

### Management of Poultry for Profit.

Poultry and eggs are equivalent to cash everywhere, and buyers come to the farms instead of the farmers being forced to hunt the markets. In view of this demand, which exists from the beginning to the ending of the year, there is a wide field for the enterprise of those with limited means, or who are interested in this particular pursuit, for present prices have brought large profits on small investments. Why should not poultry farms be established for the rearing of poultry alone? The difficulties arise principally from the universal idea that to be healthy, poultry must partially feed and care for themselves. It is due to this, more than anything else, that most persons who have made ventures in poultry raising, have become disgusted, and until farmers come to the conclusion that their fowls must be bred and fed for profit rather than ornament, they will meet with little success. A few comparisons between the improved and the old-fashioned methods of feeding and managing fowls may not be out of place.

First, as to the breeds; this is a very important matter. Some farmers are partial to the non-sitters, and do not care for the trouble of hatching young chicks. Of the non-setters the Leghorns stand first. The browns lay a little earlier than the whites, but the whites grow to larger size than the browns, though the difference is but little. They are very hardy, and make excellent crosses with the Asiatic breeds; but the crosses produce sitters. The Houdans are the largest of the non-sitting breeds, and produce the finest of market chicks when crossed with larger fowls; but they are poor winter layers. The Polands and Hamburgs are the most beautiful and are excellent layers, but are not likely to pass through the damy seasons without an attack of roup, unless carefully guarded. The Leghorns have large single combs which are easily frosted. Hence, in selecting the non-sitters, we see difficulties in the way of each breed, and crossing pure non-sitters, of different breeds with each other does not help the matter, as the produce results in sitters. The Black Spanish are tender, having been bred too choice for face ornament.

The sitters have their defects also, the Asiatics being slow in coming to maturity, and are rather heavy, often breaking the eggs in the nests. Early maturity is the most essential point to be sought in raising poultry, as it is from the early and quick growing pullets that eggs in winter are produced, and if the pullets are slow to grow they pass over into the spring before they begin to lay. To obviate the objection of size it is best to cross the white Leghorn with the light Brahma, and the brown Leghorn with Cochins and dark Brahmas.

This gives uniformity and beauty of plumage, medium size, good laying, with a moderation of the inclination to sit, and quickens the vigor and growth. The Plymouth Rocks make good mothers, lay well, and produce the best chicks, but they fatten very easily, which is an advantage in one respect and an obstacle in another, for they will not lay at all if too fat; therefore they should be fed with judgement. A new acquisition is the Langshan, an Asiatic, and the best of that class. It strongly resembles the Black Cochin, matures early, lays well, and altogether possesses many desirable characteristics, as also do the American Sebrights (not the bantam), which are becoming favorites with some.

Those farmers who hatch out hundreds of chicks every year and raise only a few, are legion. This is the discouraging part of the business, but the fault is with the farmer. To give a hen a brood and allow her to lead them wherever she chooses to find her own and chicks' food is a time-honored custom. No one can be successful with broods under such a system. Rats, minks, hawks, wet, cold and irregularity of feeding, thin them out without the farmers knowing it, until finally the number remaining is but a fraction of the whole number hatched. The strong chicks of a brood lead the hen, and, as she naturally follows, she races the weak ones to death. All these difficulties can be overcome by keeping the broods in little coops, well protected from the weather, with lath runs, facing the sun. The chicks should be fed often and well looked after. Count and close them up carefully at night; then in the morning count them again, and all losses will be observed without trouble. Keep each brood in confinement until ready for market; keep a book account, and profit will take the place of loss. Plastering lath is the cheapest material for use in constructing little runs or pens, and they will last for several seasons.

In feeding poultry, give them a little of everything, if possible, that can be used for the purpose. Corn is very good in its line, but corn exclusively is an injury. As a desirable substitute for meat use cotton-seed meal and ground bone mixed in their soft food, in the morning. Feed at night good screenings, oats and some corn. Green food need not be necessarily grass, but chopped vegetable tops, green rye or oats, and in winter finely-chopped clover hay steeped over night in water. Always give some salt in the soft food. Provide fresh, clean water always; and little boxes of sulphur, charcoal and pounded oyster shell should constantly be within reach. It is the variety and quality rather than quantity of food that induces hens to lay. They show their wants in the manner in which they accept or reject their food.