

chicks in cutting their way out of prison. When shaping the nest the earth should be hollowed out in the centre, or, in other words, made saucer-shaped, so that the eggs cannot roll away and the hen may have full control over them. It must be remembered, of course, that the hen turns the eggs several times a day; the nest must therefore be made sufficiently flat on the bottom to enable the turning process to be properly carried out. When the nest is too deep and narrow the eggs are apt to roll on top of each other and become broken. Eggs for hatching should be as fresh as possible. The number of eggs to put under a hen depends on the size of the eggs and also on the size of the hen. Generally speaking, twelve to thirteen are in most cases as many as can be satisfactorily covered.

Do not let the lice drive the sitting-hen from her nest. Give her a good dusting with insect-powder. Care must be taken not to dust the hen just before the hatching-period or when the chicks are very young, as the powder may get into the chicks' eyes and cause blindness.

On no account interfere with the hen when the chicks are hatching. She can manage best by herself. After the hatch is over there is no hurry to feed the chicks for at least twenty-four hours. The egg-shells must be removed and the nest made comfortable, while anything that may cause an accident, such as a deep water-tin, should be taken out of the way. Both the hen and the chicks should be enclosed for the first few days, then an arrangement should be made enabling the chickens to run in and out of the coop while the hen is kept enclosed. On no account allow a hen with a young brood a free range.

Sitting-hens should be given grain food only, whole wheat for preference. Any green food, mash, or meat is apt to cause scouring, which may injure the hatching-qualities of the eggs. For the first two days chicks may be given coarse oatmeal. After the third day a little broken wheat should be added by degrees. From the sixth day the following mixture may be supplied: Crushed wheat 4 parts, crushed hulled oats 4 parts, maize 1 part. From the first, clean water, grit, and charcoal should be always before the birds and fed separately. Green food, such as finely cut grass, lettuce, lucerne, clover, water-cress, &c., must be fed daily. When the chicks are a fortnight old a little boiled meat that has been passed through a mincing-machine will make a valuable addition to the ration. Where only a small number of chicks are to be reared and there is no mill available to grind the grains, I would recommend the use of one of the popular prepared chicken-feeding mixtures that are on the market.