

THE HOUSEHOLD.

HOUSEKEEPER'S ALPHABET.

Always have your meals on time.
Be as cheerful as circumstances will permit.
Cook good viands, and take pains in your art.
Desserts that are simple are best of all.
Every time you can do so, sit down to work.
Finish most of your work in the morning.
Go leisurely about your daily tasks.
Have all your lamps cleaned and filled before night.
In no case clean with gasoline in a room with fire.
Joy helps food to digest; promote it.
Kill the blues with pleasant occupation.
Let no task master you; be mistress of it.
Many steps may be saved by a little forethought.
Never argue; it breeds bitterness and wastes time.
Only common characters are scolds.
Play and seek amusement as often as you can.
Quiet and order are two great blessings.
Remember that you are the fixed home star.
Sing at your work.
Try and get "forty winks" during the day.
Use tact in handling "the reins."
Veil home worries from neighbors and guests.
Wash Monday, but don't iron until Wednesday.
Xantippe the shrew should be no woman's model.
Yield up your whims if they disturb the peace.
Zeal and industry are the corner-stone of thrift.
—*Christian at Work.*

COMMON-SENSE AND CHICKENS.

BY MARION HARLAND.

This paper is not written for people who are going into poultry culture upon a large scale. I believe that chicken-farming can be made profitable, and that women who wish to earn a living and something over may engage in it with reasonable expectation of success, if they are willing to study the business in all its details, and bring to it energy, intelligence, and personal diligence.

This and bee-raising are professions for which women are eminently adapted. There would almost seem to be a nameless and peculiar sympathy between the denizens of the poultry-yard and the hen-wife, who enters into their needs and comprehends their habits as men seldom do.

Frankly confessing my ignorance of "incubators," and "brooders," and "runs," and dozens of patent appliances pertaining to the great poultry farm, I prefer to talk to dwellers in the country and in suburban townships who would like, without much outlay of money, to raise fowls for family consumption, and to have, the year round, a supply of eggs for the table and culinary purposes. A dozen or twenty hens, well looked after, will pay for their feed many times over in the course of a year, besides furnishing the care-taker with interesting and healthful occupation.

Without trespassing upon the realm of the chicken fancier and dealer, a word with regard to breeds may help her who has not yet stocked her yard. As layers, White Leghorns give general satisfaction, but they are fickle sitters and negligent mothers, besides being, as a rule, undersized, hence not desirable for broilers and roasters. Wyandottes are of nobler proportions, lay fairly well, and their flesh is excellent eating. They are, moreover, inclined to keep the nest after once consenting to sit, cover their chickens comfortably, and are not remiss in care of them. In my own experience I have found no more satisfactory "all-round" breed than Plymouth Rocks. If I could have but one, I should take them for family use.

If Dame Partlet has been properly attended to in the winter, she gives earlier token of the approaching spring than willow-catkin or wind flower. She has not hibernated in idleness. If her house has been snug, with a sunny exposure of the windowed side; if she has had once a day a warm mash; compounded of kitchen refuse, including bones, stirred up with Indian meal when the pot is taken hot from the back of the range, a feed of corn at noon and one of buckwheat and corn at evening; if pounded oyster-shells have been strewed freely upon the cement or asphalt floor; if her nest has been clean and in a dusky corner—she ought to have laid with grateful regularity all winter. A thermometer below zero and high searching winds are a valid excuse for occasional lapses in duty.

Under this treatment—which she will not get except from a patient mistress whose interest in her has in it a dash of maternal fondness—she will tiptoe into the barn on the first mild days of February plump and sleek, with a comb like a Jacqueminot rose, and a breast so swollen with beneficent intention that hints of it escape in the gentle croon, more meaningful and melodious than any written song without words. It is not a sentimental boast; she means business, and to give her whole mind to it.

As encouragement to her praiseworthy design see that her premises have a good dry cleaning. Scrubbing and scouring come later in the season. On every day in the year the hay in the nest should be lifted, shaken lightly over a box or barrel kept for that purpose, then put back into place. A dozen nests can be thus visited and "made up" in half as many minutes. There will be no need of renewing the hay oftener than once a month in winter, once in ten days in summer. I have never known hens to be troubled by vermin when this simple precaution was taken, provided walls and floor was likewise swept weekly. Make ready for spring campaign by having every corner of the chicken-house scraped and brushed; scald the roosts in clean water to which a teaspoonful of carbolic acid has been added for every gallon of boiling water. About once a fortnight in cold weather put a good pinch of cayenne pepper into the morning rations of meal-mash. Allow your hens all the range you can afford to give them. They lay better under the impression that they are working for their living by picking up gravel from the walks, excavating in the stable-yard for torpid larvae, and raking over rubbish for tidbits you are too ignorant to value. Partlet is essentially bohemian. Lawlessness is bound up in her heart, and the scientific martinet of the poultry farm cannot drive it far from her. To do her justice, she is willing to pay in coin current of her realm for the privilege of peregrination. The freer her range, and the more liberal the allowance of kitchen scraps, the more eggs she will give you.

She is a simpleton as to identification of them after they are laid. So long as one egg remains in the nest she goes into no calculation of the number of which she has been robbed, and a china counterfeit satisfies her instead of the pearly or pinkish-brown oval she left in the hay yesterday forenoon. The advantages to you of the porcelain cheat are dual. An addled egg breaks easily and fouls the nest, sometimes actually exploding before the rush of the gas generated in the shell, and you cannot afford to throw away fresh eggs as decoys.

As the days lengthen and the sunshine brightens the nests must be shaded. Partlet loves darkness rather than light while laying and sitting. These are transactions which, in her opinion, ought to be done in a corner. However honest, she skulks like a criminal when bent upon fulfilling the purpose of her creation and preservation. A patent nest set in the sight of men she will none of. She will sooner scratch out a hole under a sill or board and hide her talent in the earth, without so much as a shred of a napkin or a wisp of straw to shield it. Give her a screen behind which she can retire in modest complacency. If you can contrive to make her think that the whole proceeding is surreptitious, so much the better. Most eggs are laid in the forenoon; and since, until the spring is well advanced, it is not safe to leave them in the nests overnight, it is well to collect them about three o'clock in the afternoon, before the soberest birds begin to think of going to roost.

The mistake made by many who wish to raise chickens—if not for profit without loss—is in building expensive houses, with so many "fads" in the way of perches, nest boxes, ventilators, and even heaters, that no hens, however conscientious, can live up to the expectation of subsequent remuneration. If you have a house already, make the best of it. If you contemplate the alteration of this, or the erection of another, I venture to describe a homely structure, revised from a mere shed, that has served my purpose well. At one end of the long side of the shed, which is battened on the inside to make it storm-proof, a door admits the mistress into a passage running through to another door, opening upon the stable-yard, into which

guano and other refuse can be thrown. To the right, as she enters, are bins for feed. In the far corner stands the box over which the nest-hay is shaken, and this is emptied daily. On the left are tiers of nest-boxes, arranged like drawers, with handles on the outermost ends. There is sufficient space between the tiers to let the hens pass in and out. Below them a wire net-work extends to the floor; a gate of the same material leads into the roosting-place. Without entering this, the mistress can pull out one drawer after another, remove eggs, shake out the hay, and put the nest in order. In winter, when this work is over, she unlatches the gate and throws food to the inmates of the larger area. In summer they are fed out of doors. The floor of the roosting-place is of cement; the perches are laid in open grooves, and can be taken out and cleaned at will. At the far end of the shed, shut off by a board door from the noisy scenes of the middle compartment, is the hatching-room. It, with the rest of the house, is lighted by glazed and netted windows looking southward. A door in the back of the roosting-place gives upon a large poultry-yard.

AN EMERGENCY CLOSET.

I think we have all known what it is to be aroused from a sound sleep by the terrible sounds of the croupy cough (at least we who are mothers), and we have sometimes remembered with dismay that we had no ipecac or other remedy at hand. And some of us—I trust not many—have seen our teething babies go into convulsions in the middle of the night, when there was no fire in the kitchen stove nor hot water in the boiler. Lesser evils, too, as burns, cut fingers, and so on—how often where there is a family of little children do we have to doctor such ills! so after a good many tribulations for lack of the right thing at the right moment, I established in my home an emergency closet.

Its position recommended it most highly. In the corridor between my own door and that of the nursery it stood, and it seemed to have been made for nothing else, for it was shallow, with many shelves across one-half of its space, and the other half was reserved for hanging purposes.

The first rule I made was this: nobody was to go to it except in an emergency. The next rule forbade anything being placed in it save by myself. The third and last was that the key should always hang beside the locked door, beyond the reach of the little ones.

And having prepared my closet and announced my rules, I proceeded to arrange the interior and classify its contents.

The top shelf contained medicines, all distinctly and carefully labelled, and with good stout corks or glass stoppers in the bottles. Little boxes of ointments and salves stood well in view in one corner, and there were three spoons of the three sizes called for in giving medicine. On the shelf below was a box of mustard plasters, a bundle of old linen, some of it cut into strips and rolled for bandages, and some left in large pieces as needed; a bundle of white flannel, old and soft; a pile of half-worn towels; another of old sheets; and a thin old blanket, to be put around a hot bath while giving it to a sick baby. On the same shelf, by the mustard plasters, was a jar of mustard, one of flaxseed, and one of hops.

On the lowest shelf stood a coal-oil stove, a large copper kettle, and a deep tin foot-tub large enough to hold a child of two years with plenty of hot water to cover it to the neck. Here also were sponges of different sizes.

From the hooks hung several useful articles. A warm eider-down flannel wrapper, too faded to see daylight, but the very thing for a sudden tumble out of one's warm bed in the cold winter nights; other flannel garments of various sizes useful as wrappings for children, bags of herbs, bags of woollen rags, bags of old linen too far gone for anything but lint, and a number of other odds and ends, all having a distinct and well-known value. Having placed each article in its established position, I could go to my "emergency closet" in the dark if needful, and place my hand on exactly what I wanted. If my sisters who are house-mothers will try my plan, I am sure they will acknowledge that it is a good

one. For my part, I know not how I managed at all in the days when I had no "emergency closet."—*Maria Pendleton Kennedy, in Harper's Bazar.*

A BACK PIAZZA.

If the new house is to be built, put a broad porch, or better, a piazza, the whole length back of the house. Insist upon this, even if there is less ornament in front. Hot summer days most of the work worried through in close kitchens could be carried on outside, like shelling peas, washing dishes or, with an oil stove, that dreaded of all working, ironing. Have the hammock in one corner, for the busy mother to rest in; or a fretful baby can be soothed into sleep outside the hot chamber, and occasionally, to the delight of the children, the table can be set, and get them to trim it with the roses or wild flowers, or even leaves. Now as to the shade: Plant morning-glories or balloon vines, and let them run to the roof on strings. One piazza is shaded by a sumac, dug from the woods not far away. The branches are very thick, and in the fall, with its curious flowers and colored foliage, is a very interesting shrub or tree. A covered piazza open at the side is invaluable for plants, as they can be kept there until heavy frost. A lady has one of these additions to the back of her house, and says she could hardly get along without it. She has movable sides of boards, and can make a nice bedroom, when there is an unusual number of guests. In the fall, large glass windows are put in, and there is a good place for plants. Such an outdoor summer sitting room may be a little expensive in the first place; but it may lessen your doctor's bill more than you will ever know.
—*New York Independent.*

SELECTED RECIPES.

POOR MAN'S PUDDING.—Peel and slice a layer of apples in the bottom of a dish, then a layer of bread crumbs that have been softened in water. Repeat this until the dish is full, sweetening the apples every time. Finish with a layer of bread and dot with bits of butter. Fill up with water and bake. Serve while warm with cream and sugar.

A GOOD PLAIN PUDDING.—One cupful of sour milk, a pinch of salt, one-half teaspoonful of soda, one cupful of dried berries—sliced green apples are good—and cornmeal to make a batter as thick as for Johnny cake. Steam half an hour and eat with sweetened cream. I find a round cake tin with a centre tube an excellent dish in which to steam puddings.

A HEALTHFUL DESSERT is easily made by soaking two-thirds of a cupful of pearl tapioca over night in a pint and a half of cold water. In the morning place over the fire and cook slowly until soft and clear, adding more water if necessary. Sweeten to taste and pour it over a can of blackberries or strawberries which has been emptied into an earthen pudding dish; place in the oven until well mixed and cooked together; then pour into a warmed glass dish. When cold, drop over it a few tablespoonfuls of whipped cream. This delicious addition, though difficult to prepare in summer for those who have no ice, is easily made when cream is cold enough to froth nicely with an egg-beater.

MOTHER'S BREAD.—Put two quarts of flour into a pan, and pour boiling water over it until nearly all the flour is wet. Stir the flour while pouring on the water. Add one pint of cold water, and beat well. Let it stand until lukewarm, then add one cup of potato yeast, butter the size of an egg and half a teaspoonful of soda, and flour to make a stiff dough. Turn it out on the moulding board and work in more flour by slashing it with a sharp knife. Slash, add flour and knead until the dough is stiff and smooth. You cannot get too much flour into it. Let it stand until morning, then knead it down without removing it from the pan. After breakfast, turn it out on the board, and knead it for ten minutes, then put it back and let it rise as much as possible without smelling like wine, and make it into loaves. When the loaves are light they should be put into a hot oven which is allowed to cool gradually until the bread is done. Bread made in this way will keep fresh a long time.

CUSTARD PIE.—A noted epicure of the generation just passed away said that no custard pie was worth the name unless it was just as thick as he could bite through. The best dish for custard pie is an old-fashioned pie pan about an inch and a half deep. The crust should be rolled out somewhat larger than the dish, then the edges may be folded in to make a stiff rim about the upper part of the pan. Some cooks break the eggs over this crust, move them about until the entire surface is covered with the white of the egg, turn them out into the custard dish and set the crust for five minutes in a very hot oven; this is said effectually to prevent the crust from soaking. For a pie of this size allow four eggs, three cups of milk and one of cream, a cup of sugar and pinch of salt. Some people beat the sugar with a piece of butter the size of a walnut, then add the eggs beaten thoroughly and, last of all, the milk. Unless the milk is quite rich, it is a good plan to beat in with the sugar and eggs one heaping teaspoonful of corn-starch, but with rich milk and an abundance of eggs this is not necessary. When the custard is in the pan, grate over the top about one-third of a small nutmeg. The pie should cook in a moderately hot oven until thoroughly set, and if slightly brown is much improved in flavor.