

get fresh blood that will do well, and there is very little reason for running risks.

There is a common complaint against using old cocks, because they hurt the hens. This is common with both old and young; some recommend reducing the cock's weight. This should be done. A stock cock should not be over 37 or 38 lbs. in the breeding season, and 35 lbs. would be better. How should this be done? Not by starving, certainly. No starving for me. The proper way to reduce him is to feed entirely on grain from December, give him a free run with the hens, and let the grain be scattered for them all, so that he must get more than one of the hens. Then let him pick all the green food he desires, and take abundant exercise in the fields. I do not like to soften either cock or hen with soft food. I give a moderate quantity of the best oats, and let them find what they can in the field. Birds fed in this way produce better birds and larger broods.

The remedy for cocks tearing the backs of hens is given by Mr. Digby and Mr. W. Cook, of Orpington fame—cutting the cock's spurs. I have often wondered at this piece of advice from such men, when they must have discovered that a yearling cock without any spurs at all will tear hens quite as frightfully as old birds. It is not the cock's spur that does the mischief; it is done by the inside toe nail while the bird is trying to keep his hold, and the remedy is simple. Take up the bird, lay his inside toe nail on a board, and take it off with a sharp chisel, and have a skewer heated to sear the cut and stop bleeding. This should be done early in March. The bird will never go lame, and he will never tear a hen's back afterwards, even if he attains 40 lbs. or over.

A 40-lb. cock with his inside toe nails off can be mated with hens quite safely, but, of course, they must be birds of good size. If a very large male bird be used, hens of at least 16 lbs. must be mated with him. This is particularly true if the male bird be a very long one. A short male bird, though ever so large, will mate successfully with very moderate hens, but a long-framed bird, if heavy in front, must have very large hens. This brings me to the number of hens to mate with a cock. I don't like to mate over six with one bird. These run with him; but if he has a run to himself and the hens are brought to him he may be mated with over twenty. One mating is sufficient for each brood of eggs, but I always allow them to run together, and much prefer that system.

I have frequently heard it said that success in turkey rearing very largely depends in having a large male bird,

and that small hens will do as well as large ones. There is no doubt at all about the benefit derived from the use of a large male bird; the cock is, without doubt, half the breeding stock, but he is only half. The hens are the other half. They are, indeed, more than half, so far as their pullets are concerned—just as the cock is more than half as regards the production of cockerels. I don't believe good pullets can be bred from a small strain of hens, nor can good cockerels from a cock of small strain. Both cocks and hens should be as good as possible.

However, I would not set the above regarding small hens entirely aside. It is, to a certain extent, true. Moderate sized hens, of a really good strain, are quite as good, if not better, breeders than their larger sisters. The moderate sized birds lay more eggs, and, being exactly the same blood, they breed quite as well. The same is true of the cock. A moderate sized bird is as good a breeder, if well shaped, as his larger brother. In fact, I have found the moderate sized birds in a flock better breeders than their larger relatives. But I would not advise beginners to invest in moderate sized birds, except they are certain of the strain and the honesty of the breeder. What a person breeds they can use safely, but it is not always safe to buy moderate specimens, as they may not be of a first class strain.

Turkey hens begin to lay about 20th March. The larger hens, however, do not begin to lay for ten or fifteen days after the moderate sized ones. The average number of eggs laid by young hens is sixteen; two year old hens lay from ten to fifteen, their average being about fourteen. Three year old hens average about thirteen. After three years old they do not lay so early or so many eggs.

The usual advice is to set turkey eggs under hens. Some say set the first six or seven laid by a turkey under a hen, and she will hatch the rest of the batch herself. With the former I entirely disagree; the latter is better, though I would not follow it either. Turkeys reared by hens never are so healthy or so thrifty as those reared by turkeys.

The nature of turkeys is to forage all day in the fields. They eat clover, nettles, dandelion, and ordinary grass. They are very fond of flies and grasshoppers, and will gather half their support if they have a good run. A hen is inclined to lie under cover, or scrape about the hedgerows. Here she finds worms which turkeys do not seem to care for, though they will eat small worms. In this way they will get gapes, which they would avoid if reared by a turkey hen, which rarely scrapes at all in the open fields.

My own plan is to set the first fourteen or sixteen eggs I get under two hens. The next sitting I also put under