

for a good laying season, they should not be interfered with in any way; though, of course, it is not necessary to force them at this stage by feeding a full meat ration. In any case they will probably go into a moult before winter, but, if they are of the heavy-laying type, the moult should only be a light one, and this will certainly not lead to lessened production in the dear season to the same extent as will any artificial postponement of the laying season.

The man who will be successful in having his birds laying just when he wants them to is he who really knows the strain he is working with. Some strains mature at, say, four and a half months old, while others will not mature till they are six months of age. Being acquainted with the average age at which his particular strain will mature enables the breeder to hatch at the right time and carefully bring his birds to lay just when they are in fit condition. Unfortunately, too many poultrymen have such a mixture of strains in their flocks that they have no means of knowing when to expect them to begin business. One of the curses of the poultry industry at the present time is the craze for early maturity and the mad striving after yield, regardless of the size of eggs laid. Modern utility-poultry breeders have good reason to congratulate themselves on the perfection of the laying-machine into which they have converted certain races of domestic poultry, but there is always a limit to man's interference with nature. We have a striking demonstration of this in the deterioration in the size of eggs resulting from phenomenal yield. It is only natural to expect the bird forced (by selection) to early maturity—built on fine, small lines—to lay small eggs; but we have birds which are of good desirable size and coming to full maturity before their laying season the eggs from which are most disappointing.

THE POULTRY GOLD-MINE.

A correspondent sends me a page advertisement from an American magazine which contains the statement that £300 has been made from sixty hens in ten months on a city lot 40 ft. square, and asks, "Could you advise me as to the value of this statement? It appears too much like a royal road to the poultry business."

I have repeatedly been called upon to disillusion many who have been misled by similar overdrawn statements into taking up poultry-keeping as a means of livelihood. The American boomster says nothing of the settings and birds he sold at fancy prices, which were almost entirely responsible for the return he advertises. I have insistently declared that poultry-keeping as a business is only successful under exceptional circumstances, the chief of which is that the man in charge has a combination of necessary characters found in few individuals. Experi-