

the preference for hens rather than pullets, of those that have had one season's experience, of individuals that have proved specially suitable, etc. But in choosing a hen to hatch out eggs, consideration must also be given to her qualifications as a mother in most instances; though the tendency now seems to be to give less heed to this, and to make the care of chicks more a matter of human provision. As another mongrel perhaps surpasses all the pure-bred fowls unless the Games and possibly some of the Bantams.

Of all creatures the hen can be made most machine-like and I have availed myself of this in a way that I have never known to be described.

It is very convenient to have hens so tame and well behaved that when given a nest and eggs they will go on and stay on till let off; will eat and drink and evacuate the bowels in just the right way and at the desired time, and then return to the eggs with that perfect though unconscious knowledge of conditions to be met which we term instinct. But such are not all hens. Perhaps when you have prepared all and set the most valuable eggs it is found, possibly on the second or third day of incubation, when the whole batch is very easily spoiled, that when the sitter is released she runs off the nest with a wild cackle, as much as to say "Oh, let the whole thing go to —" (fill in according to taste) and if your own pulse could be counted it would be found "away up in the nineties." Now I do not fear that sort of a hen a bit, though I do not like her. I never allow her to bully me, much less, to conquer me, and I venture to think my treatment of such specimens is unique. Ages ago it was discovered that a hen can be mesmerized, and the wilder the hen the more successfully. It is only necessary to hold the hen perfectly steady, head well down and covered to ensure perfect quiet of

the animal when released.

I have not usually found it necessary to completely mesmerize the fowl, but only sufficiently to render her subject to my will and I carry the process out exactly as required and repeat it or not as may be necessary. By this means a wild hen who wants to throw up the whole business of hatching can be as easily managed after a few treatments as any others.

THE NEST.

On this point I have little to add to what has appeared in the REVIEW for April, in an excellent paper by its able editor, Mr. Donovan.

We must not press the behavior of those hens that choose their nests on the ground in secluded localities, too much into service in drawing conclusions on this subject. Such specimens have retained in an extraordinary degree the instincts of their wild ancestors. The deficiencies of their nests are compensated for by special qualifications in the sitting bird.

Upon the whole I prefer a small barrel or large keg laid on its side. Into the bottom (now end) a few medium sized holes may be bored, and the front covered with a movable slat work admitting air and some light. The holes in the end allow of better circulation, which is desirable in hot weather.

Placing a sod beneath the other materials of the nest I have abandoned for sand or loam which is better not wet as it cakes and gets hard and uneven. A concavity rather larger than the body of the hen, on which the top dressings may be laid is then moulded out. Hay is preferable to straw. There are many modes of keeping the nest sweet and making it an unpleasant place for vermin to visit. I am inclined to think, however, that some of these methods may also make it disagreeable to the hen, if not deleterious to the embryo chicks in the eggs.

To see that the hen is absolutely free from vermin when set, to dust over the upper dressing of the nest from time to time with insect powder and especially before the hatching day, to make sure that the hen herself is now free from vermin, and in any case give her a dusting, has in my experience been sufficient in a *cleanly house* in which alone I assume the hen to be set. A *little* Carbolic Acid in some form sweetens the nest.

I firmly believe that sitting hens will be better managed and with much saving of time and worry if *confined to the nest* and only released (if necessary lifted off) daily, as a rule. If the sitter does not go back at the right time it is well to coax her towards the nest and get her to enter without compulsion. This will incline her to return of her own accord again. But if she takes one of those wild fits treat as above advised. Don't allow yourself to be conquered on any occasion. When once within the barrel, and the slat-work placed against it, she is safe; she will soon betake herself to the eggs. And herein lies the advantage of a barrel, beside others such as more room, better ventilation, etc. For Bantams, of course a keg answers well enough.

THE FOOD OF THE SITTING HEN.

Enough attention is not usually paid to this subject. The lack of exercise favors constipation, while the imperfect ventilation and the unnatural conditions generally, tax the health of the bird severely; and especially is this shown in the effect on the digestive tract, hence diarrhoea, a most unfortunate complication.

We think it well to feed on mild and unstimulating food at first; later, when the appetite is more capricious it will be found wise to offer the fowl several kinds of grain, not withholding even Indian corn, for the sitting hen is not likely to get fat. It is also advis-