

favourable weather. Of course, it is possible to keep laying birds always under cover, but I prefer to believe that the birds will be more healthy and vigorous if given every opportunity to use runs in decent weather.

#### ADVANCING UTILITY TYPE.

If the laying competitions have taught one lesson more convincing than another it is the important bearing of the moulting-period on profitable production. The bird that holds out longest—the most persistent layer—is the bird that is in the lead in the competitions; in other words, the first bird to moult is too often the last bird when the year's yields come to be published; and the experience of the laying competitions is being repeated on private plants all over the country. I was visiting a poultryman the other day who complained to me that his last season's pullets have not given the same yield as did those of the previous season—in fact, they were going into a deep moult. This was the second week in February. I went carefully through the flock, and noticed that a fair percentage exhibited no sign of moult—in fact, they were still laying heavily. I made the pointed remark that there were a good many birds in the flock which were worth breeding from—the best of these late moulters; but the owner disagreed with me, although he admitted that the birds in question were laying heavily, and were therefore probably among his most profitable layers. But the birds in a heavy moult had come from a particular breeder, and he therefore intended to breed from them—this notwithstanding they had no laying pedigree behind them. I am afraid this is a common mistake. If nothing is known about the laying ancestry of a fowl, she assuredly must be judged on her own performance, and there is no better rough guide to performance than the time at which she moults, and the extent of that moult.

When we speak of pedigree of performance, it must be understood that the egg-record not only of the mother but that of the mother of the father must be known. Of course, there are birds, however desirable the pedigree possessed, which fail to come up to the standard, and must be culled, for there are wasters in the purest strains ever bred. It should be also clearly understood that it is not always the best performer that is the best breeder. It is an accepted principle by all who have concerned themselves in the advancement of types in the animal kingdom that it is only the type which has been bred true to a given ideal from generation to generation which has the power to transmit desired characters. It will often be found that the medium layer, descended in the right way and built on the right lines, is the more desirable stock bird. Take the characteristics to be looked for in their respective order of merit: 1, Constitution; 2, pedigree of performance;