

specimens, that is not always to say he is going to be as successful as the person he purchases from. He is after a phantom, or at least he is taking his chances among many others who are in the same race. The value of a show hen is a fancy value, which has been established by shows, it may be one dollar, or it may be a hundred guineas, basing value on the amount anything will sell for, as we all know no hen is a commercial value for a hundred guineas, still they have been sold for that. The true commercial value of a hen is what she is worth for producing eggs, and her flesh when killed and dressed for table.

Say all hens are killed at two year old, as they should be, then that breed and that hen which has produced the greatest weight of eggs during that time, the value of which added to the value of her flesh when put on the table, less the actual cost of feeding her during life, no matter though she is the ugliest hen that ever scratched ground, that is the most valuable hen.

I know it is the generally accepted opinion that the best egg layers are not always the best table fowl, but fowl can, by selection, be bred to be good for both purposes, and if one quality is to be sacrificed, better give the flesh for the egg producing qualities. The value of a hen, say at two years old, for food, is, say from twenty-five to fifty cents, according to the market you are near, whereas the difference between a good laying hen and a poor one is much more than the value of the meat long before the hen is two years old. And supposing even we had to raise hens for laying that were worthless for the table, we could always raise enough of a good edible breed to kill as young chickens, and when our layers get too old to be profitable we could afford to kill and bury them. But I know that a breed can be produced that is good for both, and if as much time and trouble had been bestowed on such a breed as has been spent breeding for show and feather, we would have breeds that were flesh and egg producers today; but we never will have, unless shows take the matter up. One may go the round of all the shows of a season, and he will hear feather, form, style, head, neck, tail, leg, and everything else talked up, but never eggs.

What we want is a fair sized hen, that will produce a large egg, and, the most of them, before two years old, and make a good dish for the table at that age. If a fancier can produce that hen, and shows will give prizes for such fowl, it will be a success in poultry raising that has been entirely lost sight of since the craze for Asiatics first took possession of the fanciers of England. It is true "a thing of beauty is a joy forever," but no matter how beautiful a hen may be if she will not lay eggs, and is not good for the table, she is worthless. But

fashion is beauty. No one would, fifty years ago have called the bob-tailed Asiatics beautiful beside the graceful and beautifully balanced Dorking; but fashion made the eastern emigrant beautiful, and fashion would also make the egg-producers fashionable if the making of a breed for that purpose was sufficiently encouraged. No doubt there would be some difficulty in awarding prizes to hens that had laid the greatest weight of eggs, say in a given time, but I think that difficulty can be managed. I say the greatest weight, because although an egg is an egg, still a dozen large eggs is worth more than a dozen small ones, hence it is by weight of the eggs produced they should be judged, and not by quantity. While you pay your grocer as much for a dozen small eggs as for a dozen large ones, still when he gives you the small ones he cheats you, and it is the only honest way of cheating I know of. Custom allows it, and you can't prosecute him for it. The henwife cheated him when she sold him the basket of small eggs, and the hens cheated her when they laid them; but perhaps they did not eat so much grain to do it, perhaps they did, as not always the largest hen which eats the most lays the largest egg. Eggs should be sold by weight and not by tale, so should nearly everything else that is now sold by count and measure.

The English poultry breeders have taken a step in advance of us. For the last year or two they have been giving prizes at their shows for table fowl. The fowl are judged alive for show, and they are then killed and dressed on the spot, and judged for table purposes. What they want now is to add a class for egg producing, and they are complete. The flesh producers, that is flesh for quality, we can breed if we have to breed them, as I said before, for the pot specially, and kill them when young. The egg producer, the most valuable quality a hen can possess, has no class at our shows. This is an omission that has been left standing too long, and poultry breeders and fanciers should at once set about remedying it.

✕ ROADS

Strathroy, Mar. 1st, 1884.

Exhibition of Midland Central Poultry Association.

The seventh annual exhibition under the auspices of the Midland Central Poultry Association was held on the 29th, 30th and 31st January, in the old Music Hall, Peterborough. The exhibition was not the success that its promoters hoped it would be. There were some very fine birds among the entries, but the number exhibited was not very large. This certainly is not the fault of the Association or its Directors. The prize list was a comprehensive one, and was one that should have at-