Who is to Blame?

The season for selling and buying fancy eggs will soon be here and another record of wrongs will be recorded. The buyer will think he is the offended one and the fancier will think that his troubles will never cease. The fancier will send out a setting of eggs, believing them to be all right, and in time will receive a letter denouncing him as a fraud, etc. He may send out, say, three settings of eggs from the same yard on the same day to three separate parties. One will report a good hatch; one will say nothing and one will report a bad hatch. Who is to blame? Last season we remember sending two settings of turkey eggs to different parties in California. One setting hatched every egg; the other hatched but four or five turks—we forget which. Eggs sent 3,000 miles often hatch better than eggs sent twenty-five miles—according to reports. So we could go on indefinitely, but enough. Who is to blame? Well, we don't know. All fanciers are not alike, neither are their flocks. The big breeder may not have any better stock than the small breeder. We believe most of the fault is due to ignorance on the part of the buyer. He is often either a beginner or else a careless and indifferent poultry keeper.

Let us give a few directions. After receiving eggs from a distance unpack them and let them rest on their side for eight or ten hours and then turn them part way over and let them rest again for a few hours. Place them carefully under a gentle hen at night without disturbing her any more than possible and then watch that hen for twenty-one days, but above all, do not put more than ten eggs under a fair sized hen, for such eggs cost too much to risk anything. Of course the hen should be all ready to receive the eggs when they arrive. Always order eggs a few weeks before they are wanted and state when they are to be shipped. No hen can set properly unless free from lice and in all ways comfortable.

Now the fancier's part is to have good, strong, healthy stock and to know that the eggs he sends out are true to name and fertile. This last can only be ascertained by occasionally setting a few and testing them after the sixth day. We are presuming that both buyer and seller are honest people. We are sorry to say, it is not always the case, says the Agricultural Epitomist. We have found that the great majority of buyers are honest even if ignorant in poultry matters. Most fanciers will do all in their power to make amends when a report of failure is received, but here comes the question, What is a failure? Most fanciers, while they wish every egg to hatch, yet consider a 50 per cent hatch good enough. If a party pays $2 for a setting of eggs and raises four birds worth one to four dollars each, it ought to be considered a fair hatch, but this point will have to be decided by each individual.

Many fanciers have stopped selling eggs because of many rather highly flavored complaints heaped upon them, and not always with justice. Here is a case that was told us the other day. A young man wrote to a fancier for a setting of eggs (15). In due time they arrived, were set and thirteen chicks hatched. The young man then wrote to the fancier, telling him that only five chicks hatched and that the fancier ought to send him more eggs, but he didn't want any more of that kind of stock, but to send two other kinds in place of them, which the fancier did and he hatched five and three chicks respectively. The young man raised eighteen chicks in all from one dollar (and charges) worth of eggs. We hope that this is an exceptional case. We believe that the buyer often has just cause for complaint. The first question ought to be, Am I to blame? Always report successes as well as failure, for a little sauce will make the pill go down easier. This we know—eggs from strong, healthy stock, properly fertilized, will hatch as well, whether sent 3,000 miles or ten miles—if properly packed and handled.

Black Minorcas.

Many poultry shows have been held in Washington and the Northwest in the last few weeks. These have increased the interest of many in poultry and the various breeds exhibited. Among others, they will have noticed the beautiful shining black Minorcas. Some may be interested to know where this breed came from and where it received its name.

They have been bred and raised for centuries on the island of Minorca, on the southeastern coast of Spain, but only recently have they been introduced into this country. They were named after the island. They have attracted much attention from the start, and are continually becoming more popular. In general appearance they resemble the Black Spanish and Leghorns, except being larger. They have red faces, white ear lobes, large single combs and legs clean of feathers. Their chief merit is as egg producers, and they rank among the first in this. They lay a nice, large, white egg.

Klondike Eggs.

As the experiment of taking frozen eggs to the Klondike country last fall proved a success, although the experimenter sold his eggs before he reached Klondike, it is probable that a good many eggs will be taken the coming fall in that manner. By that time it will be comparatively easy to get freight through, and fresh eggs, even if they have been frozen, will be a luxury which the miners will appreciate and pay for. In the meantime a great many eggs are being eaten by people who are on their way to Klondike and Alaska. Evaporated eggs are occasionally mentioned as a portion of a Klondike outfit. Crystallized eggs are having quite a large sale for that trade.

Keeping Eggs.

A Frenchman, M. Bournof, claims the following is an extra good way to preserve eggs: Dissolve in two-thirds of warm olive oil one-third of beeswax, and cover each egg completely with a thin layer of this pomade applied with the tip of the finger. The egg shell by degrees absorbs the oil, and each of the pores becomes filled with the wax, which heremetically seals them. The discoverer also thinks that the germ may be preserved in this manner for a considerable length of time.

The National Agricultural School, of Germany, has been investigating all the principal methods of preserving eggs, over twenty ways in all.

After the cackle berries (as one young man humorously calls them), had been kept six months, all of those soaked with brine, one of the commonest methods, were found to be unfit for use through having been saturated with salt. Of the other methods, those which succeeded best are included in the following list: Of the eggs packed in bran, 70 per cent were spoiled; those rubbed with bacon, only 30 per cent; packed in wood ashes, 20 per cent; treated with potassium permangamate, 20 per cent; coated with vaseline and kept in lime water, all good.

Under no circumstances leave a horse untied. It may be entirely safe ninety-nine times; then the hundredth time you'll wish you hadn't, and wish very hard.

Reports of fall wheat at Lewiston are encouraging, none having been killed so far.

EMPIRE STRAIN

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