

the birds to the best advantage. It is surprising how contented people become with poor results when they fail to closely examine the financial side of the business. A simple poultry account-book can now be obtained for a shilling, and with this carefully kept it should be easy enough to ascertain at a glance whether the poultry is a paying or a losing transaction. If the latter, then something is radically wrong, for with the type of bird now available at cheap prices from the plants of the Department there is no excuse for want of success. The only explanation that can be offered is want of knowledge or carelessness on the part of the owner.

THE DEAR-EGG SEASON.

We are now right into the dear-egg season. The production of eggs at this time of year is quite artificial. Therefore the fowl bred out of her natural season must be treated in an exceptional manner. Of course, it is the pullet which must be mainly depended upon for eggs at this time. Bred at the right season and managed to the best advantage up to the present, she should be laying now at top if every favouring condition is present. There must be no weak link in the chain. The reason some fail and others succeed in securing eggs when these are most valuable is because in the one case some essential factor in management has been neglected, while in the other case the birds have been handled to the best advantage right through. Having the desired heavy egg-producing strain, hatched in the right season, is only one essential requirement. The birds should never have had the slightest check in the process of development. Then when they are about to lay they should receive liberal food of the best quality, and, above all, be properly housed, preferably in a roomy open-fronted building in which they can remain on cold and wet days and yet have ample exercise by scratching in litter. Dry feet with hens is just as necessary to their well-being as with human beings. It must be remembered that I am now speaking of the artificial high-type layer bred to lay when we want her to and not when her nature dictates. It goes without saying that animal food at this time of year, especially in the colder localities, is imperative. Where fresh meat cannot be obtained meat-meal may be used, as well as blood-meal employed with care, while there is nothing better than milk, and where this is not obtainable on an economic basis skim-milk may be used to advantage. If any argument be required to prove the necessity of this special care of the laying-fowl in the dear-egg season it is surely contained in the fact that, notwithstanding the greatly increasing number of egg-record stock distributed throughout the country and hatched (by artificial means at the right time) eggs are still dear at certain seasons, certainly much dearer than they would be if all the birds hatched to lay now