

But laying theory aside, experience has definitely taught us that hens with conspicuously upright combs should be avoided for breeding purposes.

In making up a pen, the hens possessing the same weak points should be put together, in order that their common defect may as far as possible be compensated or remedied by corresponding excellencies in the cock mated with them. For instance, hens with inferior combs may be selected to form one pen, and a cock with a fine broad-based comb put to them.

Male and female birds exhibiting the same faults—more especially if such faults be hereditary in the strain and not accidental—must not be put together.

Many pages might be written, many vexed questions might be raised, upon the all important question of mating ; but it would be utterly impossible to draw up a list of definite rules for the guidance of the beginner. He must use intelligent observation, and experience brought by experiment, to aid him in solving the varying problems as they arise.

## POULTRY ON THE FARM.

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**SELECTION OF STOCK.**—Farmers fail to keep poultry profitably, because their stock is not adapted to their circumstances, or to the purpose intended. A great many breeds have been developed by the poultry fancier, differing in quality and appearance, and suited to special requirements. If the desired feature be in the shape of egg production, larger size of body, early maturity for the market, or anything else, there is at least some one of these breeds adopted for the purpose desired.

If only one breed is to be kept, and both eggs and meat are required, I would select the Plymouth Rock, either the barred or white. For market purposes and for the farmer and breeder who keeps fowls to supply the consumption of eggs and poultry, the Plymouth Rock has no equal. If constant laying is required, select the Leghorns, Wyandottes Minorcas, or Houdans. The former will produce the most eggs and of fair size and good quality, while the Wyandottes will lay more during the winter and will be found a good table fowl of good size.

They mature early, making them a good market fowl. Minorcas will furnish the largest eggs, but they are not

quite as hardy as the others, and having white skin is somewhat against them for the Canadian market. The Houdan is the only French fowl suitable for this climate, and is considered a good all round fowl of large size, an average layer, eggs a good size—next to Minorcas are Spanish ; they are becoming more popular and will no doubt be one of the leading breeds for the farmer. Where dead poultry for the market is the main object the Dorking and Brahma are invaluable. They fatten easy and mature early, and have a fine appearance on the table. They may be crossed, when they will produce the largest fowls of any-cross bred known, and can hardly be distinguished from the pure Dorking, so much admired in England as a table fowl.

We have mentioned the varieties which as a rule will produce the best results, in the various circumstances referred to, and with proper care will prove profitable to the farmer, and add greatly to the requirements of the people. After selecting your stock you must proceed to study and care for them if you expect to have satisfactory results ; for if left to breed indiscriminately, and only get what food they can pick and without suitable accommodation, the result will not be satisfactory.

As regards laying stock, nearly all all fowls, under ordinary circumstances will lay so long as eggs are cheap ; but to produce eggs in winter means profit and the want of them as clearly means loss. Pullets hatched early, will moult early and have the advantage of the warm weather, and so get through the process quicker. They are then ready to commence laying in good time. No hen should be allowed to see more than her third autumn ; after that age there is a great falling off in the egg production. We find that stock produced from two year old birds will grow larger and mature earlier than from young stock. If pullets are to be bred from they should be mated with mature males not having over ten or fifteen hens to each male.

**FEEDING AND GENERAL TREATMENT OF FOWLS.** Proper feeding, proper accommodation, pure air, cleanliness and exercise are the essentials to success in poultry-keeping, and when the amateur becomes interested in the care of his stock and sees them healthy and attractive in appearance, and the readiness to which they respond to good treatment by the merry cackle, the work that they once considered laborious becomes now pleasant and remunerative. No fowls require at the most more than three meals per day ; the morning meal is the most important and the best relished, it should consist of soft or pulpy food of some kind, and be fed as early in the morning as possible. As for quantity no fixed scale can be given, but no more than they