

fresh Dorking cock, not even related to the first, or if a further cross is thought desirable, with a good Houdan cock. If eggs and chickens are desired for market purposes, the Houdan breed will be found very valuable. The chickens are not so large as those of the cross just recommended, but they are good in quality, mature early, and fatten rapidly, and the hens are very free layers; but as they rarely sit, a few Brahma hens may be kept to hatch their eggs. It will be found more advantageous to use Brahma or Cochins for this purpose, inasmuch as their buff-coloured eggs are easily distinguished from those of the Houdans. The great drawback against most of the farm-yard poultry is the want of size. This may be remedied by keeping better breeds, provided the chickens are well fed from the very first. It cannot be too strongly impressed upon the rearers of market-poultry that large-framed birds cannot be hoped for if the chickens are not well fed from the very first day they leave the nest. It is not enough to put the hen and newly-hatched brood under a coop, and throw them some tail-wheat two or three times a day; such treatment will never make large birds. During the hatching the hen should be left undisturbed; the young chickens should not be removed from under her as they are hatched—but when all are out and quite dry and strong, the hen may be cooped in a dry sunny spot, and a good feed of corn and soft food given to her. The chickens want no food for many hours after they are hatched, as they are then digesting the yolk of the egg, which constitutes their first food, and acquiring strength to run about. When they begin to peck, they should be fed with soft food and very small grain. Unquestionably, the best soft food is an egg beaten up with a tablespoonful of milk, and heated in the oven, or by the side of the fire, until it sets into a soft custard. Chickens fed on this or partially fed make wonderful progress. Another point often overlooked is the time at which the young chicks are fed. If they are to make large fowls, they must be fed soon after daylight, if, as is too often the case, they are left hungry for three hours early in the morning; they are always stunted in their growth. They must be fed the first thing, and whilst they are young, every two or three hours during the day. A large lump of soft food, such as oat or barley-meal, mixed with milk or water, is often put into the hen's coop, and it is thought that it will suffice for the day; in a short time it becomes trodden on and defiled, and it is then no longer wholesome food. The right plan is to give no more soft food than the chickens can eat at once. Overnight, a supply of grits, ground oats, or small wheat, may be put down to serve for the first meal in the morning. Many poultry-keepers are partial to keeping the hens with chickens under coop for some weeks. I am decidedly opposed to the plan. By so doing, the natural insect food that the

hen acquires by scratching—the worms, grubs, small seeds, and flies, &c.—are denied to the chicken, and no artificial diet will compensate for the loss. Nor can the hen dust to free herself from vermin, that feed sumptuously on the young chicks at night. It is said that the hen, if not cooped, will draggle the chickens through the wet grass, and the them out. A half-starved hen may possibly do so; but if she is well fed with corn, there is no danger of her so doing. If preferred, she can be shut up until the dew is off the grass; but the finest and heaviest chickens I have ever bred have been those that have been with hens that were never shut up in houses or coops, but being under open sheds, could go out at all hours. If the hens are allowed to scratch for the chickens, the chopped meat and meat-broth which are requisite for them when closely confined, is altogether unnecessary. It is the custom of some game-rearers to hang up in the woods any dead waste animal, to supply maggots for the young pheasants. This is not desirable near a homestead; but any refuse animal remains may be utilized without offence, by allowing them to become thoroughly fly-blown, and then burying them in the fowl run; the maggots attain their full size under ground, and previous to turning into flies work their way instinctively to the surface, furnishing an abundant supply to the young chickens.

There are a few other points in the management of fowls about which it may be desirable to say a few words. In the first place, let me caution all agriculturists against attempting to employ any artificial incubators: despite of all the care and attention that has been devoted to their construction, not one has been found a success in actual practice, nor do I know of any person who continues to employ them except experimentally. There is no great difficulty in hatching a certain number of the eggs in incubators, but rearing the chickens in any number without hens is hopeless. Whatever may be the case in the warmer climate of Egypt, in the colder latitude of England, artificial incubation is a delusion. The keeping of fowls in very large numbers by the establishment of what have been called poultry-farms, has attracted considerable attention of late. It has been argued that if a moderate number of fowls around a homestead can be made, as they unquestionably can, to yield a fair profit, it is only necessary to multiply the number by ten, twenty, or a hundred, to secure a proportionate return. No argument can be more fallacious. Whenever a very large number of fowls is collected together in one place, the ground becomes tainted, and disease invariably breaks out amongst them. Poultry-farms have been tried under almost every possible condition, and have invariably proved failures. If a very large space of rough useless ground can be devoted to them, a considerable number may be kept; but such ground is rare. The reason of the greater number of fowls being reared in France (from whence before the war we were in the habit of importing considerably more than one million of eggs per day) is that, in the place of large farms, the country is divided into very numerous small holdings, and that at each of these a good stock of fowls is maintained. The profit to be made by poultry depends so much on the management and on the demand for fowls in the locality that it cannot be accurately stated. That poultry, properly tended, will yield a good profit, I am fully aware; but that fowls can be reared at the same cost as beef and mutton I must have some very definite accounts to prove.

TURKEYS.

In many parts of the kingdom the rearing of turkeys is followed with great advantage, whereas in other localities a turkey in a farmyard is a rarity. There is no doubt that turkeys, properly managed, are amongst the most profitable of live stock, and it is difficult to account for their absence from many places where they could be advantageously reared. Turkeys consume a much larger proportion of green food than fowls, and grow into size almost without cost; when fattened, they realize a high price in the market; and, as they are chiefly in demand in cold weather, can be sent to distant places without risk of loss. Many farmers and farmers' wives, however, dread engaging in the rearing of turkeys, believing them to be exceedingly delicate when young. I believe properly managed turkeys are not more difficult to rear than common fowls, and I am quite certain they can be raised to much greater profit. My own method of procedure is to follow nature as far as possible. I make my turkey nests on the ground; or if in a paved house, in large shallow boxes half filled with mould that can be damped at intervals. The hens, unless they come off regularly, are lifted off to feed, and then supplied with grain with a liberal hand. When the young ones are hatched, they are left undisturbed under the hen until the next day. No attempt is made to cram them—an absurd practice, which interferes most injuriously with the due digestion of the yolk that is absorbed into the intestines at birth, and constitutes all the food required for twenty or thirty hours after hatching. The first food given them is egg beaten up with an equal bulk of milk, and baked into a soft custard; this is alternated with crumbled bread mixed with milk, to which oatmeal is added in a gradually increasing proportion. Ants' eggs are given if I can get them; but if not, the custard is continued for a fortnight or three weeks. Quite as important as any other part of the dietary of young turkeys is the supply of green food, and many persons chop up nettles, onions, &c., with the meal; but if young turkeys are watched when grazing, it will be observed that they prefer eating bitter herbs belonging to the natural family *composita*, or compound flowered plants, such as the dandelion, &c. The common lettuce belongs to the same tribe, and I have this year fed largely on it. The greediness with which young turkeys devour this plant is remarkable. At three weeks old a dozen turkey chicks will eat four or five large lettuces a day, and they even seem to prefer them when running to seed, at which time there is abundance of bitter milky juice in the plants. At the age of a month they will begin to peck a few grains of wheat or barley: but bread and milk and meal should form the staple of their food for the first two or three months of their lives. Most persons say that young turkeys are particularly delicate.