

PRACTICAL HINTS FOR COTTAGERS ON POULTRY-KEEPING.

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GLANCE at some of the details of successful management may now be taken. In order to do well poultry must be hatched at the right time of the year, must be well grown, and kept in a thoroughly healthy condition. To maintain this state they must have pure air at night, through efficient ventilation, a good supply of pure water, suitable food and exercise, good houses, and shelter from rain and biting winds, and thorough cleanliness.

TIME TO HATCH.

Reliable incubators are not yet cheap enough for the cottager to purchase, or he could hatch at any time. But he must do his best to secure a steady broody hen or two in March and April if he intends to rear the heavier breeds for winter laying, and if the lighter and non-sitting varieties not later than April or early May. The object is to get the pullets fully matured by September or October, when they should commence to lay and continue through the winter. If they are hatched later and the cold weather finds them only three parts grown, the probability is that they will never grow to a full size, and will not commence to lay till January or February, when eggs are cheap. On the other hand, a pullet of the sitting variety which has been laying all winter will want to sit as soon as a few warm days appear in February or March,

and so serve a double, useful purpose.

A watchful eye should be kept to distinguish the best layers. These will usually be found to have narrow heads and necks, with bright, large, intelligent eyes, and to be the most active among the flock, first out in the morning, and the latest to roost at night. As a rule, too, they *commence* to lay at an earlier age than the rest. These should be kept on for a second year for the breeding pen, while the sluggards should be killed before they die from fat.

HOUSING.

For a breeding pen a house five feet by four feet, to hold eight or ten birds, is large enough. A good average space for each fowl is two square feet, and perching room nine inches long. Fowl that are overcrowded never do well. The perches should all be of one height, say eighteen inches or two feet from the floor. This prevents quarrels as to which shall have the highest perch. Ample ventilation must be provided; a through current well above the heads of the fowl is best, but draughts must be avoided. Where it can be arranged, fowl should be kept together in small numbers, separate runs being provided for each flock of ten or a dozen. When they run together in flocks of above twenty-five or thirty, nothing like so good a percentage of eggs is obtainable.