

Mother's Hens

By Mrs. F. E. Sheperd, Stalwart, Sask.

Editor's Note.—If you want to read a really practical article on how to make money from your poultry, you should not miss any of these articles. The first story told how to spring clean the mother hens, and get things ready for setting. Last week, hatching, both with the incubator and with the mother hens, was carefully described, and now the care of the hatching is dealt with. The writer has made money with her poultry on a farm in Saskatchewan and these stories are the outcome of practical experience. It is hoped that they will be read from week to week with a great deal of appreciation.

Chapter Three

Ting-a-ling-ling-ling, went the telephone in the Hazelton's pleasant dining room the following week. Margaret laid down the sock she was knitting for the soldiers and rose to answer it. "Yes, it's me—Oh, is it you, Mrs. Creighton?—What do you say?—You want to know if you shall bring our mail out? Why, sure, I should be awfully pleased if you would. I have been wondering all morning how I should get it. I shall make you stay to tea.—Good-bye." She hung up the receiver and, sitting down in her little rocking-chair, picked up her knitting again, her face wreathed in smiles. "Well, now, did you ever?" she remarked to herself. "There have I been worrying all day as to whether old Billy had sense enough to remember to ask for it. Get down, pussie. You tangle up all my wool."

Presently Margaret, having finished that intricate, exasperating part of her sock known as "turning the heel," proceeded to lay the cloth for her visitor's arrival. Just as she finished the dog barked, and on going to the door, she found Mrs. Creighton, one of her nearest neighbors, and, like herself, a city girl, just getting out of the buggy. They greeted each other warmly, and proceeded to unhitch.

"For the land's sake," exclaimed Mrs. Creighton, as she entered the tiny parlor, "ain't you English the dread-fullest people to make your rooms pretty. I never seen such a dear little place. Geraniums in full bloom, too, and trailing ivy in every corner of the room. And this is the incubator, is it? And it don't smell neither (sniffing).—but it don't seem natural tho, do it, to hatch the poor little things out by the hundred and no mother nor nothing?"

"Well, I don't know," replied her hostess. "From what I can hear about the old hen, she is just as likely to smash them as flat as a pancake as she is to look at them, but if you will excuse me, may I open Mother's letter? I never can wait a minute. Will gets awful cross with me about it, and I have known him not open his letters for an hour or more on purpose to tease me. Take off your hat and make yourself at home."

Putting a good chunk of chewing gum into her mouth, her visitor sat down to listen. "Go right on," she said affably. "I'd like to know how the old lady is. She sure is the wonder-fullest hand with chickens I ever did see. Why I called here one day last spring the day after that thing come out, and if she hadn't got one of her best blankets laid out on this very Davenport and six or eight little boxes about a foot square, all lined with flannel and cotton batting, good enough for a casket, and about ten or a dozen yaller chicks in each of 'em, and another blanket covered over them all, tucked in like a baby. Cuter! You bet they looked cute." But Margaret could wait no longer and began reading:

"The hardest part of lying here is not being able to talk with you, my dear daughter—but I suppose I must be thankful I can write, so I will begin where I left off. I will not waste time or space telling you more about the incubator. Read your directions every day or two and follow them to the letter, but you must not expect it to hatch out better than the hens. Really expert poultry raisers think they do pretty well if they raise eight chickens from every thirteen eggs. (I don't think that is quite enough myself, but they often have to put up with hired help.) So you must not expect to get ninety-eight live, healthy chickens out of your hundred eggs. You will probably have had ten or a dozen infertile ones tested out, a few with half-formed dead chicks in them, and several fully

formed dead in the shell. These casualties cannot be avoided altogether, but it is up to you to make them as few as possible. With absolutely new laid eggs, from fowls on unlimited range, you should not have so very many. Talking about unlimited range, have you ever noticed what a very short distance most of your hens go away from their houses? The land around them must be very tainted after four or five years. When they build you that new chicken house in the fall, (I



"They look like yellow balls of fluffy wool"

will send you plans and directions later on about it), get them to put it twenty or thirty rods away from the present one; not necessarily farther away from your front door, but in quite a different direction to where it is now, so they will have sweeter ground. If the present site could be plowed up and turned into a kitchen garden you could take all the vegetable prizes at the different shows, but I doubt if even you could chase the men-folk around to that extent. I expect you have been getting your hen coops ready; if not, you will find them at the back of the implement shed. I always put them there in the fall or else they are sure to be stamped on by some horse or other during threshing time. I want you to learn to use a hammer and nails, dear. It is such a nuisance to have to ask one of the men every time you want any little job done, and once you learn to hit the right nail, and that is not the one on your thumb, you will be all right. Will is a rough carpenter all right, very rough, only don't tell him I say so.

"You will think my coops look like dog kennels,—they are so big—but they are the very latest thing in coops, and always used in most of our universities and experimental farms. They are about three feet long, two feet wide, and two feet high. See they have not cracked or warped. If they have, cover them all over with tar paper, nailing the corners and edges well down. You will notice the front is made out of half of an ordinary window, instead of the ordinary laths, fixed so that it slides open or shut on grooves. This is for warmth and protection from wind and rain. I used a brooder several years with very great success—and they are the most profitable, because with them you can let the hens go, and they soon commence laying again. But for an ordinary farmer's wife, with all the work she generally has to do in the summer time, the garden to hoe, calves and pigs to feed, to say nothing of looking after the babies, well it is a help to get the chicks right off your mind when they are about ten days or a fortnight old, which you can do if you feed them my way, when they are running with their mothers.

"Now when your incubator begins to hatch out you will get quite excited, but don't lower your lamp even if your thermometer registers 103 or 104. It is only caused by the moist heat generated by the chickens themselves. I am always glad mine has got a glass door. I am afraid I waste an awful

lot of time those days watching the pretty little things bursting out of their shells. First one and then another egg will show a tiny three-cornered crack in it. This gradually spreads all round it, until presently it breaks right open and the little head and wings come popping out like a jack-in-the-box, looking rather damp, but bright and perky; then they struggle on the top of the other eggs, and soon dry off, and look just like yellow balls of fluffy wool. I meant to have told you last week, that what broody hens you get a week or ten days previous to your incubator coming off, to keep china eggs under them all the time instead of real ones. Then the evening after your hatch is over, choose two of the strongest-looking chicks and slip them under the wings of one of them, at the same time taking away the nest eggs. I never had a hen refuse to take newly hatched chicks when given to her that way when nearly dark. Quite early the next morning, tuck her under your arm, and

put the two little chicks in one of those little dannel-lined boxes. (You will find quite a lot of them up in the attic.)"

The two women looked at each other and smiled. "Put the hen right at the back of the big coop, and give her a big handful of cracked corn or wheat, and some water in a very shallow vessel. I generally use a sardine tin. They do as well as the most expensive water fountain. When she has had enough she will settle down and begin to 'cluck' for her chickens. Give them to her again, slipping them under her wings. In about an hour's time go out again with about four more chicks and a few breadcrumbs; while she is fussing around trying to get the first two to eat, slip the others under her, and thank your lucky stars she can't count. Do this several times during the day to as many hens as you have got chickens for until each hen has twenty chickens under her; this is as many as she can comfortably cover—at least so early in the season."

"Well, well," said Margaret, laying the letter down on the table, "I guess we'd better leave off and get a cup of tea. I see she goes on to say something about raising little turkeys, and if I once start reading about them I shall not want to leave off."

CANADA'S REVENUE DOWN

Drop of \$28,000,000 for Year—March Receipts also Lower

Ottawa, April 9.—The monthly statement of the finance department, issued today, shows a falling off of \$28,000,000 in the revenue for the fiscal year. The total revenue for the year is \$132,000,000. The revenue for the month of March was \$11,641,000, a decrease of \$47,000 as compared with the same month a year ago.

The customs revenue for the year fell off by \$27,000,000, and is \$75,000,000. The excise revenue is \$21,367,000, a decrease of \$70,000. The postal revenue for the year, however, shows an increase of \$211,000, the total amount being \$12,589,000. Customs, excise and postal revenues all decreased slightly in March, as compared with the same month of 1914.

The net debt of the Dominion increased \$6,230,000. At the end of the year it was \$408,122,000.

If there is a chance of getting rid of the worst evil of the human race—war—that chance ought to come now. If this does not cure us, nothing will.—Lord Bryce.

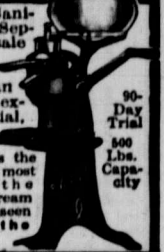
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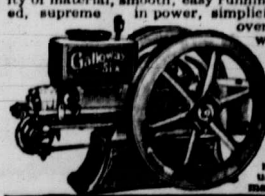
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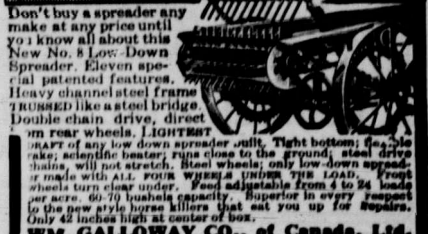
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