

## FEEDING THE YOUNG AND THEIR CARE IN GENERAL.

BY P. T. H. ERMATINGER.

By this time I suppose some of our fanciers have three or four broods running around, and with your permission, MR. EDITOR, I shall tell you how I have fed my little pets in the past, so that the younger portion of the fraternity may know how to handle theirs this season.

Pretty nearly every breeder has his own way to feed chicks, and I suppose I have my fashion as well as the rest.

I used to be very much in favor of soft food for the first days, that is, the yolk of a hard boiled egg with cracker crushed, corn meal, a little soaked bread or biscuit, etc. But I think that feeding wheat (cracked) as soon as the hen deems it necessary to take her young from the nest, is a far better and more nourishing food than anything else. It has been proved that a chick from the shell has enough moisture in its craw to take and digest a grain of wheat and derive enough nourishment therefrom to thrive and continue eating wheat, etc., without the assistance of soft food. I am certain that the chicks prefer soft food at first, but I doubt whether it is as good or as nourishing as cracked wheat—anyway I believe that chicks can be pushed forward much faster by the assistance of cracked wheat when they first leave the nest. The proper way to assure yourself of the rapid development of the young fowls, is, firstly, the systematical way, you must feed them from the start. For the first week let us have the following bill of fare, sharing both hard and soft food at each meal:—

The hen will not venture out with the chicks, until they are perfectly rested, and "Biddy" knows this "racket" better than we; but in case the beginner feels disposed to help "Biddy," by way of asking her to come out and eat with her family. (I shall say here, that by all means let the hen alone and

mind your own business. A young chick, remember, has enough of the egg left in him to keep him nourished and alive 36 or even 48 hours after he has smashed his way out into this world of ours—and you must consequently, not begin the *stuffing* process so soon. The hen shall leave the nest with the chicks, when they are hungry and well rested—then is the time to be "gallant" towards "Biddy," and you might offer her the following: A little cracked wheat and bone meal, or hard boiled egg chopped up fine with cracker, or a little corn meal and milk. Don't give all these together or you will "bust" the chicks. You can use any of the above for a week or two, always augmenting the cracked wheat and diminishing the soft food until you do away altogether with it. Feed often and little at each time—this, remember, is an essential point. I generally feed every 2½ hours, and not much each time. A capital thing to keep scattered among the broods for them to lunch on is the largest sized oat meal. Just feed it dry—give them all the milk you can spare, it is the finest thing in the world for young chicks.

Bone meal must form a part of their daily food, for when chickens are growing they must necessarily have good nourishing food, and bone meal contains everything required for bone growth.

Chickens born in March and April require a nice dry place in a well glazed house, with southern exposure. No artificial heat is necessary, provided the house be well glazed as mentioned above. The sun in March is generally strong enough to afford comfort to the young chicks.

Keep the chickens dry and comfortable, for their progress depends as much upon the way they are kept as the way you feed them.

What makes a capital and cheap house for the first three or four weeks, is a common flour barrel. Take a barrel and lay it on its side; fix it so as

it will remain perfectly steady, with no tendency to roll; cover with a good tarpaulin to keep the rain and dampness out, scatter over inside cut straw nice and clean, and here you have a first class chick-house for a start. Close the front of the barrel up every evening with a square board perforated. This will guard your pets from cats and rats, and the perforated door will afford ample fresh air for the hen and chicks during the night. Never let them out in the damp grass in early morning. This indeed is one of the reasons why our farmers are not as successful in raising poultry as they might be. They should never be let run in the grass until all the dew has disappeared and the sun high in the heavens. Turkey breeders would do well to take this in note, for the turkey is one of the hardest of the "feathered cattle" to raise, and the damp morning foraging expedition indulged in by the turkey hen and the young is fatal to them. Hence, for the rapid development of young chickens, the two essential points are these:—The manner in which they are kept, with regard to cleanliness, ventilation, and comfortable temperature; and 2nd, the systematical way in which they must be fed from the start.

In concluding this little chapter, I must express to you MR. EDITOR the loss the fraternity has sustained through the retirement of Mrs. H. H. AUSTIN, from the ranks of the amateurs. I believe this step has been taken on her part through ill health. I visited Mrs. AUSTIN's place some time ago, and a handsomer lot of *Mammoth* Light Brahmas and Plymouth Rocks would be hard to find. Let us hope that ere long Mrs. H. H. AUSTIN's health will permit of her taking up the breeding of these fine fowls with as much success in the future as attended her efforts in the past. The fraternity can ill afford to lose such successful breeders as Mrs. AUSTIN.

[We also are very sorry to learn of Mrs. AUSTIN's retirement, which was