

the greater success of our friends across the line, they are as fond of "feather picking" as we are, but their success lies in the fact that they retain a little more of the pluck and perseverance, the "never be beaten" spirit of "ye olden times." And a very desirable quality it is.

POULTRY BREEDING AND MATING.

BY P. T. H. ERMATINGER.

A good deal may be said on this subject, but I shall only give a few pointers to-day, that is, my experience which I trust may be of service to the younger portion of the fraternity.

As the breeding and mating season is drawing near it may not be out of place to consider the manner in which we individually intend to carry on our little poultry "Racket," a consideration which must be undergone so as to have most beneficial results.

Firstly, we must consider the fact that no good results can be secured from cockerels and pullets that are in a growing condition when such birds are intended for breeding purposes. Common sense tells us that a pullet that is obliged to perform the double service of maintaining growth and providing the necessary elements for the formation of the eggs will not produce eggs that will give you strong and healthy chicks. Comparing the hen with the female of any animal—the former must perform her duties very rapidly—for, while other female animals are allowed months for supplying the necessary nourishment for the development of her young, this same piece of business must be performed by "Biddy" in a few hours—and be repeated for several days successively—now if she is matured she has the advantage of being able to divert all the food to the embryo offspring, instead of providing material for her own growth at the same time.

Undeveloped cockerels are as bad in their way as the pullets, for a too young cockerel will sire weak chicks. The strong, vigorous, full developed cockerel will be most capable for service and will sire chicks that will be thrifty. Hence invariably breed from fully matured stock, or by all means retain the old ones.

If eggs are desired for the purpose of hatching use hens that are just over one year old, and mate them to a cock about same age or two years old and you will find that the result shall be, all eggs fertile and chicks strong and easy to raise. It has been said that a hen becomes less valuable after she has turned her second year—but I have found that hens lay well until they have turned their fourth year (some varieties.—Ed.)—true, she may not lay as many eggs as her daughter that is not quite full grown, but you will notice that the eggs from the oldest hens are far better for incubation—therefore the oft-repeated advice to sell or kill off the old hens should not always be followed—such, at least, is my experience.—(Quite correct.—Ed.)

The pullet hatched in April or May will often begin to lay when she is 6 or 7 months old (and in the smaller breeds sooner) but she will continue to grow until she is one year old and becomes a "hen," therefore we are correct above in maintaining that eggs produced while she is still growing will not give satisfactory results when used for incubation.

Now if after the "culling season" you have kept several pullets for breeding purposes, do not mate them to a cockerel too young;—choose an old cock that has a score card to brag of and mate him to the young pullets you have chosen as being nearer perfection than the rest and the result will be fine, strong, healthy chicks that will share the good points of both parents—do likewise with the cockerels. If you have an ideal young cockerel, mate him

to good old hens, that have been scored away up and you are certain to improve your breed by either way. Inbreeding is also bad, occasionally procure new blood in the shape of a cock, cockerel, hen, or pullet from some reliable breeder, it strengthens the flock. It is also bad to force the hens (used for breeding) too much, as regards laying, if your neighbor laughs at you because he eats fresh boiled eggs in January and you would sooner *have yours in an omelet*, don't go and *put a brick on your hens* back to make her lay. Have patience and feed systematically and don't cram "*Fegine*" down your poor pets throats, and watch for results. You will find that you shall have as strong and as healthy chicks as your neighbor, in due course of time.

With regard to the setting of hens, of course hens and pullets that begin laying in October and November, become broody much sooner than their sisters that begin only in January and February to fill our egg basket. A great many fanciers are desirous of obtaining very early broods so as to have fine chicks for the Autumn shows. Opinions differ as regards very early broods, but as far as I am concerned I believe chicks hatched out the first fifteen days in May are quite early enough. Our climate does not permit us to raise chicks with real success and with comfort to "Biddy's" children before this time, for everybody knows that a good strong sun and nice dry sand are essential for the comfort of our little pets and it is not all the "Brooders" and other artificial means that can take nature's place with any amount of success. But when hens are set so as to obtain early chicks for market this is different, as to catch the big prices for our broilers, the hens must be set in March and April and the chicks pushed on straight to the "hatchet." Therefore when breeding for pleasure or for exhibition and for market you must go about both pro-