



Poultry Yard.

Care of Chickens and Young Ducks.

As soon as the hens come off with their broods, they should be confined, for a day or two, in a moderately warm room. The chicks should at first be fed with crumbs of bread moistened with milk or hard-boiled eggs chopped fine. After the little chicks have gained some strength, the mother hen and her little family may be cooped and placed, if the weather be fair, in a dry, sunny situation. The coop should be large and airy; and here a very great error prevails with many in confining the hen and chickens in much too cramped and narrow quarters, to the no small inconvenience of the mother, say nothing about the great danger of the chicks being killed by the tread of the hen. In nine cases out of ten the coops are entirely too contracted, low and uncomfortable for the mother and her young. Just draw a comparison between a hen and her brood confined in a small, low, contracted room, hardly sufficient for her to turn about, much less to carefully brood her young, with a large, airy apartment, well protected from heat, wet or cold, and sufficient space for exercise.

In order to keep the chickens in good health, so confined, it is essential that the greatest precautions should be taken to ensure cleanliness in all departments; therefore the coops should be cleaned out daily, and the floor covered with sand or fine gravel, to prevent any portion of filth adhering to the floor. Fresh water in clean vessels should be placed before them morning and afternoon. Impure, filthy water may be set down as a main cause of all the diseases poultry are subject to—diarrhoea, gapes, and other maladies. At a later season the chickens may be left much more to themselves, only let them remember that if in possession of good fowls, and they desire to have healthy chickens at an early period of the year, their chance of success will be infinitely increased by following our advice. Chickens hatched the latter part of May and June may be confined in the coops only about two weeks, after which they may be allowed their liberty, and they will thrive far better than when confined either in coops or pens.

As to feeding, it is not easy to name the quantity which chickens will eat, or the number of meals a day that they will require, as these continually vary according to their age and the opportunity they have of catering for themselves. We have found old fowls thrive well on three meals a day, while chickens, until they reach cocks and hens estates, want ten, seven or five, according to their age. Young chickens require a little very often. When they fail to be hungry for every meal, reduce the number of meals. When they are not found to be hungry for seven meals a day, reduce the number to five, and so on; and most likely the chickens will go to work upon their food as healthy chickens should. The food also should be varied—a poultry bill of fare may be made very lengthy. For standard dishes we have corn, barley, buckwheat, oats and boiled potatoes; then there are millet, sunflower seeds, crushed oats boiled, to vary the diet, especially for the young; and for casual change we have boiled carrots, wheat-screenings, fresh meat, and any item that presents itself.

Following the rule to feed when fowls are hungry, and not to feed until they are hungry, makes frequent changes necessary in the number of the meals, and consequently in the hours at which they are given; and with regard to the kind of food, the more varied the feeding can be in that respect the better, provided all pampering be carefully avoided. The more the food is scattered the better. Throw it well abroad, and when the fowls or chickens are no longer anxious to run for it, hunger is appeased.

The Ducks now require attention. Ducks generally commence laying the latter part of March, and continue to lay until May, if the sitting did not intervene and interrupt the bird. They are not generally inclined to sit; but to induce them to do so, toward the end of laying take away their eggs, being careful every morning to take away the oldest, in order that they may not spoil. From nine to thirteen eggs are allowed her, according as she is able to cover them. The only time the duck requires some care is while she sits. As she has but little time to spare to pro-

vide her meals, food and water should be placed near her; and she is content with it, let the quality be what it may. It has even been remarked that when she was too well fed she did not sit well; for that reason she should be portioned. Incubation, as with the goose, lasts thirty days; and the first broods are generally the best, because the warmth of summer helps to bring them about. The cold always prevents the late broods from getting strong and giving as large ducks. Every duck of the same species is far from giving proofs of much foresight, for the preservation of the warmth of her eggs. It often happens that they let them cool. Besides, hardly are the ducklings dry when the mother takes them to the water, where they dabble and eat at first, and many of them perish if the weather is cold. For the foregoing reasons, it is well to sit hens on ducks' eggs. Being more assiduous than ducks, these foster-mothers have more affection for their young, will watch and guard them with more attention, and as they are unable to accompany them on the water—for which ducks show the greatest propensity as soon as they are excluded—they follow the mother-hen on dry land, and become a little hardy before they are allowed to take the water without any guide.

On hatching there is no necessity of taking away any of the brood, unless some accident should happen; and having hatched, let the duck retain her young upon the nest her own time. On her moving with the brood, prepare a coop and pen upon the short grass, if the weather be fine, or under shelter if otherwise; a wide shallow dish of water, often to be renewed, near by them. Their first food should be crumbs of bread moistened with milk; curds, or eggs boiled hard and chopped fine, is also much relished by and is good for them. After a few days, corn meal boiled, and rolled between the hands, and if boiled potatoes and a few chives or lettuce chopped fine be added, all the better. As soon as they have gained a little strength, a good deal of pot-herbs may be given them raw, chopped and mixed with a little bran soaked in water, barley and potatoes beat up together. They are extremely fond of angle-worms and bugs of all kinds, and for which reason they may be useful to have a run in the garden daily. All these equally agree with young ducks, which devour the different substances they meet with, and show, from their most tender age, a voracity which they always retain. The period of their confinement to the pen depends on the weather and strength of the ducklings. Two weeks seem the longest time necessary; and they may sometimes be permitted to enjoy the pond at the end of the week, but not for too great a length of time at once, least of all in cold weather, which will affect them, causing them to scour and appear rough and draggled. Care must be taken that the water where they are at liberty to go contains no leeches, which occasions the loss of the ducklings by sticking to their feet. Look out for mud turtles and bull-frogs in the water; cats and rats on land—all enemies of young ducks. When young ducks are exposed to many dangers and mishaps. Their waddling gait quite unfits them for running from a foe on land and they are but too apt to be trodden on by horses, cattle, and even by the foot of man. *Beaumont*

PRIDE IN FOWLS.—Fowls have plenty of vanity and pride. They are very sensible to admiration from man, and miss accustomed notice. A prize bird knows itself. The queen of the poultry-yard must eat first, and stand by the king at feeding time. She resists any invasion upon her rights, and will have a precedence in all things. Indeed, precedence in the court-yard seems as valued as at earthly courts. Age and priority of residence in the yard, not less than size and strength, constitute right to precedence. No dowager ever treated young chicks of girls more contemptuously than the senior hen treats her juniors. One has heard of a Swiss cow which died of vexation when her bell was taken from her. So did a hen of mine, long mistress of the poultry-yard, die of smoothed pride, when a new queen-hen, partner to a new king (a pair I bought at a poultry show, came into my enclosure. The rival queens eyed each other for a moment steadfastly, then rushed to the combat. The new comer, though the old hen fought bravely, was the stronger. Mrs. Mercury, as we called the old hen, from the wing-like leathery on her legs, never attempted to try her chance again, succumbed in a melancholy manner, and after a few days' moping gave up the ghost.—*All the Year Round*.

NOTE BY ED. C. F.—The above is no fiction. We had a beautiful bantam cock, who died of mortified pride. A black Spanish cock was uncooped in the same yard in which the bantam was strutting about when the latter attacked the new comer with tooth and nail. The Spaniard treated the little fellow with cool contempt, and from that moment the bantam pined, drooped, refused food, and at length died.

The Household.

Keep Your Teeth Clean.

We have met people who are noted for their neatness, who yet have unclean teeth. But these people are not truly neat, else the mouth, the most important part, would be kept clean and sweet. Dirty teeth are unendurable—in every sense you may take it; bad looks; bad breath; bad person (to permit such a thing); and bad health, or leading to it. It is for this reason, as well as to see the tongue, that some doctors look into the mouths of their patients. If every breath inhales stench, it needs no doctor to tell that this is injurious. Without number are such mouths. And yet the mouth pretends to take in only what is clean, when the uncleanest thing it can take is not half so foul as itself. But the remedy. It is to keep your mouth clean (after the dentist has thoroughly cleansed your teeth) by the use of the brush, which, if it is new to you, you can buy for twenty cents. This is simply all. Use the brush dipped in water, after each meal—thoroughly after the last, as during the night the particles of food if not removed, will turn sour and fetid, and breed insects (*animalcula*) before morning. The brush then and cold water; or, if the brush is hard, dip in warm water; this will soften it. Now and then teeth will require more cleaning. In such case, use a little tooth-powder. You can buy it of the dentist, or get it at the druggists. Chewing gum, smoking, and chewing tobacco, make the teeth dirty. The use of acids—lemons, oranges, apples, will clean them (if not too dirty); but it will also hurt them, as it has an action upon the enamel.

THE DROPPINGS OF STOVE-PIPES, where wood is burnt, leave very persistent stains. Oxalic acid will remove the iron, and when the spot is then well washed, ammonia may take up what is soluble.

SOILED CARPETS.—When soiled, carpets may be cleansed after heating, with the following mixture: two gallons of water, with half a pound soft soap dissolved in it, to which add 4 ozs. of liquid ammonia; this may be rubbed on with a flannel cloth, and the carpet then rubbed dry.

CEMENT FOR THE MOUTHS OF CORKED BOTTLES.—Melt together a quarter of a pound of sealing wax, the same quantity of resin, a couple of ounces of beeswax. When it froths, stir with a tallow candle. As soon as it melts, dip the mouths of the bottles into it. This is an excellent thing to exclude the air from such things as are injured by being exposed to it.

SLEEPING WITH THE MOUTH OPEN.—Mr. George Cathin, in his quaintly got-up monograph, "The Breath of Life," attributes very many human bodily ills to the extraordinary habit, so common, he says, among the people, of sleeping with the mouth open—in this condition breathing being injuriously performed through the mouth, instead of the safe and natural process through the nostrils.

A SUBSTITUTE FOR COFFEE.—A writer in a late number of the *Farmer* mentions "barley" as a substitute for coffee, the best substitute our family have tried is brown bread crust, and we prepare it thus: As fast as the usual loaf is used for the table cut up the crust (from the bottom and sides as well as the top), and bake it again in the stove oven till it is very brown—not black, then pound it in a mortar and use as the burnt and ground coffee.

HOW TO SAVE A DROWNING PERSON.—It may not be generally known that when a person is drowning, if he is taken by the arm from behind, between the elbow and shoulder, he cannot touch the person attempting to save him, and whatever struggles he may make will only assist the person holding him in keeping his head above water. A good swimmer can keep a man thus above water for an hour. If seized anywhere else the probability is that he will clutch the swimmer, and perhaps, as is often the case, both will be drowned.

WHOLESOME BREAD.—Stir unbolted wheat flour into cold water until as thick as common stirred cake; bake twenty minutes in a hot oven, in small tart tins; this makes a nice wholesome dish for breakfast, far preferable to buckwheat cakes.

An improvement upon this, for those who like something richer, is, to take a pint of milk, and four eggs well beaten, thicken with unbolted flour and bake in the same way. A friend of ours, at whose table we first tried it, pronounces this the only wholesome form in which hot bread can be eaten.—*Lady's Friend*.