

chickens forward as rapidly as possible. By this I do not mean that the youngsters should be unduly forced, for nothing is more injudicious than to force on young stock so as to cause them to prematurely develop into plumage without developing in frame, for then they become mere weeds, with a weakly constitution, and all the expense and trouble have been in vain. But methods can be employed to keep them steadily advancing without any undue forcing, and this can be done by feeding with the most nutritious and bone-making foods. With this end in view there is nothing I know of that answers the purpose so well as oatmeal porridge, as it is a great bone-maker and strength giver. It should be prepared as follows: A pint of water should be allowed to boil, and, whilst boiling, a quarter of a pound of coarse oatmeal should be dropped in with one hand, whilst the other hand is stirring the water with a wooden spoon. When once the oatmeal is thoroughly mixed with the water the whole should be allowed to boil for twenty-five or thirty minutes. When the cooking is finished, enough middlings or barley meal (the former for preference) should be added so that it forms a dry, crumbly mass, and in this form it should be given to the chickens twice a day. As the young birds should be fed at least seven times between sunrise and dark, two of the remaining five feeds should consist of any of the meals offered by well-known makers, who study to give their patrons compounds which are specially prepared to suit the requirements of chickenhood. Just a little bone-dust added to all soft feeds is undoubtedly most beneficial. The other three feeds should consist of cereals, and, when the chickens are quite young, nothing beats groats, which should be split for the first week, and, after that they should be given whole. As the chickens grow, broken wheat, rye, and French buckwheat should take the place of groats. A small heap of sharp grit, with a little bone dust sprinkled over it, should always be within reach of the chickens. Nature will tell them when to help themselves to these absolute necessities for their perfect digestion, and this method is far better than mixing the grit with the soft food, for then they are apt to get more than they want.

Let the youngsters have all the freedom possible, and, above all, keep them well supplied with pure, fresh water. Should any appear mopey, examine at once, to see if they are suffering from diarrhoea, as this complaint, if not stopped at once, often carries off many a promising chicken, as the vent becomes encrusted, and the chicken soon dies. Should this be found to be the case, the posterior should be bathed until all the encrusted matter is removed, after which a little olive oil should be applied, and the little

sufferer placed in front of the fire for an hour or so. When the fluff has dried the patient will be well and lively, and can be returned to its companions.

This ailment often arises from the diet of eggs and bread-crumbs being continued for too long a time; it also is caused by the drinking water being allowed to get warmed by the sun; or, if milk is given, by letting it remain in the saucer until it becomes sour. Avoid these causes, and there will not be much fear of the chicks going wrong.—*Fancier's Gazette*.

NOTES ON BLACK MINORCAS.

THIS popular breed of fowls has many devoted admirers and of late years has come so rapidly to the front that it now provides, perhaps, the best supported classes at shows of any variety.

The modern bird is in outline very large, deep bodied, well up on the leg without being stilty, broad at the chest, with long flat back, tail carried well back. Added to this the comb must be large and evenly serrated, fitted well back, face red and free from hairs, earlobes large and pure white and free from creases, eyes dark, beak and legs as black as ever possible to get them, and plumage of a glossy blackness.

It is easy to breed good little ones; but only a real Minorca fancier knows how difficult it is to breed good all-round ones and combine quality and style with size. The very large birds have a tendency to coarseness in face and lobes and to lack in color of plumage.

The Minorca is one of the most difficult birds to keep in show condition for any length of time, and it soon loses condition if shown frequently, and will not stand the strain of long journeys like some other breeds.

I consider this fact, more than any other, accounts for the widespread popularity of the Minorca in the show pen, as a really good bird always stands a far chance of winning if shown in the pink of condition.

I am of opinion that too much comb is asked for in the show pen, and would like to see Minorcas bred with considerably less comb. The demand for very large combs has resulted in the fact that very few cockerels make good old cocks, a very small proportion only being fit for the show pen in their second year through the heavy combs going over during the autumn moult.

In breeding, also, for very large combed pullets many come with extremely thin combs without much substance.