

## POULTRY-KEEPING.

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### THE BREEDING-BIRDS AND INCUBATION.

AN important fact to be remembered by those who keep the heavier breeds of fowls is that if profitable stock is to be produced, and the pullets are to lay during the next dear-egg season, the chicks should be brought out during July or August at the latest. Therefore, when there is not sufficient incubator and brooder capacity to bring out all the chicks at one time, the eggs should be placed in the incubator as soon as possible.

Care should be taken that only eggs from birds possessing outstanding laying-capacity and of sound constitutional vigour are used. The feeding of the breeding-birds is of the greatest importance, as a strong healthy germ cannot be secured from a bird which is poorly fed. Sound and liberal feeding will go a long way towards securing good hatches, healthy chicks, and robust stock. It is always a good plan to give a variation of feed to the breeders, in order to secure the best fertility of the eggs and good hatches. A mixture of equal parts of wheat, oats, and maize, fed night and morning, will usually give good results if given in a manner that will induce the maximum of exercise—namely, thrown in a deep litter. The chief advantage in feeding all grain in the litter, as compared to feeding mash from a trough, is that the hens are not encouraged to become overfat. The aim should be to keep the breeders in what might be termed an active healthy condition. Green stuff must be regularly supplied, while clean water, grit, and crushed sea-shell should be constantly before them. Undoubtedly the success or otherwise of the hatching and rearing operations largely depends on the manner in which the breeding-birds are attended to.

### COLDS IN YOUNG STOCK.

At this time of the year young stock are very apt to catch colds, especially if the weather is at all changeable and the conditions under which they are kept is not favourable in every respect. Many cases of colds affecting young birds, and in an advanced stage, have been reported to me. Colds are usually the result of allowing birds to sleep in ill-ventilated and dirty quarters, whereby they become overheated by night and are susceptible to chill immediately they go out-of-doors. Probably the greatest weakness in this respect is the keeping of well-grown birds in a small confined coop which in the ordinary way would be only suitable for a hen and a small brood of young chicks. In all cases where I have recently been asked to advise regarding colds I have found that the want of sufficient air-space was solely responsible for the trouble. At one place I found no less than eight nearly matured pullets housed in a coop 3 ft. by 3 ft. In this no proper means of ventilation was provided, the only opening being a small door by which the birds entered and left the coop. True, they had a free range by day, which helped them to combat the ill effects of the unfavourable night conditions. Confined quarters, however, are not always responsible for colds. Sometimes they are due to extremes