

to a pea-comb barred Plymouth Rock cock and the white cock was mated to some white Plymouth Rock hens bought by me from Frost strains. From both of these matings came pea-combed white Plymouth Rock chicks, the foundation of my present strain of this new variety. This brief account of the origin shows what the variety is in blood.

It is a *white* Plymouth Rock. The white Plymouth Rock has proven very popular, not alone on account of its attractive appearance and the fact that it possessed the egg and meat qualities of the barred variety, but because the feathers are of more value to sell and the pin-feathers are less obtrusive upon the fowls prepared for market.

And finally it is a *pea-comb* white Plymouth Rock. The change from a single to a pea-comb is perhaps a comparatively small change but it effects a considerable difference in the appearance of the fowl and a still greater difference in the practical qualities. Concerning the difference in appearance it becomes one to speak with modesty. I think a pea-combed bird is handsomer than one with a single comb. The head looks clean and neat, the wattles being reduced in size proportionately with the comb. Others might think differently, for to them nothing perhaps is handsomer than a high single comb, even if one has to be as tender with it to keep it from becoming frozen as a mother is of her first infant. Concerning tails there is no common ground for disputation, no exact correct Standard, to which all such questions can be referred. But the practical advantages which spring from a pea-comb are capable of demonstration. A pea-comb is small; the wattles which accompany it are reduced in size; on the female the comb is almost invisible; such a comb cannot be frosted, a bird with such a comb is always

in condition—so far as comb is concerned—for laying; the suffering that arises from frozen combs is avoided; pea-combed birds are generally excellent winter layers; mine have improved admirably in this respect. These advantages are direct and positive. For a cold climate where winter delights to encroach on the reign of autumn and lingers long in the lap of spring, a pea-combed fowl is demanded, and for those who live in such a climate, who wish a general purpose fowl like the Plymouth Rock, with a white plumage, a fowl which lays colored eggs generously, and furnishes excellent food when boiled, fried or baked, will find in the pea-comb white Plymouth Rock one which promises to answer their expectations and meet their requirements.

### THE SETTING HEN.

*A Paper read by Mr. H. E. Donovan before the Toronto Association:*

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN:—

HAVING assigned the above subject to me I shall endeavor to give you a few thoughts, which, although the matter is one that has received much attention I have not yet seen in print.

Without any long preamble I shall ask you to note two most important points, namely,

#### LOCATION AND SEASON,

or, to be more definite, location of the nest and season of the year, and these two points cannot be considered alone, each is dependent on the other. In the early part of the year, in fact up to the first of May, I prefer to have the nest box under cover of a shed or house and raised off the ground. My mode of operation at this season has been as follows:—Make the nest box suitable

to the size of the hen you intend to set, don't set a Bantam in a box two feet square, nor a Plymouth Rock or other large breed in a box in which the occupant has barely room to crouch down. Put in a foundation two inches deep of sawdust or oat hulls, (we have used both with good results) on which sprinkle a little Persian Insect Powder, hollow this out to the proper shape, and on it lay a handful of tobacco stalks, then lay on a final covering of soft hay. Hay at this season of the year is warmer than straw, it lies more closely and does not permit of cold air draughts percolating under and around the eggs when the hen is off to feed. Over all finally sprinkle some more insect powder, "no room" for vermin then. Place two or three dummy eggs in the nest and at night put the hen thereon. I say *at night* because at this time she will be more likely to settle down to business. If it is seen that she sticks closely to her work the eggs may be placed under her on the second night she is on the nest. This may sometimes be done sooner, but it is better to be on the safe side.

Later in the season it is advisable to place the nest on the bare ground, hollowing out the earth in the proper form, and laying on it a good thick bedding of well crushed straw, not too long; if too long and stiff it is apt to cause trouble by catching on the hens legs, resulting in displaced and broken eggs. An apple barrel with a hole cut in the side for a door makes a good covering for a nest of this kind, but of course any appropriate protection can be used. Note the following points, it should be (1st) water tight, (2nd) secure from the attacks of vermin, (3rd) have proper ventilation provided near the top. Never allow the hens to get off and on the nest at will, but have a stated time for feeding once a day and feed regularly. The nest should be just the proper shape, neither too convex nor