



"PRACTICAL POULTRY TALKS"



LXVI.—ABOUT INCUBATION AND EGGS FOR HATCHING.

Messrs. Editors: "Only a clod," yet the harrow teeth found it. And all because the old man made a "lapsus calami" in not inserting the words, "the last of," between "egg" and "which," in the sentence which should have read, "Nature has provided in the yolk of egg (the last of which the chicken absorbs just before it breaks the shell) sufficient nourishment to sustain life for four days." We need such jolts occasionally to make us mind our P's and Q's.

The Process of Incubation.

I have studied the incubation of an egg from the first few hours, when the building elements, or cells, begun to divide and increase to many hundreds, after the first fifteen hours of incubation, on down to the twenty-first day, when the little ball of down breaks the shell and wishes you "good morning." The embryo can be plainly seen in twenty hours, and the umbilical cord is formed very shortly after the formation of the spinal column. Through this cord the chick derives sustenance. During incubation the yolk becomes separated into two portions, one portion is entirely used up in building the embryo, while the other is held in store and is gradually absorbed until about the nineteenth day when all is absorbed and the cord which leads to the yolk sack becomes gradually drawn up into the body. If for any reason this cord should not be drawn in before the chicken breaks the shell it causes hernia and the chick soon dies. This is oftener the case with improperly managed

incubator chicks than when incubation is done by hens.

The above has reference to my lesson in January 24th issue.

How to Care for the Eggs in Cold Weather.

Now let me say that during the cold days eggs intended for incubation should be gathered from the nests twice or three times a day; they should be kept in a room where the temperature never gets below forty degrees. Do not put them in a basket one on top of the other; better have a box and stand each egg on small end or point,—never on large end, as the air space lies here and there is danger of the weight of the contents of the shell breaking the film which envelops it, and the egg would not hatch.

How Long Eggs for Hatching May be Kept.

"Eggs for hatching" can be kept during early spring from seven to ten days with good results, but if kept so long they should be turned every day or two, leaning first to one side and then to the other.

It is not considered good to mark eggs with ink when placing under hen for incubation to distinguish them, as the ink closes the pores of the shell through which the chick derives its air; use a pencil, making only a single mark. This marking only need be done, when there is a likelihood of other hens laying to her?

"Eggs for hatching" will be further considered next week.

UNCLE JO.

Mecklenburg Co., N. C.

Rich New Crop for the South.

Elsewhere in this morning's Observer is reprinted from The Progressive Farmer a brief article on alfalfa hay growing. It is shown that this extremely valuable forage crop—nearly or quite equal to the same weight of wheat bran—can be grown in the Southeast as well as the Southwest, through soil inoculation, and will remain for years without re-seeding. "While nineteen out of twenty have been dismal failures," says The Progressive Farmer, "alfalfa is now grown successfully on certain small areas in nearly every section of the South, and under widely varying conditions, soil and management." So while this crop is one which requires intelligent and usually persevering effort for its start on Southern farms, it beats the average gold mine to death once it is started. The pages of our contemporary this week form what it terms "a sort of farmers' institute on alfalfa," consisting of letters from practical farmers reporting their various experiences with the crop. Little room is left for doubt that alfalfa growing offers the means of making a substantial addition to the South's sources of wealth, and we are glad to note the evidences of increasing interest in it. Two years ago Col. Fred A. Olds, the Observer's versatile Raleigh correspondent, who is familiar from personal observation with conditions in the alfalfa country, suggested that the barren sandhills of North Carolina might be clothed with rich pastures by means of alfalfa. The Progressive Farmer—at all times one of the strongest

forces of progress the State has—is doing well in giving prominence to the great opportunities which this crop opens to Southern farmers.—Charlotte Observer.

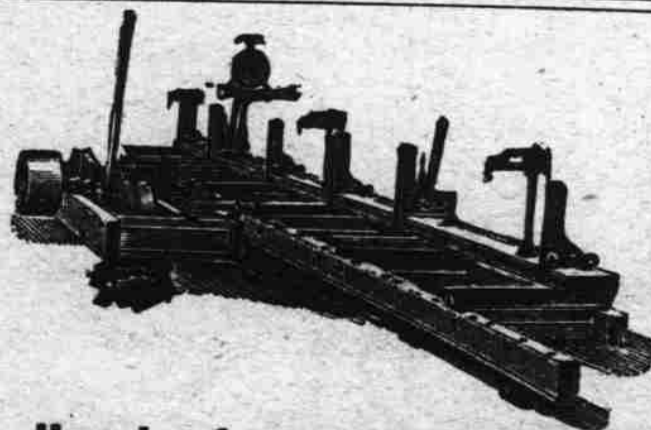
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