

especially if it is soon after the birds are introduced. General joy is felt, and the enthusiasm for the new venture is universal throughout the household. Sometimes I have known, however, by a mistake in buying, fowls obtained that have not soon commenced to lay, and then the disappointment has been very great. The eagerness with which the nest was visited at first, soon vanishes. The daily journeys thereto were regarded as a duty, but speedily lost their pleasure.

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick," is just as true of poultry keeping as of anything else. Under such circumstances the zest of the business soon vanishes away. In this manner many a budding poultry keeper has been chilled at the outset, and such a frost of disappointment as this is very deadly indeed. Nothing can bring back the first glow of enthusiasm, as nothing can make to bloom again the withered leaf. For these reasons I suggest the autumn as the better time to commence keeping poultry.

Following this, the next question naturally comes, how to begin. If there are any good breeders in the district they are at all times ready to help with both advice and assistance. I have ever noticed this as one of the most pleasing things in connection with poultry-keeping. They themselves have known the troubles, the difficulties of novitiate, and can sympathize with such as are in a like condition. It is also in the interest of every poultry-breeder to encourage others to follow in his footsteps, and as a rule, recognizing this, they are always ready to give the fruits of their experience to those who are new in the pursuit. But the beginner ought to study the directions given in papers like the COUNTRY GENTLEMAN, which devote considerable attention to poultry subjects, as therein are to be found the wider experiences which can only come to those who have the opportunities of learning what others are doing. Each individual breeder should try as far as possible to apply the knowledge he may gain to his own special circumstances, not merely follow blindly what others have done. What is suited to one place may not be so to another, but the thoughtful breeder will, after he has got a fair hold of the business, be able to apply what he reads and hears. In this way we obtain new ideas and methods of management, whereas a blind following of the examples set before us would never result in any such discoveries. Nor should the novice be at all backward in asking. If he does not tell his difficulties it is impossible that any one can help him in them. In this respect he is highly favored, as he can get advice through your columns for the asking. But for these things, the path of the amateur would be very much harder than it need now be, and if he fails to get help the fault can only be on his own shoulders. I have known beginners to declare that they would not be indebted to others, but would find things out for themselves. This may seem independent, but it is excessively foolish. The wise man tries to get all the information he can from the experience of others who have been before him, and tries to improve on these for himself. That is the spirit I should recommend.

The primary step to take is to prepare a place for the fowls, and while on a farm it is seldom very difficult to do this, yet in most cases some preparation is needed even to adapt an existing place. I have but recently said something about movable houses, and need do no more than refer to that letter here. If, as is usually the case at first, a house already standing has to be taken, the great thing is to see that it is dry, well ventilated, though not drafty, and not too cold. If it is of stone or brick, it should be carefully pointed, and the roof examined, and if the insides of the walls are very rough, the crevices had better be filled up with mortar, afterward to be well whitewashed over with thick lime-wash, in which some carbolic acid has been mixed, three or four times. The object is to prevent, as far as possible, any harborage being

given to vermin. Nothing can give better shelter to these pests than an uneven surface on the walls of a poultry-house. The insects cannot be seen in the day time, but at night they come out on their predatory errands, to the utter misery of the luckless fowls, whose non-thriving is very often due to this cause alone, though it is seldom suspected.

If the fowls are to be given their freedom, that is, if they can have free range, the provision of the house will pretty well cover all the preliminary work. But if they must be restrained, it will be necessary to prepare some kind of fencing. As one of my most recent letters was on the subject of fencing, nothing more need be said on that score. It is just desirable to point out that the runs made should if possible be changeable, as the ground is very apt to become foul if the birds are kept long upon it. Many mistakes are made in forgetting this when the fences are being built. In fact, at first it is well not to go to any great expense. I was recently in the yard of a large breeder, who at great expense had put up large permanent buildings for his poultry. From varied causes he has given up breeding on so extensive a scale, but nearly all the houses are unsalable, simply because they cannot be removed. If they had been made in sections, that would have permitted their removal, they could have been sold at good prices several times.

I should strongly advise all who are commencing, to be content with small things at first, so as to learn the ins and outs of poultry-keeping, before attempting anything great. If a cock and five or six hens are obtained, they will give sufficient work to do, if the owner will give a good deal of study to them, yet will be quite within his power. By the breeding season he will have the whole thing in hand, and by setting all the eggs he gets, may increase his stock almost as much as he likes. This is a far better plan than trying to do all at once, which so often leads to failure. The demand upon the resources should never be forcibly made greater than the ability to meet them. The development of a poultry-yard ought not to be rapid, but rather gradual. This, I am well aware, is a hard lesson for many to learn, but a necessary one.

H.—England, Sept. 3.

STEPHEN BEALE

I think it is pretty clear that all the fuss about feathers is, like the black tongues and black switches of the Jerseys, nearly at an end. If beauty alone is desired in poultry, breed games or Hamburgs; for table, Dorkings or Plymouth rocks.

A. R. J. F.

EDUCATED FARMERS.

Some people imagine that farming requires very little outlay of brain power, but this is a great mistake. "I honestly believe," said one, who is himself a successful agriculturist, "that the farmer who will work his brains till noon, and his hands the balance of the day, will outstrip him who rises at five and toils till nine at night." Our most successful farmers are not those who work hardest at manual labour, they work, nevertheless, with all their energies. None are exempt from labour, but in all it is not equally well applied and directed. If we take any two men, physically equal, the one will accomplish most who excels in brain-power. Therefore, let that small enclosure within his own skull be cultivated as assiduously and as carefully by the farmer as is his choicest crop. Whatever farming may have been in the past, the time has come when the highest intelligence is demanded as a necessary qualification on the part of the agriculturist.

Book-farming, however, is decried, and "farmers are not