

If the birds are to lay to their maximum capacity some forcing-food, such as boiled meat, meat-meal, &c., should be included in the ration. Beware of poor-quality foodstuffs, especially where the laying pullet is concerned. Some of the samples of ground food upon which my opinion has recently been asked would be dear at half or even a quarter of the price charged for them—especially some of the so-called oaten pollards. These chiefly consisted of ground husks, which are of no food value and next to useless for promoting egg-production. The cost of good-quality foodstuffs is certainly high at the present time, but nevertheless it is a penny-wise-and-pound-foolish policy to purchase damaged or inferior lines because they are cheap. A much better way to economize is to cull out the poor layers and give the remaining stock the best-quality food that is obtainable. Poultry-keepers who have a supply of last season's wheat should reserve this as far as possible for the pullets, as a sudden change from old to new wheat will probably bring on a premature moult.

Above all things should be remembered the important influence of prevailing weather conditions on the pullet bred to lay in winter. In last month's *Journal* some advice was given regarding the common causes of pullets catching colds, but it is well to emphasize the necessity of their not being subjected to extremes of weather. Again, in order to obtain eggs in the cold dear season the pullet should be given every opportunity to take exercise in comfort when unfavourable climatic conditions prevail. For this purpose the floor of the house should be well covered with litter, in which the birds are compelled to scratch for their grain ration. Among other things they require is plenty of succulent green food, gravel grit, crushed sea-shell, and clean water.

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THE APIARY.

FINAL EXTRACTING.

FEBRUARY will probably see the end of the main honey-flow in most districts, and beekeepers will be wise to remove the last of the honey before the cold nights arrive. Once the honey in the hives has been allowed to become thoroughly chilled there is little prospect of its becoming warmed again when uncertain weather sets in. Wherever inclined to be thick the honey will be found exceedingly difficult to extract unless it is warm, and the beekeeper who delays too long will find that he will have to return to the hives combs almost as heavy as when they were removed. Thin honey extracts best when it is warm, but it is imperative that thick honey be not allowed to cool before extracting.

One of the principal matters to be attended to when the last of the honey is being removed is the condition of the brood-chamber. Many prolific queens keep the brood-chamber so full of brood throughout the season that the bees have very little room to store honey in it. Consequently, if all the honey in the supers is removed, such colonies stand a chance of being starved out before the end of the