

to the farmer of an alkaline phosphate is, that it is so easy to make he can do it himself, all the articles used in its manufacture being well known and easily handled, while in acid phosphate the reverse is the case. There is danger of breakage in transporting the sulphuric acid. It is dangerous to use by those not accustomed to using it."

Poultry for a Lucrative Living.

EDS. COUNTRY GENTLEMAN—Mrs. M. L. L. (p. 129, current volume,) wants "some kind reader who thoroughly understands poultry raising," to tell her "whether a lady can make a lucrative living by raising poultry for the city markets." I do not pretend to "thoroughly understand poultry raising" to the extent she has in mind, and I doubt if anybody will make such pretensions, but I can give her some ideas and suggestions that, in the absence of fuller information, may be of essential service.

First, let me kindly suggest that the question, in the form placed before the reader, does not indicate that the writer can have given much observation to the subject in hand, or to business generally in the past. A very little knowledge of human nature would assure anybody that such a question, even if answered affirmatively, might do her no good. Some people make poultry raising lucrative, as well as other pursuits, but she might not. I know two single ladies in a village of about 2,800 inhabitants, who have the largest, finest, most popular and most profitable store there, and began with but a trifle of capital; but it proves very little, except that they have succeeded where a hundred others would have failed. It is the same with men—one succeeds where a hundred or a thousand fail. The lesson that Mrs. M. L. L. has forgotten or ignored is that success in poultry raising or anything else depends more on the individual than on the business or any circumstance connected with it. The kindest and most successful poultry raiser in all creation, nor all of them combined, can so advise her that she will succeed unless she has the mental essentials for success within herself. If she has prudence, ingenuity, patience, some capital, and above all, tact, she may succeed, otherwise not. Here ends the first lesson.

The second lesson is to hunt out the best books and publications on poultry raising, and study them. Their opinions will be found, plenty of them, and very often sound ones. Sometimes these books are selfishly inspired, to some extent at least, but so far as I have seen, they invariably agree that "lucrative" success is very rare except to a person peculiarly qualified for it. Connected with the business as a business, there are innumerable little details to note, and drawbacks to overcome, which no written or printed rule can surmount, and sometimes not be remotely applicable. Then the value of "gumption" is apparent. But they will tell a great deal that is helpful, and often through their very failures, they enunciate useful principles—glittering generalities perhaps, but it is the special application of them which is to emphasize the new beginner's capacity for success.

Let me note a few things that may be quite as "lucrative living" from poultry without having a good many, and to handle a good many profitably is far more difficult, even proportionately, than to succeed with a few. The proportionate expense of the investment for 5,000 fowls might not be greater than for 50 perhaps, but it will require far greater tact to manage them profitably even supposing that the owner keeps them in good health, and gets as many eggs and chickens as he can reasonably expect. To buy feed for them is comparatively easy while the bank account is good, but how about important as a blank opinion. There will be no

selling of the products from several thousand fowls? No location near a slow going country village, or even to a decently ambitious city, will do. There must be great hotels and restaurants to buy these products regularly and to pay cash promptly; and to receive their patronage by contract, one must have a reputation, and reputations don't come at will.

The chicken breeder must have good help, and an abundance of the sort he needs, and that is very difficult to get. Contracts to deliver must be filled on time and according to the quality demanded, and no excuse as to poor health, bad weather, disappointment about help, &c., is worth a rush if repeated more than once in fifty years. And still, in spite of your possible reputation there will be second class fowls to sell, and sometimes second class eggs, and one must have a second class market for them or heavy losses will follow. Your hens must live only to a certain age for profitable layers, and then they are not "spring chickens" or "broilers" by any means, and coming in your hands in quantity each year, they must be disposed of promptly. You cannot confine yourself to eggs exclusively, nor to flesh growing exclusively, unless you face other risks and difficulties that are equally serious, requiring judgment, tact, knowledge of human nature and of chicken nature that tell immensely on your bank account.

After one gets a reputation as a breeder, a demand for his stock will spring up, perhaps without advertising. It may be profitable, perhaps more so than any other feature—it ought to be at from \$7 to \$10 a trio—but it complicates matters and calls into requisition a new line of work and talent. It must be conducted on its merits and quite apart from other branches. Here another order of help is required, that which is reliable, alert and practical; and how is it to be had? Not without a large outlay certainly, because it is skilled work. The poor stock must be separated from the good, and the owner's acquaintance with fancy markings must be thorough enough for him to know a \$20 rooster from a \$3 one, or he soon suffers the pangs of knowing that he has unwittingly put about \$17 into some other man's pocket. Eggs of his fancy breeds will be in demand by distant customers, and how to insure them safe transmission against the stupidity and carelessness of expressmen, or how to bear with equanimity the curses of his customers, will be another puzzle to vex his mind.

In all this I have supposed that the breeder had mastered the first problem of success, which is to produce the stock on a large scale. But how many are likely to do that without a long preparatory training? How many will even attempt to give, say to 2,000 fowls, the proportionate care and space that they give to fifty fowls? Not many; and if they do not, the problems connected with selling poultry products on a large scale will not trouble them much. From 50 to 75 fowls to an acre, with separate lots and buildings for each flock, is good advice, but how many novices will heed it? They want a shorter road than that, to a "lucrative living," and are rarely satisfied until they have tried it. The prominent idea in their heads is that if 50 fowls will give a profit of \$50 a year under ordinary treatment, then each thousand fowls will give \$1,000 profit—but they will not without more than proportionate increase of care and cost, and let the novice not forget this.

As a matter of "opinion" then, given with considerable knowledge of poultry raising, but without any knowledge at all of the qualification of Mrs. M. L. L., my advice is that she go very slow in the attempt to make a "lucrative living by raising poultry for the city markets." She will enjoy more peace of mind and make for herself a greener old age,