

Selling off the Hens.

ONE of the greatest mistakes the ordinary poultry keeper is continually making is that of selling off the hens every fall and keeping only the pullets.

There is a common idea that hens are no good as soon as they begin to moult, and as they always look unsightly and shrink to about a third of their ordinary size their former beauties, and proportions are forgotten, also their useful qualities and they are unhesitatingly consigned to the block. Or if sales are made many are anxious to part with the hens, and reserve only the pullets for their own use. But it is a very great mistake. The hens if carried well through the moulting season, will pay better than the pullets. They will lay more eggs and those laid by the hens will be almost double the size of the eggs from the pullet's first litter. The hen's eggs will hatch better, and the chicks from them will be larger, and a great deal more vigorous than those hatched from pullets eggs, they will always prove to have more endurance and strength of constitution. Chicks from pullets eggs may mature very quickly but they will never (except in rare instances) attain the size of the birds hatched from hens eggs.

There is yet another reason for keeping the hens, if the chicks from them are satisfactory to you, the hens are more valuable than your pullets because you have proved their worth as breeders, while the pullets are yet untried in this respect. And again the pullets are not yet matured and any one of them may develop a fault entirely unnoticed as yet.

In mating hens say in January or early in the year, it is best to use a yearling cock, if of the large breeds, or a cockerel not less than ten or eleven months old. If the latter is used be sure not to give too many hens. A yearling will not be so easily hurt because he has more rigidity in the muscles, and the bone is matured. But an Asiatic cockerel at ten months

of age, is getting his fitting out in this respect, and if you want him to improve all he can, do not sap his vigor by giving him a large harem to attend to. It is far better to let him live a celibate for a full year or more. The Leghorn cockerel at six months old is far more matured as a breeder than a Brahma, Langshan or Cochins at ten months. You can easily prove this to your own satisfaction when dressing the males of the different breeds for table or market. In the middle weight breeds a well advanced cockerel mated to hens will give best results in chicks in the first months of the year. But he should not be used a full season if he is intended for a breeder afterwards. One of the ills a cockerel suffers from when in the breeding pen, is his excess of gallantry which he will carry to the extent of starving himself, in his eagerness to act as a good provider for his household, and you will find the hens are nothing loath to profit by their lord's gracious and chivalrous generosity, albeit a mistaken idea of their partner altogether. It is well to pay a little extra attention to the males when in the breeding pen. Remember when we hatch in the three first months of the year, the males are not able to get away from their partners, and enjoy a feed after they are satisfied, and when in the pen they absolutely take the food out of his mouth.

Pigeon Department.

WITH this issue we add a department for pigeons at the request of numerous subscribers. Mr. E. F. Doty, the well known and thoroughly practical fancier, of Toronto, will have it in charge, and Columbarians know that their interest will not be neglected at his hands. Short pithy communications are solicited and questions will be answered as in other departments.

Poultrymen should note the fact that the JOURNAL is issued weekly and that it visits the homes, and the advertisements catch the eye four times as often as the monthlies, at no higher scale of charges. The circulation is rapidly increasing.