

## POULTRY AILMENTS.

NOTE.—We invite items of interest, questions, etc., for this department.

### SOME CAUSES OF BAD LAYING.

MRS. BORTON IN "FOWLS."

How many hundreds of amateur poultry keepers are plagued with hens which don't and won't lay! Is there no remedy for this evil? It would almost seem, judging from the continuous wail raised in the correspondence columns of the poultry papers, that breeds of non-layers as well as non-sitters are carefully and studiously bred, the progeny of which all fall to the share of the guileless amateur, or the beginner in the art of what is fast becoming the science of poultry keeping.

Truly the woes of the beginner in poultry keeping are legion. The sitting breeds won't sit, the non-sitters pretend they will, and sit long enough to ruin the eggs before they finally desert their nest, while both unite in causing the luckless owner the greatest possible expense while they don't lay.

Of course, there is a remedy. Practically the game is in our own hands, and the matter resolves itself into a question of how the birds are managed and treated from the egg (aye, and before that), to the laying pen.

It is a big subject if we are to consider all the causes of non-laying amongst hens, but happily, our editor limits us to some of the causes of bad laying.

I suppose one of the most fruitful sources of bad laying is over-feeding. It is one of the evils most difficult to check. The ignorant are always wasteful and extravagant, and there is no greater waste than that of giving animals more food than they can either eat or digest. No matter what the stock is, or what animals are kept—be they poultry, pigs, horses, cows or dogs—more harm is done to all by over-feeding than by under-feeding. So surely as animals are fed recklessly, extravagantly and ignorantly, so surely does disease, and often death itself, follow; and, in the case of poultry, liver disease is induced, internal fatness, and consequent inability to lay. A hen's food is required to supply material for egg-making, and to supply heat to her body, and also to repair the

wear and tear to her system which prolific egg-production entails. It follows, then, that it is useless to cram birds with food that fills them while it supplies no real nutriment, and none of the material essential for egg-making. It is quite useless to feed birds exclusively on such foods as barley meal, Indian meal, and maize, for although you may produce nice fat hens, no eggs will be obtained for the simple reason that hens cannot make eggs unless proper material for egg-making is supplied to them. The food must be properly balanced, sufficient carbonaceous or starchy food to provide warmth or fuel for the hen's body, but also enough nitrogenous, or flesh-forming food, to nourish the hen, and enable her to use up what is over from her own requirements to make the egg.

It is not within the province of this paper to point out the right sorts of food to use. It is easy to ascertain the constituent parts of food. The table of food which appears in Mr. Lewis Wright's book, and which has been copied into almost every poultry book, is excellent. It will bear careful study, and is well worth the trouble. The amateur must work for himself. We get the great advantage of the research and study of successful poultry breeders, but unless we take the trouble to master these elementary details fully for ourselves, we can never use the information we obtain with any great profit. The lazy amateur who is always picking other people's brains leaves off much where he began, for he is too indolent and too ignorant to know how to use the knowledge he obtains. Therefore, to this feeding question I will only add that one essential ingredient both for health and for egg-production is ample green food, and another absolute requirement for winter laying (even bad layers lay in summer) is animal food in some form. This they must have until Nature supplies it.

Next to feeding, housing has a good deal to answer for. A hen that is alternately heated in a hot unventilated house at night, and chilled in a cold run exposed to wind and rain by day, is not likely to prove a good layer. She requires all the store of food she takes in to keep herself warm and enable her to battle with the elements. Keep your fowl-house warm but airy and perfectly dry, and give the birds a covered run, well protected from driving rain and wind.

It is not necessary to review these causes one by one; there is not space to do so in detail. Suffice it