

**200 EGGS A YEAR PER HEN: HOW  
TO GET THEM. A PRACTICAL  
TREATISE ON EGG MAKING AND  
ITS CONDITIONS AND PROFITS IN  
POULTRY**

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200 Eggs a Year Per Hen: How to Get Them. A Practical Treatise on Egg Making and Its Conditions and Profits in Poultry by Edgar Warren

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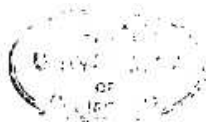
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## CHAPTER I.

### THE TWO HUNDRED EGG HEN.

We hear a good deal said in these days about the 200 egg hen. Some are disposed to deny her existence, and to class her with such fabulous or semi-fabulous birds as the phoenix and dodo. Others admit that she has appeared in isolated instances, but is by no means common. Others contend that if she should appear in large numbers it would be a misfortune rather than otherwise, for such excessive egg production would weaken her system so that her eggs would not hatch healthy and vigorous chicks; and the 200 egg hen would be in constant danger of extinction from her own success.

One thing is certain, however, the 200 egg hen is no myth. There are many of them scattered about, and the tribe is on the increase. My reputation for truth and veracity is reasonably good; yet I am willing to make oath that I had a flock of 14 White Wyandottes that from October to October gave me a total of 2999 eggs, an average of a little better than 214 eggs apiece. There are others who can beat this. Men are already talking of the 250 egg hen, and before we realize it she will be here.

I do not see how a man can draw an arbitrary line, and say how many eggs a hen may or may not lay in a year. The hen in her wild state lays from six to ten; the average farmer's hen not over 100; while on egg farms the average is raised to 150. But why stop here? There are 365 days in a year; and I do not see why a pullet that is fully matured, that comes from an egg producing strain, that is properly fed and cared for and kept steadily at work, may not lay at least 200 eggs in that time.

I am prepared to admit that a hen will not lay 200 eggs a year without constant and intelligent care. I am also prepared to admit that in some cases the number of eggs extra a hen will lay where she has this constant and intelligent care will not pay for the time consumed, and that it may be more profitable to get an average of say 150 eggs a year than a larger number. But I believe that in the poultry business, as in every other, it is well to have a high ideal. The man who inscribes on his banner, "Two Hundred Eggs a Year Per Hen," and then comes as near it as he can, will make more money and have more fun than will the man who is content to take what comes along.



## THE HEREDITY OF THE TWO HUNDRED EGG HEN.

When I was a boy a mile in 2:40 was regarded as a great performance for a trotting horse. There were horses that had trotted under 2:40, much under, but they were few. I remember it was the custom for us urchins to cry out whenever a man drove by at a slashing gait, "Go it, two-forty!" I am not an old man yet by any means—my wife tells me that I am young—but I have lived to see the trotting record come down and down until it has dropped below the two minute mark. A horse that cannot trot in less than 2:40 is regarded as a good horse for a woman to drive, but out of place on the track.

What has brought the record down and down until men are looking for the two minute horse? Heredity and handling! A trotting horse now has a pedigree as long as a European monarch. The blood of generations of trotters flows in his veins. It may be the ancestral lines converge in the great Messenger himself.

Heredity and handling! These two things are as necessary for the 200 egg hen as for the two minute horse. Men do not gather grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles. The 200 egg hen must be bred to lay. She must come from an egg-producing strain. No matter how scientifically a man may feed or how hygienically he may house, he cannot take a flock of hens of any old breed or no breed and get 200 eggs a year apiece from them. It is impossible. By carefully following the instructions of this book he can largely increase the egg yield of such a flock, but he must not expect to get 200 eggs a year apiece. I cannot impress it too strongly upon the reader's mind that if he expects to get 200 eggs a year apiece from his hens he must start in with a great laying strain.

### WHAT BREED IS BEST?

There is an old Latin proverb, *De gustibus non est disputandum*, which I will take the liberty to translate for the benefit of those who have been out of school for some time. Its meaning is this: In matters of taste there is no argument. This is as true in the poultry business as it is elsewhere. Other things being equal that breed is the best for a man which he likes best. There is no breed that combines all the excellences and has none of the defects. There is no breed that does not have its admirers. In general it may be said that the most profitable breeds are to be

found in the Asiatic, American and Mediterranean classes, as follows: In the Asiatic class the Light Brahmas, Black Langshans, Buff and Partridge Cochins; in the American class the Barred, Buff and White Plymouth Rocks, all the Wyandottes and the Rhode Island Reds; in the Mediterranean class the Black Minorcas, Brown, White and Buff Leghorns. These are the great money-making varieties. The Asiatics are excellent table fowls and prolific layers of dark brown eggs. They are good sitters and mothers, although somewhat clumsy. They are inclined to be sluggish and readily take on fat. They stand cold well, and make good winter layers. The Mediterraneans are egg machines, turning out great quantities of white-shelled eggs. They do not stand cold as well as the Asiatic and American breeds, and are not as good fowls for the table. The Americans on the whole are the favorites. They are all-round birds, good layers of brown eggs, excellent for the table, good sitters and mothers. They stand cold well, and are the birds for farmers and breeders. The danger with every breed is that it will get into the hands of the fanciers and be bred for points rather than for utility. Stamina is the important thing, and not the show card. It will be a great day for the poultry business when farmers keep more pure-bred fowls, for then the great standard varieties may be kept up without danger of deterioration.

#### HOW MANY VARIETIES SHALL I KEEP?

After studying the matter carefully, I have come to the conclusion that it is better for the average poultryman to confine himself to one variety. He will get better results and make more money if he concentrates his energies than he will if he dissipates them. After a man has made a success with one variety he may perhaps add another, and even a third; but the best poultrymen do not handle many varieties, and some of the most successful confine themselves to one. Where several varieties are kept I would suggest that there be some principle of unity determining the choice. Let the birds all be of one color—say white, black or buff—or let them all be of one family like the Leghorns, Wyandottes or Plymouth Rocks. Where the fowls are all of one family they will have the same characteristics and respond to the same treatment. In case of an accidental mix-up the damage is reduced to a minimum, for the birds are all of the same size, comb and contour.

### HOW MANY RECORDS ARE WRECKED.

Some time ago I received a letter from a young lady who is an enthusiastic poultrywoman, in which she said that she was getting a goodly number of eggs, but that her record was lowered because she had kept over half a dozen hens which had laid well the year before. She said that she knew better, but could not resist the temptation. I mention this case because it is so typical. More egg records are wrecked by keeping old hens in the flock than in any other way! There is always a temptation when a hen has laid well to keep her the second year. This temptation must be resisted if one is in quest of a big egg record. The fact that a hen has laid well for one year since coming to maturity incapacitates her from ever laying so well again. She has drained her system, and requires recuperation before she can lay even moderately. *You may set it down as an axiom that it is the pullets that give the big egg records.* If you have in your flock some hens that you desire to keep a second year as a reward for past services, or for breeders and mothers, put them in a pen by themselves and do not look for more than a moderate egg production from them. It is the pullets that lay, and the early-hatched pullets at that. Get out your chickens in March, April or May, according to the breed, if you want winter layers.

### WEED OUT THE NON-LAYERS.

Reports from the Maine Experiment Station, where trap nests are used and individual records kept, show that among hens of the same breed and kept under the same conditions there is a great difference in egg production. One Barred Plymouth Rock laid 251 eggs in one year, while another in the same flock laid but eight. A White Wyandotte pullet laid 219 eggs, while another of the same breed laid absolutely none. These figures are most significant, showing as they do the absolute necessity of weeding out the non-producers. Suppose you have two hens in a pen, and one lays 200 eggs a year and the other none. The average for the two is 100 eggs apiece. In other words, the non-layer has reduced the pen record one-half. It costs a dollar a year to feed a hen, and this money is thrown away if the hen does not lay. The one absolutely sure way of identifying the layers and non-layers is by the use of the trap nest; but this takes time, and many do not feel that it pays. Still