bottom, and one side. This does fine and takes no time—always such a consideration with me. Push them up close and at the end of the season you can chop them up for firewood.

"They require different feed to chickens or turkeys. Their food must be sloppy. An egg, very finely minced, and some bread and milk fed in a herring-tin or something similar, and clean water in another close by. After a day or two see all the table scraps are kept especially for them. Ducklings seem to need a little meat of some kind or other. In about a week you can give them all to one of the hens and send the other one back to the egg factory. When you get thirty or forty of them around you about a month or so old, get a bunch of beef lungs from the butcher, boil them several hours and put thru the mincer. When you feed anything like that you can fairly see them grow. There is another thing I do: put about a quart of shorts into a basin. Pour over it some of the hot liquor you boiled the lungs in, stir it until it is as hard as a baseball nearly, then throw little bits around as you walk among them and just see them run. I think I get as much fun out of feeding my ducklings as I do out of anything—but they are quite a lot of bother. Do not forget to move their coops on to fresh ground every day, they soon soil the ground. There is one thing about them, when they are ten weeks old you can kill and market them—they are the first returns from your labors, and I suppose that is really what we are after."

"You bet it is," emphatically remarked Mrs. Creighton. "What I see about poultry raising is its so much easier than gardening. That old hoe sure does make your back ache."

"Why don't you get Jim to put it on a fresh piece of summerfallow every year?" laughed Margaret. "Will says he wouldn't have a garden at all if he couldn't have it that way."

"Well, now the letter's ended," said Mrs. Creighton, "I suppose I'd better be going home or that husband of mine will think he's got to get his own breakfast tomorrow morning as well as his supper tonight."

ONTARIO SINGLE TAXERS ACTIVE

The progress that is being made by the single tax movement in Ontario was described by H. B. Cowan, of Peterboro, president of the Tax Reform League, in an address at a well attended meeting of the Single Tax Association of Ontario at Toronto recently. Mr. Cowan ascribed much of the rural depopulation to the present methods of taxation, which increased the values of land in cities out of all proportion to the increase of values in rural districts.

Dr. O. J. C. Withrow spoke of "Social Hygiene and Tax Reform," declaring that the application of single tax would mean more sanitary conditions in cities. It taxed the land into use and stimulated the erection of a better class of buildings. "Woman and the Land" was the theme of an address by Mrs. Hector Prenter, president of the Political League. William White told of his methods in getting recruits for the single tax movement, and A. B. Farmer spoke on "How to Educate the People." The members of both the Provincial and Federal Houses and members of the Senate were circularized, and single tax literature was being widely distributed thruout the province, said Mr. Farmer.

CORN PLANTING

W. H. English, of Harding, Man., is preparing to seed twenty acres of fodder corn this year and if the crop is good he will erect silo accommodation for the corn. Reports from all over the country are that a very large amount of corn will be planted this spring, as farmers are realizing that it is one of the most profitable crops they can raise.

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