

## THE POULTRY INDUSTRY.

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### MAY WORK.

It is full time the breeding operations were planned, for it is always a safe rule to be well prepared and have everything in readiness if success is to be assured. Of course, I am only referring now to early hatching, to the breeding of birds for autumn and early winter laying. Hatching operations should certainly not commence before July, as birds of the heavier breeds hatched then will come on to lay on the rising egg-market. While this is so, preparations for the important work should be got under way in May. The breeding stock should, even now, be on the proper diet, a healthy blood-clearing ration with nothing to unduly force the birds to heavy laying. The cock bird should also be got into vigorous condition. Green stuff, grit, fresh water, are all essentials to making the birds fit, while it is very desirable that at this time the breeders should have some range, and thereby an opportunity to secure the desired exercise. It should be unnecessary to emphasize that if vigorous and profitable stock are to be bred—and it will only be profitable if it is vigorous—it can only come from parents of sound constitution in perfect health and condition at the time of mating. The parents at this time demand the most careful treatment not only in the matter of diet, referred to above, but should be comfortably housed without being coddled, and by good shelter and in other ways be given every opportunity to conserve their virility in view of their important work when mating takes place. It is useless having a strong male in the top of his form and the females in poor condition, and *vice versa*. The other day I saw a young imported cockerel penned by himself alongside a wire-netted run of pullets. The untiring activity of the young sire, racing up and down the pen, was enough to bring him to a dangerous state of exhaustion in a week. With such treatment the bird was being rendered useless for breeding. Male birds should be kept by themselves well removed from the sight of the fowls, but it is advisable to keep young cockerels with a few old hens. Even when a male bird, through going off, has to be taken out of a breeding-pen, it is a mistake to place him in solitary confinement. He will exercise more and eat better if given the company of one or two hens. The feeding of the breeding-pen cannot be too liberal. Too often poor