

## OATS FOR POULTRY.

**T**HE very best oats that can be grown are not too good for poultry food. The fat Scotch oats used in the old land are very different to most we see in Canada. If oats here are too poor for anything else they are fed to the fowls very often, and, as they are nearly all husk, the birds refuse them, and then their owners tell us that their birds do not like oats. Of course they don't like that kind any more than we enjoy a withered nut.

Oats keep up the vitality of fowls in a marked degree, and should always form a part of their rations. Chopped oats are excellent for the young stock too. A few handfuls put in the pot of scraps make the liquor very nutritious for mixing the soft food. Oats in the sheaf are splendid for the stock in winter to give exercise. The birds will take more pleasure in them than sheaf wheat, though both are very good. The stock eats largely of the soft husk of oats if fed in the sheaf, and seem to relish a hunt through it immensely.

## What It Costs to Keep a Hen, Etc.

**A**S we have had several questions on this subject, we can answer all in one. It will take one and one-quarter bushels of grain or its equivalent to keep a hen one year if confined to a house and only allowed a small run. A hen at liberty all the season from spring to fall will pick up nearly all that she requires, and if on a farm, all that she requires for her support during that time, so that the cost to those who can allow free range is lessened by at least one-half, and the farmer much less than that. The food not consumed by fowls on the farm is an actual loss, as it being so scattered no other kind of stock can get it, and besides giving the birds their keep, it is so good for them to have to search for it and to get so much variety.

It is a common error to suppose that fine stock in poultry can only be the result of the fancier's care, that there is no use in a farmer trying to raise show birds etc., but the fancier would give a great deal for the farmer's chances of show birds, with his own breeding pens to hatch from. The fancier is generally

a city man, a man of business or belonging to one of the professions, and his birds, as a rule, are restricted to the limits of a lot near the city, where, by continually running upon it, the fowls keep down all grass, etc. The fancier seeks to provide for his pets only the same advantages that the farmer's birds obtain naturally from their surroundings and mode of living. Now it is clear that the hen who has her liberty will only cost her keeper about one-half the expense that she would if shut up in a run and fed on grain or other food purchased retail, and in limited quantities at that, so that in purchasing land for poultry farming, it is well to have plenty of it, as the quality of the land is not of so much consequence as if it was intended to raise crops of grain etc., and the poultry man can very soon improve it with the litter and manure from the poultry house. Any good fowl will lay close onto two hundred eggs per year, exceptionally a hen may do more; but suppose the bird only lays one hundred and seventy-five eggs per year, that is a good profit on her keep, the eggs ranging from 15 to 25 cents per dozen, and her brood of chicks count for something even if only mongrels they will be your next years layers, and if thoroughbred are quite valuable. A vast saving in keep can be effected by buying your supplies when the market is low, if you have a place for storage. Suppose you will need 100 bushels of wheat, it can be bought at one time for \$1 per bushel but you know it will go up seven or eight cents before long. If you buy while it is one dollar you will have eight dollars more to the credit side of your account, and you get it without an effort. You have made eight per cent. on your money on the transaction in one day; that is the way to look at things. Last winter, not having my new quarters ready in time to lay in supplies, I had to pay 20c per bushel more for wheat than if I had been able to buy at the right time. In keeping your poultry you need an eye for the little leaks in expenses just as you do in any other business. If you can by any labor of your own contribute to keep, such as growing roots etc. for winter, it is something less to pay for, but if it will pay you better to buy it and use your own time more profitably, it would be foolish