

**Poultry.**

Edited by J. W. Bartlett.

**Getting a Start.**

There will be many persons who will make a start in poultry keeping on an improved system this season, as there is every year, and with the improved prospects for the poultry business, no doubt more this season than usual. During the last two winters, hucksters have scoured the western counties for poultry, for the Detroit and Chicago markets, and the preference they give to choice birds can not but stimulate our farmers to action in the matter of improving their stock of fowls. This can be done either by buying eggs for hatching, or stock, and if eggs can be got from reliable breeders, it is the cheapest way to work into a good stock of fowls. But alas! this is one of the most difficult things to accomplish we ever tried, not that most breeders are dishonest, but most people who keep choice fowls take so much pride in them that they over-feed, and this is a serious drawback to successful incubation. It took us many years of expensive experience to learn to feed properly to secure good results in hatching; we have often failed to get even two percent of eggs to hatch from men we know to be strictly honest.

Again, by all means do not be at all penurious in this matter, as the first cost of a setting of eggs is or at least may be of many dollars import to you, and as an American writer said recently—"while high prices can not be positive proof of choice stock, low prices are proof positive of inferior stock."

**Feeding Young Chicks.**

Although a great deal more is dependent on the health and condition of the parent fowl that laid the egg than is generally supposed, and we might almost say than upon the care of the chick, yet after the downy creature leaves the shell, there is much to be done to assist its development and build up a healthy, robust frame, and from the time of leaving the shell it must be pushed forward as fast as healthy food and nature can do it, as all time lost in growth may be considered eternally lost, for no care can atone for it, and the chick will never make as fine a bird as the one that commences to grow immediately on its advent into this world, and continues to do so without interruption until maturity is attained. And because the chicks are not intended for exhibition purposes is no reason why they should not receive at least humane attention; if it pays anyone to keep fowls, it pays the farmer, and if it pays him to keep them at all, it pays to keep them well. When we hatch with hens we take the chicks from the nest as soon as they are dry and put them near the stove or in some other warm place (we find an old cap an excellent receptacle for them), and cover warmly until all are hatched; this keeps the hen quiet and she does not break eggs or trample chicks to death. Do not feed the chicks until twenty-four or thirty-six hours; then if at all convenient, feed for one or two days on the yolks of eggs boiled hard, keeping the whites and shells until three or four days old, then chop them fine for them; in the meantime give them a few crumbs of granulated oat meal occasionally, and by the fourth or fifth day abandon the eggs entirely and feed coarse corn and oat meal, but do not wet it, and be very careful about letting them get drink for the first four days. Chicks should not have drink until that time, and if possible give them only milk until a month old, and if there is any tendency to diarrhoea, boil the milk occasionally, chop a little fresh meat very fine for them; and if there is not grass, chop a little cabbage, carrot or turnip once a day; also a little bone meal is beneficial fed in

the meal; after they are a month old, corn ground coarse and scalded for a morning feed and wheat the rest of the day is as good a ration as can be given. Most writers lay great stress on Douglass Mixture for both young chicks and adult fowls, which is made as follows: Half pound of sulphate of iron and one ounce of sulphuric acid dissolved in two gallons of water; give a teaspoonful in a pint of their drinking water—but we prefer powdered charcoal, a teaspoon to a dozen chicks in their soft feed. The preparation of iron sometimes causes a yellow tinge on white feathers, and the charcoal answers every purpose without any of the disagreeable results, and we do not consider either necessary where the chicks are hearty, and they are likely to be when cared for as directed above, especially if given unlimited range on grass. This latter alone covers more deficiencies in care than any other one thing.

**Duck Raising.**

It is an open question whether it will pay to raise ducks on most farms or not; the careful housewife whose pin money is derived from this and similar sources, says yes, while the husband or manager of the farm in nine cases out of ten says no, and we are inclined to think he is correct—but on the other hand there are many cases where they may be raised with profit, and a reasonably large profit. If the farm is located near a large city and regular trips are made to the market, it will pay to raise them until nine or ten weeks old, and put them on the market at that age, but under ordinary circumstances they must be sold at that age, as they are so rapacious feeders that they will eat their heads off, so to speak, if fed on meal and grain until Christmas; but on the other hand, if the farm has a piece of waste ground in the form of a marsh or miry place, where they can forage for themselves after that age and not be a source of destruction to growing crops, they may be kept until autumn with reasonable profit. While ducks are fond of water, for the water itself is not a positive necessity to their well being, the chief reason why they like water is the vast amount of animal food they get from that source; this is why they prefer a dirty pond or marshy place, to a clean spring creek. It affords greater quantities of snails, slugs and worms. But to raise ducks on meal and grain until autumn, they will be a bill of expense instead of a source of profit, and where they are allowed to get into the growing crops or garden, they will in a short time destroy more than they are worth, as their feet seem peculiarly formed for that purpose, while their bills are equally well formed for devouring any grain and succulent leaf that may be within their reach.

The Pekin is probably the best for all purposes, being quite hardy and prolific, yielding a goodly quantity of feathers, and when killed are of fine flavor and good size. There are several varieties of smaller ducks, but these are in most cases more ornamental than profitable, some of them being of gorgeous hues.

**Points about the Nests.**

Much depends upon the nest. It should be made movable, so as to be taken outside for cleaning, and it should never be placed where any of the fowls can cause it to be filthy or roost upon it. It should never be so high as to compel effort to reach it, as the large breeds will prefer to lay on the ground rather than attempt to reach a high nest, even when a footway is provided, to say nothing of the fact that some hens learn to fly over a fence by first learning to reach a high nest. Never have the nest in a barrel, or so constructed that the hen must jump down into it, as broken eggs will be the consequence; but, rather, so place the entrance as to permit her to walk in upon the eggs. The nest should be placed in a dark position, or so arranged that the interior will be somewhat dark, which will be a partial protection against egg-eating. For a flock of one dozen hens four nests will be sufficient.—[Farm and Garden.]

**The Apiary.****Managing Bees for Honey.**

BY W. H. WESTON.

The care and management of bees can be classed under three headings, as follows: For queen rearing, for increase, and for honey. The latter plan being the most remunerative to the average bee-keeper, I shall therefore confine my remarks to this branch of the business. Before proceeding, I will offer a few suggestions that may be useful to the readers of the ADVOCATE.

Bee-keeping farmers who wish to be successful must be perfectly conversant with the honey flora of the locality in which they reside. Study the best works on bee culture, so that you will be able to use the information to the best advantage, practically, during the season. As there are many kinds and styles of hives in use at the present day, it is rather difficult to choose, but when you have made a choice, have all your hives the same. Purchase what foundation comb you think you will require for the season, and prepare all the frames and hives to receive the swarms that you expect during the season. In that way you will not be delayed, and everything will be properly and systematically done.

To obtain a large honey crop, it is of the utmost importance to "keep all colonies strong," and to that end it is necessary to understand the fall care of bees, as the fall and spring management are closely allied. In the fall, when the flowers have done blooming, it would be well to feed a small quantity of rich syrup each night, till real cold weather comes, so as to keep up breeding. If you are successful in doing so, these young bees will be, to a great extent, the salvation of the colony in the spring. Colonies that are short of young bees in the fall, very often in spring dwindle, and in many cases disappear altogether. Many a bee-keeper who is congratulating himself in April on being so successful in wintering his bees, is down in the dumps in May, when he loses a large share by spring dwindling.

When the red buds of the soft maple appear in spring, feed a small quantity of thin syrup every day, but be careful to avoid robbing by not spilling any about the bee yard, as bees are very apt to rob weak colonies, and are almost sure to do so when encouraged by carelessness about the apiary. Continue to feed till the apple blossoms appear. In this way you will build up each colony, so that they will be just boiling over with bees by the time the white clover blooms. "Keep all colonies strong," is the watch-word for every bee-keeper, and should not be forgotten if you wish to avoid trouble with the bee-moth and other pests of the apiary.

Some who wish to obtain a large honey crop are anxious to avoid swarming, but I would say let them swarm naturally, unless you perfectly understand dividing. If your colonies are strong when the white clover bloom appears, put on the surplus cases and increase the room gradually above the brood, if possible, so that the bees will not waste valuable time hanging out, as they would be likely to do unless extra space is given them to store in. When they show signs of swarming, place empty hives where they will be convenient when the swarm issues. When you have hived your swarm, place it on the stand which you have previously prepared for it, and, on the same day, put on the surplus boxes and contract the brood chamber so as to force the most of the bees into the surplus department. It is always well to use shallow frames in the surplus cases, if you are working for extracted honey. If you are working for comb honey, put on a case of sections, and when it is nearly filled with comb, raise it and put another case of sections beneath it, so that the bees will have to pass through the bottom sections to get at the full ones, and the bright cappings of the filled sections will not be soiled by the bees having to run over them to deposit their loads of honey, as they would if you were to put the empty sections above the partly filled ones. Some of the largest