

3, individual performance; 4, possession of utility characters; 5, trueness of type. Or, more briefly put, laying-capacity and possession of the desired constitutional, utility, and breed points. The common argument I have been met with in laying down these principles to individual breeders is, "Oh! I have had a layer, the best bird on the nest I ever saw, and she was nothing to look at either as a layer or a type of the breed." This may be true enough; but "one swallow does not make a summer." There are freaks and exceptional animals in all classes of stock, but these do not prove a principle to be wrong; they merely constitute the exception which proves the rule.

After all, it is not the single high-type individual we are after so much as a flock of them; nor even the swell competition-pen which can put up a record and which is the selected half-dozen from a flock of hundreds. The objective of the poultryman should be to breed a flock of sturdy layers of a uniform type which plainly exhibit the desired points referred to—constitution, laying-power, and breed characters. It is no easy matter to attain this ideal, and it is even more difficult to perpetuate the type when once it has been secured. Too much importance cannot be attached to constant study of the egg-yielding type, so that the layer may be distinguished at a glance. When this facility is attained all else will follow. There is a limit, of course, to all things, and if everything is sacrificed to egg-yield something will suffer. Constitution will be weakened, the size of the eggs will decline, ovarian troubles will be intensified, and the difficulty of rearing vigorous stock will be increased. The danger in improving a character by weakening another should always be kept in mind, and while aiming at the ideal laying form see that other important features are not sacrificed in the process. There is a limit to which we can go in the laying-capacity of a bird, and if phenomenal layers only are looked for, the power responsible for it will weaken with the poorer constitution which must result.

The laying competitions have done good work, but they are capable of working much harm. It is high time the chief honours were awarded to the birds producing the greatest weight of eggs in the year rather than the largest number. The consumer will soon protest against paying full market rates for miniature eggs. With the prevailing tendency I can see a revival in some of the old popular breeds, such as the original type of Minorca, by reason of the fine large eggs they produce, especially when the market value of eggs is fixed according to quality rather than on the mixed and doubtful lines sold through the city auction-rooms.

The best thing the laying competitions have done has been to expose the show monstrosities. In the earlier competitions it was proved that