

THE TWO WAYS.

If anyone ask whether or not to keep poultry, the best advice is "Don't—unless you are prepared to do the thing properly." By doing it properly, we do not necessarily mean spending a lot of money. Much of the most successful poultry keeping has been accomplished by those who have very little cash to spare. What we mean by doing it properly is arranging every thing for the comfort and well-being of the birds. Some of the pestilent holes in which fowls are kept are a disgrace to civilization, and the wretched existence forced on the little creatures amounts to cruelty. A dozen birds will be cooped together in room not sufficient for four; the houses are draughty, and not even watertight; the floors and runs are inches deep in filth and puddles, making the atmosphere reek with unendurable odors, and soiling the food which is thrown there as often as not, while the walls, nests, and perches are alive with vermin. This is no exaggerated picture. There are thousands who keep their poultry in this manner; in winter a prey to cold, rain, slush, and wind—which fowls abhor; in summer tortured by vermin in a stifling atmosphere, with drinking water which is neither clean nor cool.

Birds kept so afford neither pleasure nor profit. The evident misery in which they live is a constant source of uneasiness to their owners, however much they may try to stifle all thought of it. And as to profit, what can be expected of birds, either as breeders or layers, when reduced to the ill-health which must result from such conditions?

Yet the step from such poultry keeping as this to that which yields both profit and pleasure is not a big one. A little time and thought in starting, and a quarter of an hour or so at regular intervals, and they will yield that pleasure which is always afforded by the sight of healthy and well tended pets, besides the gratification which comes from a successful undertaking. No matter what it is we set our mind to, if the results are good the thought gives us pleasure, though it be nothing more than keeping a few fowls; and this to say nothing of the real interest which poultry keeping affords for those who take it up in a scientific manner. The best of our birds now differ from the

common stock as much as a thoroughbred horse differs from a common hack. This is the result of thoughtful treatment and breeding. Developments as great as there have been in the past lie in future for those who bring to bear upon the matter the skilled attention, care and thought which would be brought to bear on anything else where improvement is looked for.

By far too large a number start on their poultry keeping in the haphazard manner which characterizes so many of our undertakings. They reap the fruit of this haphazard conduct in the constant source of annoyance they find the birds are to them. In this way they do much harm in spreading the idea that fowls are, as the phrase goes, "More bother than they are worth;" which is by no means the verdict of those who set about it in a business-like fashion.

The first question for would-be poultry keepers to ask themselves is, "Are we prepared to give real attention and regular attention to the undertaking?" A good many of those who have actually started on it might advantageously ask themselves the same question, if they would wish to insure that the birds shall no longer be a source of uneasiness. After this there are certain other questions which demand close attention, for a very great deal depends upon a good start.

One important thing to decide is how many birds can be kept, which is by no means the same as how many they would like to keep, although many people have confounded the two things. And thus a dozen birds are frequently seen where there is only room enough for four, or forty where there should be only twenty. Nor is it only a matter of space, but of time and money. It takes longer to prepare the food for, and properly attend to twenty birds than it does for ten. It may not be much longer, but still it is longer. And the choice of the higher number may make all the difference between well and ill-kept birds.

Then there is the question of money. If the sum to be expended is spent on cheap birds and houses of course a greater show is made. But it is folly to do it. Cheap birds cannot be depended upon for either laying or breeding. What is wanted at starting is good stock, stock worth breeding from. Ten such birds will yield better results than twenty chosen haphazard on account of their cheapness. As to the houses, one may feel inclined to put up a somewhat