

moistened with any kind of milk, with a little baking soda added, the whole baked in a shallow pan in a moderately quick oven, to be as good a variety of food as can well be had for young chickens. Keep wheat, as soon as they can eat it, and fresh water before them always. Feed on clean boards. All your chickens should be hatched by the middle of May, and by June some of your earliest cockerels should be ready for market, and you should begin to market them right along, so that by the end of September all of your cockerels should be marketed. During these months you will receive more per pair for them than you would if you kept these same chickens until November and December when the markets are always full. You need not study this matter very carefully to see that you will make many times more profit out of your chickens handled in this way than in the way they are commonly handled.

THE PULLETS.

You have been feeding your pullets well all this time, so that by October the earliest of them should begin to lay, and by December all of them should be at work, and continue at it throughout the winter.

In order to make room for these pullets you must kill off all the old hens, and the proper time to do this is as soon as they stop laying in the fall. You will not get high prices for them, but any price will pay you better than keeping them. Any of the hens that you have left that don't get through moulting early in December should be killed, as they are likely to lay very little during the winter. Keep no hens more than two winters. In order to do this it is necessary for you to have some method by which you can know the age of your hens. You can for 25 or 30 cents buy a little punch with which you can put a hole through the web of the foot of the little chicken. For instance, in 1894, as you take the chicks from the nest, put a hole through the outside web of the right foot, in 1895 through the inside web of same foot, and in 1896 outside web of left foot, and so on. These holes always remain, and if you keep a record you will make no mistake as to the age of your hens.

THE MALE BIRD.

I have discussed in a general way how your young stock should be handled, and how you should each year lay the foundation for good winter layers. I shall now go back to May. When you ceased gathering eggs for hatching you turned the ten hens out of their pen, and you allowed them liberty. Do not allow the male out of pen. Unless he is very valuable, you should

kill him; but if you particularly desire to keep him, why keep him in that pen alone. And why should you do this? You remember that hen that stole her nest away and came out in August with a dozen or more chickens, which during the winter ate twice as much as any of your large hens, and yet never grew or laid an egg. That rooster was to blame for that. You remember when your wife, who was most careful in gathering the eggs regularly, took the eggs to the grocer, he told her several times last summer that she brought him half-hatched eggs in her basket. That rooster was to blame for that. You remember in the fall, when you marketed your carefully packed eggs, that you found some of them quite bad, and your grocer found even more. That rooster was to blame for that. What good have we to say of this rooster? Why, none whatever, except that if he is not too old and tough he will be good to eat. Surely, then, after knowing what trouble he made last year, you are not going to allow him his liberty this year.

I shall endeavor to explain to you the difference between eggs laid by hens with a male and those laid by hens without one. The first will contain the germ of life—it is fertilized; the other is not. The fertilized egg will begin to show signs of life as soon as sufficient heat is applied to it. There is no life whatever in the other egg, and even after being sat on nine weeks it is so fresh that it "tastes good." In warm weather life is very easily started in a fertile egg. Even a number of hens sitting on a nest to lay in quick succession will start life, and as soon as that life is killed by the egg becoming cold the egg begins slowly but surely to decay. I do not mean to say that an infertile egg is a fresh egg after being sat on nine weeks; but I do say—and you will readily understand me—that it is not a decayed egg. Where chickens are raised by the thousands the fertile eggs are always tested out of incubators after four to seven days and used for baking. To have no males with your laying hens, then, is a gain in every way and a loss in none. You know that your fresh eggs are not half hatched. Your grocer will soon know it, too, and will be willing to give you a higher price. Male birds must eat; they don't lay, nor do they assist the hens to lay, and so are useless in every way, harmful in many ways, and expensive to have about. If you are packing your eggs in summer you will have no bother getting only good, fresh eggs, and you all know how important it is to have only such eggs.

HOW TO DISPOSE OF THE EGGS.

After you have succeeded in getting a good supply of eggs in winter and all the year round,