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THE NEBRASKA BEE-KEEPER

YORK,  NEB. 

 JUNE, 1894. 



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Mention this Journal.

Chas. Dadant & Son, Hamilton, Ill.

THE NEBRASKA BEE-KEEPER

Vol. 5,

JUNE, 1894.

No. 6.

Reply to the Reply of Chas. White and Others.

BY A. C. TYRREL.

BRO. White does not grasp the situation, or is not familiar with the best methods of queen rearing, as practiced by modern queen breeders. No modern apiarist "scatters queen cells haphazard all through the hives," but on the contrary, they are placed just where we want them, the same as if fastened to a stick, and what is to hinder us raising queens "at any season of the year," just as early or late as Bro. White is able to; and does he not suppose they "can be placed in the hive in such a way that the bees can keep them warm?"

I would trust the little bee, though not more than two months old, in preference to our judgment, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, for I have bought too many scientific reared queens for the good of myself and family, already.

To make my meaning and system plain, which differs but slightly from that practiced by Mr. Henry Alley and other reliable breeders: suppose Mr. W. wishes to use the larva for rearing queens from a certain colony:—that larva was a few days prior to the commencement of his scientific (?) manipulations an egg or eggs. In the first

place he must go to work and prepare some artificial cells, if not already made, which requires some labor and fussing. With little round sticks which must be scraped and polished, dipped into melted wax a number of times, to construct symmetrical cells, you know; then he must search for royal jelly, which a colony made queenless for that purpose has been preparing, go to the hive "wrap up the comb, carry it to a warm room to protect it from the cold air" (to use his own words), put some royal jelly into the cell-cups, dig out the tiny grubs, place them therein and carry all back to the hive again.

What earthly use is all this trouble? Why not take the *eggs* from that colony, as many as you wish to use for queens, and allow the bees to enlarge the cells in which they are placed and rear the queens; in other words, let them do *all* the work; they can do a better job than you can with your stick and wax, and is fully as scientific, and you are relieved of the labor, and *better bees* are produced by this process.

By no parity of reasoning can it be made to appear that the system you practice is superior to a more natural

course; one more in harmony with nature's way. No one dare to contend that by simply removing larva from a natural cell to an artificial cup, the queen will be superior in any way, shape or manner; it is not logical, reasonable, nor is it scientific. It has not one feature to recommend it to practical bee-keepers.

The plan I recommend and practice, cannot be termed in its fullest sense, artificial or original; it is however practical, and I can make all preparations for raising 500 or more queens in less time than Bro. W. or any one else can "fix his machinery" for 100. I can raise my queens in a full colony, if I desire so to do, make all the conditions as favorable for rearing perfect queens as Mr. White can possibly do, and not be compelled to make half of my colonies queenless to accomplish the result. Mr. W. is sadly mistaken when he says: "We have the cells just the size we want them." Is he not aware that the bees draw out the artificial cups and shape them to suit their own ideas of shape and size, which are nearer right than he could make them. Does he contend that the cups when placed on the frame, are the exact size and shape of the cells from which the queens emerge? No, he merely constructed a *slight foundation* for the superstructure, which when completed by the bees bore no semblance to the original. He has nothing whatever to do with either shape or size.

He further alleges: "There is one place we beat the bees." This is the most remarkable allegation contained in his article. I should say that in "that place" the bees beat him badly, their little "brains" suggested a more practical way than his judgment (?) dictated, although compelled to perfect a bungling job.

If a scientific bee-keeper should discover (?) that queens raised in thimbles were superior to anything we have

yet produced, what do you think the bees would do about it? Would they take kindly to the innovation?

I know what I am saying when I make the assertion that I never had a queen raised by the so-called scientific method that was worth a straw, and I believe I have squandered as much money for high-priced queens as any man in Nebraska.

I would give more for one queen raised under the swarming impulse, than a dozen raised on a stick, if they are all like those I have purchased here tofore.

I do not raise queens that way, however, but there are one or two old foggy notions that will do to "tie up to."

I am very radical in my utterances, always, but no offence is intended, as every one is entitled to his or her own opinion.

Why Queenless Bees In Spring.

Ever since I have kept bees it has been my delight to watch them and learn their habits. I see on page 467 the writer thinks that so many become queenless in the spring because the queen is more tender after they commence to lay in the spring, and the cold snaps "do them up." I think that so many queenless colonies in the spring come from virgin queens that hatch out on the outside frame after we have had 10 or 12 days of cold weather. We will say that to-day is a nice, warm day, and the queen gets on the outside frame and lays a patch of eggs about the size of a man's hand. It turns cold right off, and the queen goes to the center of the colony and stays there until it warms up. This outside frame of bees don't know what has become of the queen—everything is quiet for 10 or 12 days, so they build a queen-cell, and if the weather stays cold so the bees do not stir around until this cell hatches out, this virgin will slip around

among the bees and kill the old queen. As it is too early for drones, some of the bees get mad about the way the business has been carried on, so they kill this virgin queen, and that is the way, I think, so many colonies become queenless in the spring.

G. W. NANCE.

—*American Bee Journal.*

We do not wholly endorse the above, as in Nebraska, so many colonies went into winter quarters with old queens which could not withstand the severe winter weather.—Ed.

Work at Michigan's Experimental Apiary.

R. L. TAYLOR, APIARIST.

Some Experiments in Wintering.

During last fall and winter I made such efforts as I could under existing circumstances to get some light on the problems growing out of the matter of wintering bees. My beecellar is under my honey house and is fifteen by thirty feet with a cistern in one end. I have wintered bees in this cellar for seven or eight years with almost uniformly excellent success and yet it now seems certain, from my experiments with a hygrometer, to be a very damp one, there being a difference, at a temperature of from 45 to 50 degrees, between the wet bulb and the dry bulb, of one-half a degree, which indicates that the percentage of moisture is about 96—almost complete saturation.

It is claimed by many prominent beekeepers that moisture is one of the principal causes, if not the principal cause, of the winter disease of bees known as dysentery, but if this were true I should have expected to find it prevailing largely among my bees during the last winter, but such did not prove to be the case. In fact, though I suffered a larger percentage of loss than I ever did before in this cellar—a-

bout 20 per cent,—yet only a small proportion of those that perished showed even a little evidence of that disorder. I discovered only two cases that could be called really bad, in one of which the colony died and in the other the colony had regained its health and was in good order and of good strength when removed from the cellar, and still remains so. This case was a peculiar one. The hive was an eight-frame L. hive and the bottom board was left on in the wintering. Such a forbidding receptacle for bees as this was when taken from the cellar about the tenth of April, I have seldom seen. The bottom board was covered with a mass of sticky ordure to such an extent that only now and then would a bee venture upon it to gain the outside of the hive. The cover was well sealed on and when pried off it ran with the almost incredible amount of water and the honey board and combs outside the cluster were wet and white with mould. When the bottom board was removed and a clean one substituted, the bees came out to fly as clean, healthy and strong as one would care to see.

I cannot reconcile this case, as well as many others I have examined recently, with the theory that moisture is the cause of dysentery. Yet I think I have good evidence that moisture under certain circumstances is harmful. When the strength of the colony is sufficient to enable it to keep its immediate neighborhood dry, it appears not to suffer from moisture, but if it is so deficient in numbers and vigor, one or both, that it is unable to do that, it seems reasonable to suppose that it must perish, being either chilled to death in the cluster or else driven to desperation by the misery of the situation, scattering and leaving the hive tenantedless. The slight spotting of the combs which often occurs under such circumstances should not, I think, be taken as a sign of the trouble known as

dysentery. It is rather the result of the weakness of approaching dissolution than the cause of it.

Last season after the failure of clover and basswood there was very little nectar to be gathered in this locality either during the remainder of the summer or during the fall, from which fact it resulted that at the beginning of winter a large portion of the colonies were not only weak in bees but especially so in young bees. It was not difficult to foresee the probable consequence of this state of things, so I was not surprised at the loss I have incurred. Apparently the old bees died off during the early part of the winter, for more than the usual number left the hives during that time, thus reducing the cluster to a size too small to enable it to successfully combat the unfriendly influences of moisture combined with a cellar temperature. Perhaps in most cases the cellar temperature alone would prove sufficient to create such a feeling of discomfort as to make the bees restless and so cause them one by one to leave the cluster and wander out of the hive and be lost, but I have no doubt that in other cases the added influence of moisture was necessary to accomplish total ruin. That the decline of these colonies came about in the way I have indicated seems substantiated by the fact that in almost all of these cases very few dead bees were left in the hives and in only now and then, one had the bees last to perish preserved the form of a cluster to the last.

Quite a strong effort was made to determine if possible whether sealed covers were, in cellar wintering, a disadvantage and a large number of hives with such covers as well as of those with loose covers were set apart and carefully examined with the result that where the colonies were of fairly normal strength there was no apparent difference—almost every one of that

class wintering very satisfactorily. About the only advantage of the loose covers was that the combs were preserved dry and clean. It was also observed that the entire removal of the bottom board, leaving the bottom of the hive entirely open, served largely the same purpose as a loose cover, tho' not to quite the same extent. In some of the larger hives, having a bottom board as well as sealed covers, the combs outside the cluster were very wet and mouldy. In the case of the weaker colonies sealed covers were comparatively detrimental. Of course all this is in a cellar where the temperature was maintained during the entire winter at 45° and over, and it can readily be believed that the class of colonies that would fail to cope with the conditions induced by sealed covers out of doors would be very considerably enlarged; not, I think, because the moisture would induce the disease known as dysentery but because it would require stronger colonies to ward off the encroaching chilliness caused by constant excessive evaporation so that the health and vigor of a larger number would be undermined and finally destroyed.

Of course so far it does not appear that sealed covers that sealed covers have any advantage in any case but inasmuch as they cause wet and mouldy combs it would be well worth the while to loosen all covers when the bees are put into the cellar and certainly so unless the bottom boards are entirely removed.

The losses I have incurred speak plainly of the importance of giving strict heed to the old rule: Keep all colonies strong. By doubling up about one-third of my colonies in September I should have escaped with practically no loss.

—*The Bee Keepers' Review.*

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The Best Honey of the World.

How tastes vary according to Locality.

CHAS. F. MUTH.

Our friend Hubbard, at Walpole, N.H. is asking for my idea on sourwood honey; and as the matter may prove interesting to others, and I know that our friend will see it, please give it space in *Gleanings*.

Sourwood furnishes a very good honey, of light color and good flavor. I should put it in the same class with basswood of the North and Northwest, or the orange blossom or saw palmetto of the South. We have just now a new arrival of orange blossom honey. It is of good quality and fine taste, and we advertise it as something "new and choice;" but we shall be no more able to raise a customer for it now than at former trials. A certain preference would be given to basswood over sourwood honey, because of the former having a lighter color. All the above will be sold to manufacturers principally, almost exclusively. The most popular and most praiseworthy honeys are: Northern white clover, mangrove of Florida, and sage of California, in their purity—i. e., without an admixture of other qualities. According to my experience, this trio includes the only qualities accepted by the public for table use. Almost all other qualities go to the manufacturers principally.

It must be remembered that our tastes are cultivated. While basswood honey is of fine quality, and, no doubt, popular in the basswood region, still it will never be successfully introduced in a clover country, for table use. I have tested the matter for many years. Horsemint honey, very obnoxious to our taste at first, loses its bad flavor gradually by our handling and tasting it. When my friend Dr. Lay said, "Horsemint is the honey for a man of Texas," and when I replied that it amounts to

nothing in business (what he and I should like), both of us were correct. Only those qualities which are popular, or can be made so, count. All qualities next to the above mentioned trio, in regard to flavor and color, go to manufacturers. The idea I intend to convey is, that, according to my experience in the business, white-clover stands at the head of the list; next comes mangrove of Florida; next, sage of California; and next, any amount of other varieties too numerous to mention, all of which can be sold to manufacturers only, because of their lower prices. However, anything is possible these times, the business features of which are abnormal and unnatural. Since we sold at 6 and even at 5½ cts. per lb., by the carload, each of first class California and of clover and basswood honey, we can hardly find customers for dark honey at any price. The bottom has come out of prices of all articles of late, which, I hope, is only temporary.—*Gleanings*.

What will the Harvest be?

Not for several years have the bee keepers of central Nebraska watched the growth of honey plants as closely as this season. The frost and drouth in May, killing much of the tender vegetation, grain and corn and weeds as well, thus cutting short the plants upon which we depended for honey with which our colonies could build up ready for the honey flow we always expect later on, and many began to croak that the later honey plants were killed as well. With the June rains our honey plants are growing fast and already showing blossoms and if we have been careful to keep our hives right side up and full of bees, the harvest will be all right.

Hither and Yon, Continued.

BY W. E. S.

Every stranger visiting the city of New Orleans finds something to attract their attention, and while no two persons will give the same description of things as they see them, yet in general, they will nearly always agree on some things of general interest. A few items from some of the places we visited while there may not be amiss.

It may be classed as a foreign city, from the fact that it was, and now is, thickly settled by people from France, Spain, Italy and Germany; the first settlers being from Spain and for some years they held full control of public affairs. The city is one of the oldest in the United States; in 1541, DeSoto formed settlements along the lower Mississippi, and there is little doubt but that New Orleans is one of these Spanish settlements of the early date.

The city, (as many suppose lies only a few miles from the mouth of the Mississippi,) is situated about 115 miles from the jetties at the mouth of the river, and the ocean vessels are about a day coming from the mouth of the river up to the city. The wharf is the highest part of the city, and the water for the sewers is taken from the river at this point; these sewers are open ditches on both sides of the main thoroughfares, and the water runs quite swift emptying into Lake Ponchartrain. All garbage is kept cleaned up and the pavement well

wet by men going up and down these ditches with a scoop and by a single motion wetting a large space around them.

The prominent streets are very wide and nicely laid out, the driveways for teams on each side with the street car tracks in the center and trees on either side of the track; also through these finest streets are many flower beds, ornamental and costly vases and urns, statuary and monuments in honor of great men, watering places and fountains. In some of the oldest streets there is just room for a narrow sidewalk on each side and space for one team to pass another without hitting hubs.

The many magnificent public buildings, monuments, parks, etc., require time and study to appreciate their beauty; also the countless number of fine and costly residences, costing their hundreds of thousands, and surrounded by beautiful grounds, with the roses, oranges and other tropical plants blooming all the time make them of special interest. It was in some of these yards the 20th, of April, that we saw oranges for the first time upon the trees, and it is indeed a pleasant sight to see the fruit in all stages of its growth on the same tree.

While in the city every visitor should visit the old Exposition and grounds which are kept up as a park, while the buildings are used to grow plants and flowers in. The banana wharf is of special note, for

here the fruit can be had in any desired quantity up to a train load of 15 or 20 cars. Large bunches of the fruit which is too ripe to ship, can often be bought for 25 or 30c.

The "markets" are a necessity without which New Orleans would not be complete. There are two: the "French market," and the "lower market," the latter being the smaller one, and of which we will try to describe. It is composed of two iron buildings, about 50 feet wide, 150 feet long, and 12 feet high on the sides; three alleys run the entire length of both buildings which are connected at the ends; on each side of these alleys it is divided into stalls about 12 to 15 feet by 6 feet. If one person was able to use two stalls they had quite a large room, but nearly all just had one stall here. Everything in the shape of food was here on sale, raw or cooked, fresh or dried; fowls, fish, fruits, vegetables, breadstuffs, meats, etc, in all shapes and quantities. For instance, take every stall in one row; first is a bakery, next a flower store, then a meat shop, next a fruit stand, followed by a restaurant with hot meals at all times, next we have a vegetable stand, then meat and bread together, an oyster stand, more fruit and groceries. Everything was separate however; the live poultry was sold outside the buildings, all else was inside. The stalls are mostly kept by women, yet some are kept by men. The fire for cooking was of charcoal and in an earthen ves-

sel about the size of a five-gallon jar. Rich and poor buy here, and it seemed strange to us to see ladies buy fresh fish and meats and then sit down and wait until they were cooked, the cooking of which cost nothing. The only trouble in a stranger going to this market, is that things are so cheap that they are apt to overload before they are aware of the fact. Everything is of the best quality and at lower rates than elsewhere.

Below New Orleans is one of the orange growing sections of the United States. There are orange farms here which produced last year \$500,000 worth of fruit; the quality is equal to California fruit, and being nearer to market gives an advantage which is worth seeking after. Single farms in this section are valued at \$1,000,000.

While along the lower Mississippi river, especially between New Orleans and Vicksburg, we could not help noticing the river, which as it flows between the levees, is about 25 feet above the surrounding country most of the way and not as wide as at Memphis or St. Louis, but deeper; the steamers made a picture for any painter, as they went up and down the river, going so high above the sugar plantations and buildings on the shore.

Coming from Vicksburg to Memphis, the only occupation of the people seemed to be that of growing cotton and corn, and this idea more forcibly impressed itself on our mind when we visited the

great cotton warehouses of Memphis.

As to the school advantages and church privileges of the south, we have not the space to fully explain, but we will say that we do not believe a teacher or minister will turn back to ignorance simply because they cross the Ohio river and teach school or preach the gospel. The intelligent view and fact of the matter is this: the schools of the south have the best teachers, many just graduating from northern colleges and going there to fill the highest positions. The colored schools in most places are supplied with the best white teachers and paid by the State in which they are hired. As to the religious state of affairs, they are generally in most places, as good or better than places of like size and character at the north, while the ministry has northern as well as southern talent, and graduates from all American colleges may be found in all denominations.

In these few items it is not our purpose to raise a point of argument, but simply give facts from a general point of view. We went south for pleasure, profit and information, and after taking an intelligent retrospect of things as they are to-day, we are well satisfied and feel well paid for the time and money out.

To be continued.

Times are close but 50 cents pays for our paper a year just the same.

R. Miller, says of Melilot or Sweet Clover, "It seems there are yet a good many bee keepers who know but little about sweet clover. As I have raised it for over 20 years, I think I have had some experience with it. I have sown it at nearly all times, and never had it to fail. I have sown it in the fall, in March, April, May and June, and it has always grown for me. I have sown it with wheat, oats and alone. It is not best to sow it to thiek. It does not stay in bloom as long when sown to thiek. I sow from six to eight pounds per acre; four pounds will do where it is all well gotten in."

We find that there are a great many people who practice dividing instead of natural swarming who still advocate letting the queenless part of the division rear their own queen whether they had made any previous preparation or not. Now this may answer for some, but not any divisions of that kind for us. Colonies should only be divided when the conditions are favorable to natural swarming, and to divide and keep one half of the colony about twenty days without a laying queen is simply nineteen days lost time, as they are constantly losing numbers of bees from age and accidents, and if they simply hold their own by increase in bees from the hatching brood they are doing well, then another twenty days before young workers are beginning to hatch, when by giving them a laying queen at time of division there will only be from two to four days in which there are no bees hatching, from the larva taken from the old colony and the eggs laid by the new queen, and during the time taken to raise a queen in the one case, the queen in the other will have laid eggs enough to make a full colony of bees, so that in case one had to buy queens, it is simply the price of a queen against the bees for a full colony.

→ The Nebraska Bee-Keeper ←

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By

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The Apiary at the Experiment Station is one of "the things that be."

And it now is in order for the bee keepers of the state to ask for tests and work along the line of progress which most interests us, but in asking for experimental work don't go back backward and take up old theories and work which our advanced workers have discarded long ago. Make it a school for the young to learn newer methods as well as to train them to think for themselves.

The next meeting of the Nebraska State Bee Keepers Ass'n will be held at Lincoln during the week of the State Fair, beginning on Tuesday evening, Sept. 11. The convention will be held

in connection with the honey show and in the honey house on the State Fair Grounds. There will be a good program and we expect to have a full report so as to be published.

Make arrangements to bring some bees or honey to the fair and attend every meeting of the convention.

Office seekers, looking for seats in our next Legislature, are getting to be nearly as thick as it is said that fiddlers are in a certain place, and they are ready to promise to do anything if only you vote their way. Now make them promise to help the Bee Industry in Nebraska a little, make them say so squarely and then brand them if elected and do not do as they agree.

Some of "the fruit folks," keep trying to make us believe that bees are not essential to the perfect polenization of fruit. Keep right on and perchance they may talk themselves into thinking it not necessary to have any polen at all.

The fruit just grows 'cause it's natural, that's all. If the two industries cannot live peaceably together let the fruit men pull up their trees and move out. We came to stay.

Experiment Station Bulletins Received.

University of Illinois, Agricultural Experiment Station, Champaign. Bulletin No. 32. An Acid Test of Cream. Bulletin No. 33. The Chinch Bug in Southern Illinois.

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Raising Chickens.

We have now fully entered the season of raising chickens and also the season of rustle in every department of farm life, and it is no less a season of rustle, care and anxiety to the poultry man, especially the new beginners. One coop is too fat, hens wont lay, (and it is quite easy to get Asiatics too fat at this time of year) and in another yard it is found that the eggs are not fertile. One hen trusted with the incubation of high priced eggs has given up the job of setting in a week and left the nest etc. All this is at this season of the year is coming to light and after all this to endure and the expense added, to bring poultry to a higher degree of excellence. If a few dollars is asked for the fine specimens in the fall, the would be purchaser is surprised, and many times goes and buys a cheap scrub with nothing to recommend him but color, and that not perfect; the result is not good and the whole poultry business will be denounced as a fraud next spring.

There has been a great deal of improvement in breeds the past 30 years in the quality of their flesh, in egg production, in beauty and uniformity of color, and in the ease of fattening readily, but we cannot say there has been so much improvement in the way of raising chick-

ens, if we except modern convenience, arrangements and care. Our chickens are lousy today as well as ever; they sicken and die now as fast as they did thirty years ago, if neglected. There is more profit now, a-days raising poultry than in times of yore' and it is to this point that we call especial attention.

If one would follow the advice of some writers on how to raise chickens, he would be everlastingly contriving the most palatable food for their use, fussing and pampering with condiments, developing food, bone meal, ground shell and such like, which are of no permanent and essential value to a healthy chicken. Fowls, animals or bipeds raised artificially, never attain that physical development, stamina, hardiness and vigor which nature, natural food and natural conditions ever bestow to organic life. The chick from the shell needs healthy and nutritious food, plenty of sunlight and fresh air, agreeable exercise, and comfortable shelter from rain and cold.

It is folly for farmers to attempt following the routine of fanciers who live in villages or towns and who are crowded for room, and obliged to raise their fowls in an artificial way. They get good prices for their eggs and prime birds, and in order to keep them in presentable condition for sale and exhibition, they must supply them with artificially prepared food and other necessities in lieu of the natural food they would get if raised

on farms or suburban places and allowed freedom.

There is one rule of action the farmer should follow out in raising poultry and that is to give them proper care and make them comfortable. He should begin with good stock, select the breeding fowls for vigor and from these raise young stock. The old habit of selecting eggs from a promiscuous flock is poor policy; endeavor to breed to uniformity and from a selected pen. The main foundation for success is in healthy stock, and that the farmer can secure because he is not influenced by standard requirements.

When one is ready to raise chickens to sell and replace the old birds, his object is to raise all he can conveniently. After selecting the eggs, you want a faithful sitter, and one that is free from lice and parasites. If this precaution is not taken into account, every chicken of the brood will become lousy. The hen should be dusted frequently with insect powder and the chickens examined after hatching out. After being well brooded, a little hard boiled egg and stale bread crumbs sopped in milk, or broken pieces of cracker with a little milk for the first few days. A little dry oat meal and millet seed for a change, followed with baked oat meal or johnny cake, crushed wheat, or midlings and barley meal baked. Some sharp sand may be placed around the coop, and fresh water or milk in shallow dishes. In front of

the coop rake the ground so they can dust, and at night put a false bottom or bedding to keep them off the cold and damp ground. These are the main requisites for young chickens. J. W.

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From Poultry Gleanings.

The pullet of this year, hatched in April, or thereafter, and which should begin to lay in November, though she may be as large as the old hen, does not become clear of feathers and moult, as is the case with those of previous years hatch, for the reason, that she has been moulting during the time she was growing, and thus was constantly making new feathers. It is therefore, understood by some that the pullet does not moult the first year though in reality she has been moulting from chickenhood. The pullet hatched in March, or earlier in the year, on the contrary, is liable to act like an old hen, and begin the process of moulting along in November or December, which is just the time when she should be laying. Knowing this, in order to avoid moulting, some poultrymen will not hatch their pullets out before the middle of March.

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The growing of feathers is a trying ordeal, and the consequence is that when the hen begins to moult she ceases to lay, as she cannot well produce feathers and eggs at the same time. Feathers are composed largely of nitrogen and mineral matter, and the food of moult-

ing time must be very nutritious.

To feed a hen corn at this time is simply a waste, as she cannot produce new feathers from such a diet.

If she is on the range she will have a better opportunity of plying her needs, but if the feathering process is extended over too much, the hen becomes exhausted, and on the first exposure to cold or a rain storm the croup attacks her, and her career is ended.

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