

posited before the egg formation begins, is nothing but theory; as any one can prove to his satisfaction by occasional experiments. It is certainly very wonderful to note the different powers possessed by the several hens, as to their ability to retain the male influence in an active form. In some, in fact most hens, the germ is inactive after the seventh day, and does not possess power enough to impregnate the egg, while other hens can retain the germ in an active reproductive state for weeks. It really seems to be as much an essential of the hen's vitality as it is of the male's vigor, as to the length of time the germ will retain its impregnating power. A case in point this spring came under my observation, not the first by any means, but I quote it as others can vouch for it, and it is of late occurrence. Mr. T. Barrett had kept with his Dorking cock a few Wyandotte hens, these he afterwards separated for three weeks, and then bred them to a Wyandotte cock. He gave me the eggs to hatch in the incubator for him in early March, and every chick but one was true Wyandotte, in fact the one looked like a Wyandotte but had a single comb, and as it matured, proved a cross. I felt sure that at the season when they were separated, viz.: February, the breeding powers of both would not prove very strong and so considered three weeks ample time to overcome the influence of the Dorking male. In this case only one hen retained a germ in active life. The cross bred chick was a cockerel, strong and vigorous; it was killed last week and weighed seven lbs., within an ounce or two. Thus we see how uncertain it is what time is necessary for separation. If the germ of the male had to be deposited before the egg commences to form, it would be imperative that the birds be mated months before the chicks were required to hatch. I certainly think Mr. Felch is right in saying that before the egg is encased in its outward lining there is every opportunity and chance of its impregnation by the male germ. The period of its possibility of active life depends as much on the vital forces of the hen as on the healthy spermatozoa of the male parent, as indicated by his vigor and evident healthy state and attention to the inmates of the harem. But how

can we judge of the like capacity in the female portion of the pen? The birds all seemingly in good health, hearty and full of vigor, in number sufficient to prevent undue attention or neglect from their partner, we can form no idea of what their capacity is for giving hatchable eggs. I was reading in the A.B.C. of Bee Culture, some comments on the fertilization of eggs. Among other things the author says; "I do not know, whether the hen has the power of laying fertile, or unfertile eggs at will." He cannot say, nor can we, but still the fact of unfertile eggs confronts us, and we know not why. Under the same conditions, some hens' eggs are generally unfertile, yet not always. Another strange experience comes in here, I once kept a cockerel in a pen of Leghorns all spring, got a lot of chicks from him and desired to use another male, the hens received his attentions and he was left in the pen for fully two months, all that time I did not get one fertile egg from any hen in the pen, yet eggs from the other pen hatched. The case was so peculiar that I put back the cockerel which had been their mate previously, and got chicks from him from eggs laid the first few days after mating.

No doubt such instances could be multiplied, and they only increase our wonder at the mysteries surrounding this subject. Well may we say with one of old, "It is too wonderful for me," when we consider how limited is the utmost extent of human knowledge concerning these mysteries. Is it possible that the hen possesses the power in common with the queen bee, of laying fertile or unfertile eggs at will? And if so is an uncongenial mate the cause of unfertile eggs?

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Any old barn-yard fowl will lay an egg or two in the spring when everybody's hens are laying but the kind that we want are the ones that will lay when it is snowing, or when the thermometer goes down a few miles below Cairo. "Them's the ones for us."

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Take our advice and place your perches all on a level. Your fowls will then scatter all over them, but if you have them slanting they will fight for top seats, just like the small boy and Methodist parsons do when at the circus.