

pression one had was, that here was a breed invented on purpose for grilled chicken legs, for every other part was sacrificed to the thighs. As they were my own, I was obliged to try and see beauties in them, but all I could say was, "Wait: when they are on the table you will discover my cross is *the* cross. K—says they are the finest table fowl known. I waited and waited for the breasts to develop, but they only grew taller and taller, till at last I ordered one to be roasted. On the dish coming to table, an uncourteous guest remarked, "What strange animal have we here?" "Something in the ostrich line," answered another. Killed very young, their legs were fairly nice, and they made a quantity of soup, for they had such large bones, but others that were slain at Christmas time were, to those who understand what a really good fowl is, almost uncatable. In size they were magnificent, several turning the scale at twelve pounds, but my landlord hinted that it would take him at least a year before he should care to see a chicken on the table again. For the hens of this cross, I must say a kind word, as I never had such good layers or such mothers. One or two actually lived on for seven years, and reared a brood the last year, and, what is more, they grew handsome, densely black, and so very wide that their legs never looked over-large.

The next year I put Game hens with the Dorking cock, and in this cross I discovered the ideal fowl. I had set over 150 eggs, most of them my own, before the second week in March, so that I had numbers hatching out every day after the first of April. During the first week I had them all fed with a sort of custard made of eggs and milk, gradually mixing a little barley meal, until at the end of a fortnight they were feeding well; oats and tail wheat crushed together made excellent food as soon as they were able to peck; no water was ever left with the coops, but each time the chicks were fed the water was poured out fresh. This care prevented gapes, although others were complaining all round, and really it was very little more trouble. Wire pens into which the chicks could run held the more delicate food; the older birds had to walk round and long for it in vain.

Maize was given to the fowls mixed with other sorts of grain, but never alone for more than a few days together, for it is so fattening, that if fed on for long together it will actually kill them, the hens dropping off their perches quite dead without the slightest warning.

I had no ducks of my own, but bought four dozen at 10d. each, just half-feathered. At this age they are very little trouble, and soon make the acquaintance of the green peas, they were fed upon meal and corn, whilst those actually fattening had milk to drink; turned into the garden, they did a great deal of good, as they destroyed the slugs and snails without picking at the plants and scratching like chickens.

Here I must mention an extraordinary event which took place in a sister's poultry yard. She possessed some very fine cherry trees of the best of all kinds for cherry brandy, and the cook had been hard at work making a large quantity. The cherries, after being soaked in the brandy until all their flavour was drawn out, were thrown by one of the servants into the poultry-yard.

An hour later, every dweller there was furiously and frantically drunk. The turkeys went running and tumbling all over the place, the ducks tried to stand on their heads, whilst the chickens ran backwards.

No harm seemed to come, however, and after an hour or two the drunken fit wore off, and the fowls came to their senses.

The cockerels of the Game and Dorking cross I had killed off directly they were fat enough, and delicious little round birds they made; whilst the pullets were kept for killing later on, and for laying. All the older birds were fattened before

they began to moult, save a few which were required for stock.

For setting both hens and pheasants, I tried boxes of my own invention with the most perfect success, knowing that so many birds perish just when they are hatching, both among pheasants as well as chickens, it occurred to me that the reason probably arose from the birds being set in a yard and fed on the gravel, when naturally the old birds would be seeking their food among long damp grass, from whence they return to the eggs with wet feathers.

I had the sitting-boxes made long enough to cover six nests, with divisions, but had no bottoms for the nests, which were made on the ground; the roofs of the boxes slanting to throw off the rain. They were then placed in a small wood, where the grass was long. Every day, before letting out the hens, if there was no dew, the grass was well watered, and in very hot dry weather the ground on each side of the boxes was watered several times a day. Sprinkling the eggs, if the hen's feathers are dry, has very little effect, as the feathers absorb all the moisture at once.

This plan answered so well, not a single egg was found in which the bird had died in the shell. Pheasants' eggs require more damp than hens', as the shell is so much more greasy.

Each box, I have forgotten to say, was padlocked; a rod ran through all the locks of the nests, and kept them secure.

Although I found the cross-bred birds the easiest to rear, and the best layers, I was always most careful to keep only pure cockerels, and these were generally Dorkings; now and then I used to kill off all the cross-bred hens, and start fresh again. A gardener who lived a short distance from my farm had the care of a dozen Game hens and cock, so that I always had plenty of that breed, whilst pure Dorkings were kept at the farm with the cross-bred ones, their eggs being so much larger, there was seldom any difficulty in selecting them for hatching.

Eggs for setting should not be kept over a fortnight; they will hatch when a month, or even six weeks old, but the chickens are not so strong. Great care is required while the hatching is going on; the hens should be well fed chiefly on corn, as grain digests slower than soft food, and therefore the hens are less restless. Ten minutes is quite long enough for them to be away from the nest, although in summer twenty minutes will do no harm. Care should be taken that they have plenty of fresh water, and a dust-bath of sand and wood-ashes, with a little sulphur, this mixture will destroy all insects—a fruitful source of bad sitting.

It is not generally known how very fond fowls are of roots; and a few mangolds, turnips, carrots, or beetroot are well bestowed on them, for during winter poultry frequently flag for want of green food, which can in this way be easily given; also in the pheasant pens they are most useful, and will be greedily devoured. If the birds scour at all, boil the roots first. As we hatched early, we always had plenty of eggs when they were scarce, although early hatching alone will not bring about this desirable result, for animal food must in some form be supplied. During most years the butcher has furnished the yards with something—I never inquired too closely what—but last year I tried a new recipe, which produced eggs more plentifully than I ever remember, for we gave them real insects. To do this a good deal of foresight is necessary, as the only insects to be got during the cold months are meal-worms.

In September prepare either one, two, or three pans, according to the number of your fowls—one pan, I should say, to every five-and-twenty—put in them two quarts each of musty meal, a tallow candle or two, a pair of old cotton stockings, cut up, and about a pint of meal-worms—to be bought at any bird shop. The pans should then be set in the cellar, and, as soon as cold weather sets in, and insect life begins to fail, a