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PROFITABLE BREEDS OF POULTRY

BY A. S. WHEELER

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PROFITABLE BREEDS
OF POULTRY

Profitable Breeds of Poultry

BY
ARTHUR S. WHEELER

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PROFITABLE BREEDS
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CHAPTER I

STOCK—GOOD AND BAD

IN making a start with poultry, to select a good breed and, within that breed, the most suitable variety, is important. The statement reads tritely, but the truth involved is often hidden from the beginner. Since poultry-raising may be entered into, on a small scale, with little capital, and since accounts of big profits made by it appear frequently in print, it appeals to many persons who have slight business experience and no special information. One novice commences with the idea, acquired from some battered human almanac, that scrub hens are as good as any; another goes for instruction to the nearest owner of fowls, whose knowledge may be very limited. Another, who would

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discount a neighbor's advice as prejudiced, pays a large price blindly to a stranger, on the strength of a noisy advertisement.

It is unfortunate that the printed matter which usually falls into the beginner's hands is not of a critical kind. Catalogues issued by breeders and poultry-supply houses are one-sided, and poultry journals are conventional. The custom is to divide breeds roughly into three classes: the meat class, the egg class, and the general-purpose class. Within any one of these broad divisions, the journals must avoid editorial opinions as to comparative value. The regular answer, for example, to the oft-repeated question concerning the relative merits of Orpingtons, Plymouth Rocks, Wyandottes, and Rhode Island Reds is: "All are good, and none is better than the others." This answer may be correct, as far as it goes; nevertheless there are differences which it is worth while to understand. I suppose most poultry keepers in whom the fever persists discover their favorite breeds by trying many. The process, though interesting, is wasteful.

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Shifting the breed entails not only expense but loss of time.

Of course, when one considers in detail the characteristics of various breeds, one is taking the hen seriously. If there is any good reason why, as a source of income, she should not be taken seriously, it is not evident. Granting the importance of coin of the realm, a billion-dollar industry is a pretty important thing; and it was by patient attention to details that the poultry industry was built up. The man who squats for an hour in a henhouse on a cold winter's day, to study the points of his breeding birds, may arouse a beholder's sense of humor, but he is the fellow who will get from his matings offspring ten per cent better than the parents, and consequently more profitable.

The common opinion that "fancy" chickens and careful methods are amateurish is a harsh comment upon the intelligence of those who hold it. Only poor, pig-headed, or ignorant people now breed cattle or poultry in a haphazard way. Ignorance is excusable in the beginner, especially as regards

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poultry, but poverty, short of destitution, doesn't excuse the breeder of scrubs on a dunghill, for the cost of honest standard-bred (pure) stock is not prohibitive, and the profit, with good management, is in proportion to quality.

If birds are bought in the autumn, to be killed off during the year for the family table, scrubs will do, and may be kept sloppily, provided the family taste isn't exacting and the neighbors don't object. But allow scrubs to multiply, and trouble begins. To maintain the quality of a standard-bred line is sufficiently difficult, to predict the kind of offspring that a mongrel flock will yield is utterly impossible. One can, however, be pretty sure that mongrels will run down, whereas not only the purpose, but to a high degree the result, of breeding toward a definite standard is the creation of a type of fowl that can be relied upon to reproduce itself uniformly.

Vigor is retained in a standard-bred flock by selection, with reference to ancestry no less than to the size, shape, and color of the

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birds to be mated; but a mongrel has so much ancestry that so far as taking advantage of hereditary influence is concerned, it has none. I think mongrel-breeding can scarcely be condemned too savagely. It is the industry's slum, where filth and degeneration abound. Scrubs in a dooryard suggest a sloven not far away; and in general, the quality and condition of poultry reflect the owner's character.

A self-respecting man will provide decent quarters, and a shrewd one will bring his flock up to at least a grade level—that is, a level which shows a preponderance of the blood of a recognized breed. Grades, however, are compromises at best. Their possibilities in no way equal those of a standard-bred foundation. The improvement of grade fowls by the introduction of standard-bred males is to be recommended, but if a grade flock fell into my hands, I would sell it and put the money obtained from the sale into a few birds of the pure blood. In so doing, I should not act from any sentimental consideration, but for the sake of an eventual

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profit in dollars and cents through regular market channels.

True, some standard-bred birds are weaklings, and decisions in the showroom occasionally seem to encourage the breeding of poultry for color alone. At a recent exhibition, a large, vigorous pullet of mine lost first place to one that was slightly undersized and, in my opinion, of poor shape. The winner, however, was far in advance of its class in color, and it was within the logical power of the judge to give it the blue ribbon, in addition to the "color special" to which it was clearly entitled. Color is of great practical importance, because it systematizes the work of breeding; without it, there would be chaos. As near-perfection in it is extremely difficult to attain, the remarkably well-colored specimen is given the benefit of every doubt.

Theoretically, a blue ribbon ought under no circumstances to be awarded to a bird that is lacking in size and vigor, but in practice, the judge—who, one should always remember, has the opportunity, which a visitor

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usually has not, to handle all the entries in the class—renders the best decisions that he can in accordance with his experience. While a few judges are incompetent and an exception may be dishonest, most of them are thoroughly honest and capable, and decisions which seem bad are in some cases really good, in others merely the results of inevitable defects in an otherwise fairly satisfactory system.

The science of breeding has been worked out carefully, and until one becomes much more skilful than any beginner can be, it is best to follow the rules closely. Crossing, except by way of experiment, is poor policy. A good general-purpose breed will meet all ordinary demands; if a special purpose is to be served, a special breed can be found to serve it. A single variety is enough for the average plant. It should be chosen intelligently, clung to, and studied with an eye to the greatest possible profit, in both money and pleasure. There is nothing shameful in being well-informed about poultry, or in being enthusiastic. Ye ancient platitude

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applies: "A thing that is worth doing, is worth doing well."

In six of the following chapters, I have tried to describe briefly some of the profitable breeds; to give a little information about their histories; and to show what may be expected from each of them. With regard to the historical side, the truth is that there is no breed, and only an occasional variety, of which the origin is not in dispute. I have given the versions which strike me as most logical, with such comments as seemed to come within the province of a handbook. The reader who desires lengthy argument must seek it in books written by specialists.

Since it is next to impossible to describe vividly without employing comparison, I have compared breeds with each other freely; and this method makes doubly necessary a warning which should be emphasized whenever breeds are discussed. A statement that one breed excels another in laying-power doesn't mean that every hen of the first will lay better than any hen of the second. Statements of that sort, unqualified,

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are misleading, for laying depends very much upon feeding and handling, and upon the strain—"strain" being the term used to denote birds bred in line by one person or one firm for several generations and showing in consequence fixed characteristics peculiar to themselves. Good fowls can be ruined by improper feeding, and a good strain of a poor breed is more productive than a poor strain of a good breed.

For instance: the average **Cornish** hen doesn't lay as many eggs, per year, as the average **Rhode Island Red** hen, but good **Cornish** hens, rightly fed and housed, lay more eggs than weak, poorly bred and raised **Reds**. Therefore the buyer, having decided upon his breed and variety, should use just as much care in selecting, within the variety, a good strain. It is a good idea to attend a couple of shows and get definite notions of quality from the birds exhibited. Most of the large exhibits, and some of the small ones, are accompanied by handlers who explain their birds' points. It is to the interest of these handlers, who are often the owners,

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to be courteous and truthful, and I doubt if there is a sound basis for the complaint, sometimes made by visitors, that no notice is taken of the information-seeking novice.

A show's chief purpose, which is to call public attention to standard-bred poultry, is defeated unless questions are answered. A showbird, from a business view point, is an advertisement. Though many of the specimens shown are offered for sale, it is as a rule unwise to purchase cooped birds for use in a breeding-pen. The long hours and mauling of the showroom tend to have a weakening effect. One should make inquiry of the breeder concerning unshown stock, and visit his plant if possible.

When one is obliged to order by mail, ordinary common-sense is the best guide. The buyer should always insist upon the privilege, cheerfully accorded by reputable dealers, of returning stock which, upon delivery, does not satisfy; but, on the other hand, it is absurd to assume that the dealer is a rascal, express to him the fear of being cheated, and finish by putting him "on his

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honor.” The dreary list of fool buyers nursing causeless grievances is almost as long as is the roster of unfortunates who have been unmercifully trimmed by charlatans. Last but not least: Don’t expect to get much for little; nobody is selling for a dollar and a half a bird qualified to win at Madison Square.

CHAPTER II

THE PLYMOUTH ROCKS

THE other evening I asked the Old Poultryman what breed of poultry he considered the best. Leaning over the gate and punctuating his sentence with harryings of the wayside dust, he answered:

“ Well—ffst!—I’ve tried ’em all—ffst! —an’ they can’t none of ’em beat the good ol’ Plymouth Rock, nossir—ffst! ”

Not only do many agree with him, but the fowl he favors is probably better known than any other in the land of its birth. Ask ten men of American parentage—you can find them in almost any large town—to name quickly a breed of chickens, and nine of them are likely to shout: “ Plymouth Rock! ”

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The tenth will be trying to recall the name of those gray-and-brownish birds that used to half run, half fly, into the dooryard when Mother called, "Cheek, cheek!"

Undoubtedly the name itself has had a good deal of influence; one remembers Plymouth Rock more easily than, say, Wyandotte, just as Standish clings closer to the memory than Steuben. Little Miles with his big sword and the gray rock that pious Pilgrim feet are supposed to have trod connote both Romance and Reliability. Let a fowl, a hotel, or a toothpowder be named for either of them, and it has a good start toward success. But it is also true that the Plymouth Rock hen would have become popular under another name. She might justly be described as a certain collector of china was accustomed to describe his favorite teapot: "This, now, is a very meritorious article."

When the Old Poultryman said Plymouth Rock, he meant Barred Rock; if one wants to refer to Whites or Buffs, one does so specifically. The Barred variety is the oldest

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and is widely distributed. Maine and Michigan love it well, and many a flock follows greedily the shallow trail of the Virginia plow. Farmers breed the Barred Rock; it is hardy and a good forager, and therefore demands a minimum of care. Activity and hardiness are important always, but doubly so when the attitude of the keeper toward poultry in general, and his own in particular, is merely tolerant. This attitude is passing, and some farmers have fine flocks and tend them carefully.

It still obtains in many districts, however, and somewhat in proportion to the popularity of Rocks among oldtime farmers is the percentage of undersized and comparatively unprofitable birds. The farmer's Rock, in sharp contrast to the big, bright, snappily barred bird that ought to be representative, is often dingy in color and as light in weight as a Dominique. To trace the various breeds that have contributed to its making would be amusing, were the task possible. Leghorn, Dominique, Hamburg, Java, and only Heaven knows how many others! The

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best way to improve it is by the introduction of Standard-bred males.

The Standard-bred Barred Rock itself has a plentiful sufficiency of ancestors. Here are some of the early crosses which are said to have been used to produce it: Black Spanish sire on White Cochin hens, and the offspring bred to Dominiques; Black Spanish sire on Dorking females, and a Dominique top-cross; Dominique sire on Buff Cochin hens; and a cross in which Black Javas figured, the resulting pullets being mated to Dominique cocks. It will have been noted that in every case Dominiques—barred fowls popular a half-century ago—appear as the determining factors. This is the basis for the statement, sometimes made, that Barred Rocks are in reality modified Dominiques. As a matter of fact, a variety that has been bred so long and that must, inevitably, have been subjected to many experiments, defies accurate analysis.

Hundreds of breeders have tried to improve it, and of most of these efforts there are no records. A fair-sized volume could

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be filled with the theories that have been advanced, but many practical writers content themselves, and very likely a majority of their readers, with the assertion that the Barred Rocks are descended from the Dominiques and the Javas. The explanation is a fairly safe one, for no one can deny that it would have been natural to cross Javas and Dominiques, with the idea of getting a fowl more satisfactory than either, and, for direct evidence of one source, we have the barred coloring. But inasmuch as all barred fowls tend to throw black as well as white sports, the black feathers that so frequently occur and the occasional black chicks can scarcely be taken as pointing to Java ancestors. Apropos of black Rocks: the English have some that vary from most black poultry by having yellow legs.

The Barred Rock has always been a fancier's fowl, as well as a farmer's. Between the fancy Rocks and even the best of the utility birds, however, there are wide differences; the variety is an extremely diffi-

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cult one to breed for points, and none save an expert to-day has a chance to win at a big show except with a purchased bird. Indeed, very few people know what an exhibition Barred Rock should be. I remember the fury of a young agriculturalist, anent a decision that had left his cockerel unplaced. "Why," said he, "that bird o' mine weighs ten pound, and that one you put first won't go over eight." The show happened to be a small one, and the judge, an old and patient man, took the two specimens out of the coops, and compared them, point by point. When he had finished, the exhibitor was a greatly surprised person.

But that particular judge, though he loves Barred Rocks and is competent to handle a class according to the Standard, no longer breeds them. Personally, he has been alienated by the adoption of color requirements that necessitate double mating. Concerning these requirements, the Standard has the following to say:

"The plumage should be grayish-white, each feather crossed by regular, narrow,

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parallel, sharply-defined, dark bars that stop short of positive black; free from shafting, brownish tinge, or metallic sheen; the light and dark bars to be of equal width and to extend throughout the length of the feathers in all sections of the fowl, each feather on females ending with a narrow, dark tip, the combination of overlapping feathers giving the plumage a bluish appearance."

And again: "The colors should be modified black and white in all sections, the bars narrow, regular, and running parallel across the feathers, the over-lapping of the feathers producing a bluish tinge when viewed under certain light-reflections. The perfect colored Barred Plymouth Rock should show the same shade of color in all sections and be barred to the skin."

The colors of male and female are given under a single heading, and this is to be interpreted as meaning that male and female should be of the same shade. Actually, pullets and cockerels from the same mating differ by several shades, the cockerels being the lighter; therefore, breeders are obliged to

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resort to the use of dark females in some pens in order to get exhibition cockerels. Since this increases the number of breeding-birds that must be kept, fanciers who are limited for room often specialize in either cockerels or pullets, and one sees such advertisements as, "Pullet Line Bred Exclusively."

Another difficulty is created by the demand for a combination of dark tips and strong under-barring, for in practice the clearer a specimen's under-barring, the less likely it is to have dark-tipped feathers, and vice versa. It is claimed by many that if a slightly lighter shade were allowed in males and the importance of undercolor were not so heavily emphasized, not only would breeding be simplified, but the variety would gain in vigor while losing nothing in beauty. Certain it is that the rage for birds "barred to the skin" has resulted in the awarding of prizes to many birds very unsatisfactory in shape and surface-color.

I think fanciers at present are inclined to over-estimate the value of under color in

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general. If, for example, you hand a Rhode Island Red to a fancier, he immediately digs down into the feathers of the back on a hunt for impurities in the under-coloring, and the discovery of a little "smoke" will cause him to shake his head gravely. Yet only very few dark Reds have backs free from smoke, and those few—so slender is the chance of getting a near-perfect bird—are likely to have much more serious defects, such as small size or poor shape. The Red breed-standard provides that if two specimens are equal in other ways, the one having the richest undercolor shall win, but the Standard of Perfection contains no such provision, nor if it did, would an interpretation that gave undercolor the preference over surface-color be correct.

A Red or a Rock should have, in the first place, size and vigor; in the second, good shape; in the third, surface-color that is rich, clear, and even. If a strong undercolor can be combined with these qualities, well and good; theoretically, the contentions that Reds should be red to the skin and Barred

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Rocks barred are sufficiently logical. To argue that clear barring throughout the Rock feather is unnatural is to argue beside the point, since scientific poultry-breeding doesn't follow nature, but tries by selection to make the natural product more effective, within reasonable limits. Only if a sense of proportion is lost, does Nature revolt. Put undercolor before vigor and surface-color, and you get a weak, ugly bird.

Though fanciers by excess of zeal and others by indifference have worked injury, there are thousands of Barred Rocks that can stand comparison, for general value, with fowls of any other breed. They are hardy and excellent layers and of a useful size. They have yellow legs and yellow skin. Their flesh is rather coarse, but of good flavor. Their worst faults, from the poultryman's point of view, are their habit of extreme broodiness and the ease with which they take on fat. A Rock hen will sit on a batch of eggs or a china doorknob longer and harder than any other general-purpose fowl, and will die of apoplexy from the effects of

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a ration that a Wyandotte can cheerfully assimilate.

In handling such a bird, skill is at a premium. It's a hard thing to break up a broody hen quickly without hurting her, and feeding calls for more care than any other of the poultryman's everyday tasks. One doesn't rejoice, after killing a hen, to find that the corn one has fed her with the laudable intention of keeping her warm has been utilized by her for the acquisition of a big bunch of posterior fat.

The Standard of Perfection defines Rock shape as moderately long and moderately deep. That is, the reader is expected to be familiar with long, deep birds and short, shallow ones, and to visualize the Rock as a happy medium. This definition applies equally to all varieties, and outline drawings of ideal White, Barred, and Buff Rocks should agree perfectly with each other. In reality, however, the Whites are the longest. As a solid color, and especially white, is comparatively easy to regulate, breeders of Whites have been able to give a large pro-

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portion of their attention to shape, and a long-backed type has resulted.

Length in poultry is popular, and perhaps justly so, and the White Rock has friends who wind the bugle loudly. It is a good layer and dresses off splendidly for market. Therefore it is suitable for the large poultryman. Also, we find it recommended for use on "gentlemen's country places," on account of "the pleasing contrast of the pretty white birds running about on the greensward," etc. Unhappily, most of us do not own large market plants, nor—though we strive dutifully to be gentlemen!—do we possess country places, in the sense of large areas of lawn over which chickens are permitted to roam, in pleasing contrast or otherwise. Our space is limited, and so is the time that we can give to our fowls; we like to exhibit a bird occasionally, but don't care to run a small laundry every time we prepare one for the showroom.

White fowls, whether allowed free range or not, must be washed before being exhibited and when kept in confinement, man-

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age to look dirty and bedraggled most of the time. The general objection to them, on the utility side, is expressed by a principle which is pretty well established, that white doesn't indicate vigor, but rather suggests a lack of it. Such an objection need not deter anyone who has a real preference for them, but I think that the unbiased person, who wishes to keep fowls for pleasure or as a sideline, is likely to find them both less profitable and less interesting than buff or parti-colored birds.

The White Rock is true Rock by blood as well as in name, being descended from sports thrown by Barred birds, and has the two special Rock faults—the tendency to take on fat and the extreme broodiness. The Buff Rocks owe their origin to combinations of White Rocks, early Rhode Island Reds, Buff Cochins, and Light Brahmas. Probably there is very little Rock blood in them to-day, though they have been bred to conform to the Rock type. They are very good utility birds indeed and easy to handle. To say that they are better on the utility side

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than the two varieties whose name they borrow would be going too far; if their faults are less prominent, so are their virtues.

As to their color, buff, and especially the golden shade which is in vogue, is a good, practical color for a flock. The difficulty of getting and holding it in a rich, even, harmonious blend is pretty well shown by the sweep-stakes handicaps allotted by the Standard. Buff birds are given one point over white birds and half a point over black ones, but must concede a point to part-colored competitors. That is, with perfection fixed at one hundred, it is officially considered easier by one per cent to approach perfection in buffs than in birds that carry two or more colors, and harder by one per cent and one half of one per cent, respectively, than it is to succeed with whites and blacks.

This rating has been much cussed and discussed, but is allowed to stand for the simple reason that a fairer one isn't in sight. Argument about it runs around in a ring, because it is perfectly easy to prove, to the satisfac-

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tion of the person advancing the proof, that a color has been harshly treated. Buff breeders complain that their struggle against the outcropping of black and white is arduous enough to entitle them to a larger handicap; nevertheless, a buff bird sometimes wins in sweepstake competition.

The other recognized Rock varieties are the Partridge, Silver Penciled, and Columbian. The last has the shape of the Rock, the colors of the Brahma, and the name of a variety of Wyandottes. The elaborate color-schemes of the other two recommend them to people who are willing to sacrifice utility value for the sake of producing beautiful birds, but unfit them for the use of the practical poultryman. It has been proved definitely that when color problems become excessively difficult, as is usually the case in laced and penciled varieties, egg records are lost sight of; frequently it is necessary, in order to hold the colors, to breed from a hen that is far below the average as a layer, and that produces poor layers.

I once asked a breeder of remarkably

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well-laced fowls how his hens laid. He replied contemptuously: "I don't breed 'em for eggs, I breed 'em for feathers." One may laugh at the viewpoint, but if there were no fanciers of that sort, our exhibitions would be monotonous affairs. A man who gives skill and time to the perpetuating of beautiful coloring in poultry is in his way a public benefactor. Aside from the fact that the Partridge Rock has partridge feathering, however, I'm unable to see a good reason for enthusiasm over it. The Partridge Cochins and the Partridge Wyandottes are older and provide the opportunity for choice between feathered and unfeathered legs. A variety that meets no special need is open to the charge of being superfluous.

There is danger in prophecies, and, in view of the Plymouth Rock's solid worth and honorable history, the risking of sweeping statements anent its future seems unnecessary. White Rocks are good if one likes white poultry, and Buff Rocks are useful, reliable general-purpose fowls; the Barred Rocks, in which the original blood still runs strong,

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are like the Yankees among whom they first became popular—rugged, alert, and strictly attentive to the dollars and cents. You see their faults, you may even positively dislike them, but they command respect by reason of their achievements. Their popularity has been genuine, with merit, not exaggerated advertising, for a basis. Possibly a shrinkage of their prestige will follow the passing of the generation of keepers to which my friend the Old Poultryman belongs, for the Wyandottes are out in full force and the Reds are rising; but there is plenty of room.

CHAPTER III

THE WYANDOTTES

WITHIN the last year there appeared in a magazine an advertisement which I shall not quote literally, but which was to this effect: "For sale, a new breed of poultry. A real breed, not a variety. As the birds are white, any number of varieties may be founded on them."

Now, granting that these fowls, as a breed, have worth and individuality, suppose that someone should make a deal for them, name them Paragons, and after a struggle, succeed in getting them admitted to the Standard of Perfection, thus legalizing them. Suppose, further, that they should become popular. We would soon be favored with Buff Paragons, Black Paragons, and Partridge, Penciled, Ermine, and Cuckoo Paragons. These later Paragons

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would carry little of the original Paragon blood, because other breeds would be drawn upon for the various colors; they would simply be bred, through whatever crosses served best, to conform to Paragon shape and would trade upon the Paragon name.

Despite the official provision that "extraordinary care shall be taken to prevent multiplicity of varieties," the creation of new varieties has been indulged in so much that it has become almost a rule, and a prominent breed can scarcely escape it. Among the Big Four of the general-purpose class, the Rhode Island Reds furnish the only exception, and even they are in danger.

The Wyandotte family offers an especially good example of the working of this near-rule. In England, where the breed is more popular than any other of American origin, they have Silver, Golden, Black, Partridge, Silver Penciled, Columbian, Buff-laced, Blue-laced, Blue, Buff, Cuckoo, White, Spangled, and Pile Wyandottes. Comparatively few varieties are bred in America, but still we have enough to cause

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confusion and split up progress. Buff, Columbian, and Partridge Wyandottes, for example, differ very little in appearance, and not at all in purpose, from Buff, Columbian, and Partridge Plymouth Rocks, respectively. All of these varieties have yellow skin, clean yellow legs, and medium size, and the pairs match in utility qualities.

The Buff Wyandotte is neither superior nor inferior to the Buff Rock by a clear margin, and the same is true in the other colors. In some cases age gives logical precedence to Wyandotte varieties, in others, Rocks have the call, but the difficulty of establishing dates and tracing blood lines makes arguments unceasing among the partisans. In like manner, Silver, White and Columbian Wyandottes do not differ very greatly in looks or usefulness from each other; one is pure white, while the others are combinations of white and black, and all are good. The Silvers are regarded by many veteran fanciers as the only true Wyandottes, and it is quite likely that if the Whites and Columbians had not been de-

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veloped, they would have done excellent service alone.

The Columbians and Whites are now well established, and their abolishment—supposing that it could be agreed upon—would be altogether too radical a cut; on the other hand, a system that allows, in direct opposition to a stated warning, the legalizing of a new variety for no other reason than because it differs a little in color from existing varieties of the breed is by way of becoming farcical. According to this system, if one could produce red birds that would breed true to Wyandotte shape, one would have Red Wyandottes and, provided the proper backing was obtained, could get the birds admitted to the Standard as a new variety, notwithstanding the fact that they would really amount to nothing more than off-shaped Rhode Island Reds. That “shape makes the breed and color the variety” is regarded as fundamental in the classification of poultry, and a good deal of easy money has been pulled in through the loophole.

Pick up little Archibald's toy globe and

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balance it (if you can) on two pegs, and you'll have a structure that gives a rapid-fire idea of the shape which connects the Wyandottes and individualizes the breed. The bird is one of curves; barring the legs, not a straight line is visible. It has a curved, almost pouting, breast and a short back. An occasional exhibition 'Dotte looks as if its head and tail had been pushed in and is so short and round that one could almost outline it with a circle; such a specimen is, of course, extreme. The effect of breeding toward the round ideal is to make of the average Wyandotte a sturdy, compact, medium sized and rather heavily feathered bird that will thrive in a cold climate. The carcass is of fair weight in proportion to age and plump without extra fat. The 'Dotte is good eating, at any stage over six weeks and under a degree of antiquity that should entitle a fowl to be considered a curio rather than an edible asset.

The Silver, or as it is now called, Silver-laced Wyandotte was the first to appear. Mystery would be a pleasant word to use in

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connection with its early history; quarrel, a more apt one. Apparently a good many people worked along the same general line in different parts of the country, and the Wyandotte was evolved from various crosses of Sebright Bantams, Silver Spangled Hamburgs, Buff Cochins, and Dark Brahas. It is sometimes stated that the first cross was Sebright Bantam on Buff Cochin, the intention being to produce an improved Cochin bantam. If a bantam was the object, it is not quite clear why bantams were not used on both sides of the mating; possibly the intention was to produce what ultimately resulted—a fair sized fowl having the beautiful silvery color, laced with black, of the Sebright.

There were disputes about comb and name, and in 1877 as American Sebrights the birds were refused admission to the Standard. The hostile factions finally agreed upon a rose comb and accepted the name of Wyandotte as a compromise. A warlike label, fastened upon these plump, quiet, home-loving birds, is rather comic, but

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certainly it was better to give them a title of their own, and an American one, than it would have been to pass them along as qualified Sebrights or Cochins. The story goes that "Wyandotte" was suggested to the man who proposed it by the name of a sailing vessel which his father owned. Admission to the Standard was in 1883. A boom followed, and the big demand found too few good Wyandottes to meet it. Unscrupulous dealers took advantage of the opportunity to foist inferior stock upon the public and the breed fell into disfavor.

It takes a breed of poultry a long time to recover from a boom that has "burst." There are so many breeds and the production of new varieties is so easy that the tendency is to branch out in other directions. Partly for this reason and partly because they are laced fowls, and therefore present hard problems in color, the Silver 'Dottes have been slow in "coming back." Their lacing ought not to continue to militate very heavily against them, for, unlike most laced birds, they can be bred successfully for ex-

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hibition from single matings, though double mating is sometimes practiced.

The English, who have taken kindly to them, use double matings and get beautifully colored birds, some of which have been brought to America and introduced into native strains. These imported birds have the sharp, regular lacing and large, clean centers that are desired, but in shape many of them are rank culls from the American point of view. English breeders in general pay less attention to shape, relatively, than do ours, unless a fad happens to strike them, when their loose notions of shape allow an eccentric trend full sway, as in the case of the Langshan, which, in its "modern" British form, looks like a beer bottle on stilts. The danger in using English Silver Wyandottes is that the shape which should be characteristic of the breed may be injured in the variety.

White Wyandottes are said to have originated in white sports from the Silvers. The fall of the latter threatened to bring them down, but instead gave them a start, and the fashion which favors white in poul-

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try helped them along. They are now very popular and are as good white fowls as can be found in the general-purpose class. They are remarkably easy to manage; indeed, I used to believe that anyone who could handle fowls at all could handle White Wyandottes successfully, until a customer's experience shook my faith. I sold six beautiful pullets, the pick of quite a flock, with the cheerful assurance that they would do well in almost any conditions. In the customer's hands they went to pieces, laying poorly and moping around in a generally disreputable manner, whereas Barred Rocks made excellent records. For my own use, I would rather have had them than twice their number of the best Barred Rocks in the world, because the faults peculiar to Rocks annoy me. All of which goes to show that no one breed can suit everybody.

It is true, however, that most people who try the White 'Dottes have little trouble with them. In breeding them, the most common irregularities to be encountered, aside from the gray flecking which crops out

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in the feathering of all white varieties, are feathers on the legs and single combs. Brahma blood is responsible for the feathered legs; as to the combs, all rose comb fowls throw single comb chicks occasionally, and the presence of half a dozen such chicks in a hatch from a hundred purchased White Wyandotte eggs is not a proof that the buyer has been cheated. Neither is a chick with black markings evidence of intentional fraud. Usually it is evidence that the dealer has mixed his eggs, but black-marked offspring out of white birds descended from parti-colored ancestors are within the possibilities. Inquiries about these points make regular copy for the "Questions and Answers" department in the poultry journals; the single comb matter, especially, can be explained in half a dozen issues per year, in answer to anguished purchasers of Wyandotte and Rose Comb and Red eggs.

Black Wyandottes, like the Whites, were originally sports from Silver matings. The American Blacks of to-day have dark legs, but in England yellow legs have been

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achieved by application of the double mating system. Double mating is open to sharp criticism in any case; in that of a solid-colored variety with pretensions to utility value it seems absurd, and if the Black Wyandotte can't be furnished with yellow underpinning by simple methods, it would better be left to struggle along on black. The English Partridge Wyandotte also differs from the variety of the same name on this side of the water, but whether the British interpretation of partridge coloring is right and ours is wrong, or vice versa, is a matter that only dyed-in-the-wool fanciers need argue about, since according to either interpretation the color is so elaborate that not much attention can be given to the meat-and-egg side.

The Golden Wyandotte is in the same class. The color requirements for it follow those for the Silver, except that the silvery white ground-color is replaced by golden bay, but it is a much harder bird to breed true than is the Silver. Golden, Partridge, and Silver Penciled Wyandottes take rank

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with Spangled and Penciled Hamburgs, Partridge Cochins, and other examples of ornate coloring, as "fanciers' fowls."

The Buff Wyandotte carries about the same proportion of Wyandotte blood that the Buff Rock carries of Plymouth Rock—that is, very little. Like the Buff Rock, it has an early Rhode Island Red cross back of it. Golden, Silver, and White Wyandottes, Buff Cochins, and Golden Spangled Hamburgs also contributed. Careful work has developed a strong, useful, fairly even-colored bird that should have a future. What it chiefly needs is the support of more active friends. Exaggerated advertising does more harm than good, ultimately, but good advertising is necessary to success. If our native buff varieties had received the publicity that has been given to the Buff Orpington, the latter would have had a less prominent place at the present time than it actually has. The Buff Orpington is not so well suited to American needs as are the Buff Wyandottes and Rocks.

For the Columbian Wyandotte, great

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claims have been made. It has the colors of the Brahma and was apparently intended by its originators to take the place of that grand old breed in the hearts of a generation which prefers active, clean-legged, early-maturing poultry. My impression is that such a purpose would have been better served by the production of a clean-legged Brahma. The Brahma has nothing except color to give to the Wyandotte; both are excellent table birds and fair to good layers. Clean-legged Brahmas were produced years ago, by what means I don't know; I should think that in getting them in medium size at present, White Cornish—sturdy fowls which nearly always nick well in a cross—and Rose Comb White Leghorns, which are Mediterranean, might be made use of to advantage, and at any rate the experiment would be interesting.

When size is to be reduced, there is an opportunity to improve the laying by bringing in Mediterranean blood. The makers of the Brahmaized Wyandotte turned aside from this opportunity, and consequently the only

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laying blood in the Columbians is the Hamburg remnant that came down through the Whites and Silvers. The Hamburg, a Mediterranean in type, cannot compare with the Leghorn in either number or size of eggs. To expect anything phenomenal in the egg line from a fowl that depends on it is illogical.

One may say broadly that the Wyandotte in general has the defect that so often accompanies its best quality. The more closely it approaches characteristic shape and consequent market perfection, the less likely it is to be a first-class layer. There seems to be a period in its development when it balances pretty evenly between strong laying ability and good table quality. The Buff and Columbian varieties have reached this period; neither has been crowded into as compact a form, on the average, as have the Whites, and probably selected Columbian and Buff birds would hold their own in any laying competition, if size and color of eggs were disregarded.

I've never seen a description of the Silvers

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which were successful in one of the Australian contests, but I have no doubt that they were comparatively long and rangy. Unless a Wyandotte is noticeably short and rounded, however, it is not a Wyandotte in the true sense and might as well be called a Rose Comb Rock. The Buffs and Columbians must conform to the breed type, or be false to the name under which they trade.

Adverse criticism of a fowl so excellent as the 'Dotte is only justified by the necessity of separating it from others of its class and a desire for truth. Except by comparison with the very best, it cannot be ranked as a poor layer. I suppose that three out of every five people who give it a fair trial are satisfied with it. The number of its varieties is a pretty good indication of its strength and its weakness; its attack is scattered, not concentrated in one column at one point. An even better result might have been obtained, had the interest it has aroused been devoted to the improvement of not more than one or two varieties.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ORPINGTONS

OF the four most prominent general-purpose breeds of poultry in America—I mean the Plymouth Rocks, Rhode Island Reds, Wyandottes, and Orpingtons—only one, the last named, is of other than American origin. It is obvious that in order to have obtained a firm foothold here against strong native competition, the foreign breed must have been skilfully pushed; and, in fact, no breed has lately received wider publicity, both in the poultry papers and through items in the general press, than the Orpingtons. Orpington breeders advertise liberally and are shrewd at catching the reader's eye. Most people who are at all interested in poultry have read of that marvelous bird, the ten thousand dollar White Orpington hen "Peggy,"

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and the attractive catalogues put out by leading dealers have gone far and fast.

Unquestionably, Orpingtons are in favor among amateurs throughout the States, but it is doubtful if poultrymen and farmers breed them, as yet, to any great extent, despite the fact that their claims, or rather those of their friends, are based chiefly upon utility qualities. Your practical poultryman is a pretty hard-headed person who keeps in close touch with his egg basket and his market record and is loath to make a change without a good reason. The mere statement that a breed is "easily three times more profitable than any other" doesn't convince him. He wants definite evidence, and Orpington literature is somewhat indefinite.

The possible buyer, if inquisitive, is inclined to wonder just why these big, handsome birds—which look, in the showroom, like mammoth chrysanthemums—should be heralded as the best of all fowls. Are they thoroughly vigorous? Are they reliable layers? Do they make good, saleable broil-

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ers and roasters? What sort of breeding is behind them? These are the questions which must be answered satisfactorily if the Orpingtons are to become permanent rivals of the 'Dottes, Rocks, and Reds.

There are ten recognized varieties of Orpingtons and several which are still in the kindergarten stage. The recognized varieties are the Single and Rose Comb Blacks, Buffs, Whites, Spangled, and Diamond Jubilees. Only Single Comb Blacks, Buffs, and Whites are popular in America, and the three are supposed to differ from each other in nothing save color. In shape, they should be round, broad, deep, and set rather close to the ground on short, stout legs; "cobby" is an adjective frequently applied to the Orpington type.

The feathering is described as "abundant," and while it is not so loose as that of the Cochin, it gives the birds a massive look. The standard weights run from seven pounds for the pullet to ten pounds for the cock, making the breed the heaviest in the clean-legged class. The skin is white, and

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the legs, except in Blacks, agree in color with the skin; the Blacks have black legs. Comb, face, wattles, and earlobes are bright red. The most typical exhibition Orpingtons are distinctive and cannot be mistaken for fowls of any other breed; the ordinary Buff or White Orpington looks very much like a Rock.

On this side of the water, credit for the production of all the Orpingtons is usually assigned to the late William Cook, of Orpington Village, Kent, England. Mr. Cook mated Black Minorcas to black sports from Barred Rocks and top-crossed the offspring with Black Langshans to make the Black Orpington. The start was made in 1876, and about ten years elapsed before the leg-feathering due to the Langshan cross was eliminated. The Blacks were first made public in 1886 and were favorably received.

In the meantime, it had occurred to Mr. Cook (here, I borrow freely from the catalogue issued by the firm of William Cook & Sons) that black fowls might not be sat-

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isfactory to everyone, so he set to work on a White Orpington by mating White Leghorn cocks to Black Hamburg pullets and crossing such of the resulting pullets as came white with White Dorking cocks. To get Buff Orpingtons, he used Golden Spangled Hamburgs, Dark Dorkings, and Buff Cochins of a "marvelous laying strain." The Diamond Jubilee variety came from the same crosses that produced the Buff, except that Speckled Dorkings were used instead of Dark Dorkings. Behind the Spangled Orpingtons were crosses of Dark Dorkings, Barred Rocks, and Silver Spangled Hamburgs.

Most of the early Orpingtons that were imported into America were Cook birds. Mr. Cook himself pushed the breed here, and his theories molded the American type for a number of years. Recently there have been a good many importations from other strains, produced, according to English authorities, without a trace of Cook blood. The majority of first-class British Black Orpingtons of today, one reads, are

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descended from the very large, full-feathered birds bred by Joseph Partington; and many good strains of Buffs are said to run back to the Lincolnshire Buffs—hardy barnyard fowls, of a general buff color, but scarcely definite enough to be called a breed.

Evidently the English take the Orpington seriously, as well they may, since any promising breed that has a white skin and lays tinted eggs (prime requisites for the English market) should command recognition over there. They have introduced Buff Rock blood and, it is reasonable to suppose, sundry other crosses into the Buff Orpington to improve the laying. This new blood, coming into America through imported birds, will undoubtedly bring us nearer to the English type, and, even now, it is probably more accurate to refer to William Cook as an exploiter than as an originator. Apropos of this breaking away from the Cook ideal, some amusing discoveries have been made, as, for example, that good Diamond Jubilee Orpingtons can be found among the Sussex Fowl, a fact

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which suggests that Mr. Cook took a great deal of unnecessary trouble in order to get his Diamond Jubilees.

The truth seems to be that the Orpingtons are mixtures to the making of which many breeders have contributed. Even according to the Cook account, the varieties are not closely inter-related, but have merely been grouped under one name and bred to a common type. Such differences as remain between the English and American interpretations of this type are due to breeding toward standards of which one has been improved, while the other is old-fashioned.

It is rather hard to get accurate evidence about the laying quality of the Orpingtons. People who raise our American breeds frequently break into print with egg records, but the friends of the Orpington don't seem to have the habit. Such evidence as is available points to the Blacks as superior to the Buffs and Whites in this respect. They were at the top in one of the big Australian laying competitions, proving thereby that certain chosen pens of them laid more eggs

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within a given time than certain chosen pens of Buff Orpingtons, Langshans, etc. A record of that sort, of course, is more suggestive than conclusive; it means simply that there have been some excellent layers among the Black Orpingtons.

Probably because of its black legs, the variety is not bred in great numbers. In England a black-legged general-purpose fowl is certainly not preferred, and with us it is at a discount; black legs defeated the Java, otherwise an excellent fowl, and I don't believe that any breed or variety which has them can successfully compete, on the average American plant, with yellow-legged birds. The White Orpington, as a layer, has received great praise; several prominent dealers call it the best layer in the world. One need have no hesitation in applying to such statements the term used by the humorist when asked to comment on a report of his own death—"greatly exaggerated."

Eight pound hens will never astonish the the world by their laying; too big a proportion of the food they eat must go to the up-

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keep of their heavy bodies. If heavy fowls prove to be fair layers, they are doing all that can reasonably be expected. I have lately talked with three people who breed White Orpingtons, none of them being either an out-and-out fancier or a professional dealer, and of the three, only one—a lady of very enthusiastic temperament—was willing to say that the Whites were at all remarkable as layers. Perhaps these people are not representative; therefore, and because I have at hand no accurate White records, I shall not assert, but shall merely give it as a personal opinion, that White Orpingtons do not as a rule lay so well as White Rocks and White Wyandottes, or as their own breed-mates, the Blacks and Buffs.

Concerning the Buff Orpingtons, it is possible to be comparatively certain. They were the earliest of the varieties to be brought to this country and despite the extraordinary advertising with which the Whites have been specially favored have always been the most genuinely popular.

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Both fanciers and poultrymen like buff fowls; they do not show dirt, the exhibition specimens need not be washed, and there are no objectionable dark pin feathers on the dressed carcass. I think that the Orpingtons will stand or fall in America by the measure of success which the Buffs achieve.

I handled the Buffs in a small way for a couple of years and found them pretty satisfactory layers. My pullets were later in starting than Reds and Wyandottes of the same age, but kept at it fairly well during the cold months. Their eggs were regular in shape and in color reminded me of a magazine article in which an enthusiast wrote of Buff Rock eggs as violet. A person able to see violet in the shell of a fowl's egg must have the soul of an impressionist, but those Orpington pullets certainly turned out eggs of a tint too delicate to be labeled a plebeian brown. They were very gentle and I hated to sell them, but had little trouble with the business side of the operation, for they "took" well, especially with feminine buyers. There can be no doubt

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that the Buff Orpington, with its soft golden plumage which runs into a lighter shade in the undercolor, is an attractive bird.

The chief difficulty, in breeding it for exhibition, is to avoid the outcropping of black and white; few males come with solid buff tails and white is common in the pullets' wings. The persistence with which white appears in the feathering may be traceable to the white skin and legs, fundamental characteristics that are serious blemishes from the point of view of the marketman who caters to an American trade. A white skin is thought in most sections of this country to give the dressed carcass a sickly appearance; we prefer a rich yellow. So strong is this prejudice that the large market plant which carries a yellow-skinned breed has a big handicap over the plant which adopts a white-skinned one, and I do not see why, when there are plenty of good breeds of the former kind, any large poultryman should care to burden himself with the latter.

On small plants, the affair is of less importance—though it is annoying, if one has

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a few pair of broilers to sell, to be obliged to cut the price on account of the appearance. So far as rapid growth is concerned, Orpingtons of a good strain will produce excellent broilers. The quality of the flesh is fair, the texture being neither close-grained nor very loose. There is no special flavor. In a recent (Boston, 1911) dressed carcass competition, with specimens of three breeds entered, Orpingtons were placed third to Wyandottes and Rocks. This decision was no more conclusive than is a victory in a limited laying contest, but it provides an interesting comment on the sweeping claims indulged in by some of the Orpington supporters.

If the Buff Orpingtons have a considerable portion of Lincolnshire Buff blood, their ancestry is in their favor, for it bespeaks vitality. A breed arbitrarily created and perfected within a short period is not necessarily weak, but a breed that results from the gradual improvement of hardy utility fowls is safer. The English understand this, and if, as I gather, the Buff

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Orpington is the most popular variety of the breed in England, the choice is probably due very largely to the solid Lincolnshire foundation.

The British poulterer is quite as conservative as the American poultryman. The breed most strongly intrenched in his yards, the Dorking, is historically nearly two thousand years old; it was described by Columella as being common in Rome in his day and apparently the Romans took it to Britain, where, on account of Druidical prohibition, fowls had not been bred for eating. Incidentally, Columella disapproved of white poultry, for he wrote: "Let the white ones be avoided, since they are less hardy and less vivacious, and also are not found to be prolific." In the matter of vivacity. White Leghorns, which hop about like canary birds, would have given him a bad shock.

Although English fanciers are always fussing over new varieties, they are inclined to poke fun at us for the frequency with which we produce or adopt new breeds and,

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when they have no axes to grind, advise us to spend our spare time in improving the breeds that we already possess and that are suited to our needs. Aside from their ingrained conviction that anything English is superior to everything un-English, they don't consider the Orpingtons better fowls than our best, such as, for example, the Wyandottes. It would be reasonable on our part to show a little justifiable patriotism. The Buff Orpingtons, which are the most attractive to us, do not suit our market and cannot unless the market changes radically, and their laying capacity is not remarkable enough to earn continued popularity for them on that score alone. One may doubt whether they would ever have commanded wide American recognition if they had not been very skilfully advertised.

On the other hand, they are extremely handsome fowls, easy to raise, and not in the least troublesome to keep. They lay fairly well all the year round and have weight as roasters. They are excellent on the fancy side, for the best specimens make

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beautiful showbirds. Apparently they not only have been, but ought to be, in America, birds for the amateur, and as such, their present popularity is legitimate. If the amateur is willing to pay enormous prices for them, that is his own affair. Bought at reasonable prices, they prove a profitable investment for Neighbor Jenkins, who has a little backyard plant, likes to amuse himself with his chickens when he comes home from work, and kills his culls for the family table.

CHAPTER V

THE RHODE ISLAND RED

THE average American poultry keeper needs fowls that combine the qualities of good laying and good meat-production and that are hardy. He doesn't want Leghorns, because Leghorns make poor roasters, nor Cochins, since they amount to little as layers. The Orpingtons, big, handsome birds, have white skin and legs, whereas the fixed American market demand is for yellow. The flesh of the Plymouth Rock, which is an excellent winter layer, is of coarse texture, and Rock hens go broody too hard and too often. Wyandottes don't give quite enough eggs and those that they do give are irregular in color and shape.

In fact, the absolutely perfect combina-

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tion fowl has not appeared; there is always some fault in evidence, or some quality lacking. I think that the breed which comes nearest, so far, to the general-purpose ideal is one that not so long ago was despised, but that now is rising to wide popularity: the Rhode Island Reds. The Reds are first of all utility birds; that the best specimens make fine showbirds has been fortunate, but their strongest appeal and greatest value are to the average poultryman who wants to get from his chickens a fair meat-and-egg profit, and perhaps a bit of fun and an occasional sale at a fancy price in the show-room.

Officially, they are less than ten years old. The Single Combs, which were the earlier of the two varieties to be recognized by the Standard of Perfection, were not admitted until 1904, and prior to that time Reds were comparatively little known outside of Rhode Island and the eastern part of Massachusetts. Farmers of that section, and especially of the Little Compton district in Rhode Island were their originators.

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The first crosses, dating back to the fifties, were of red males, brought from the East in sailing vessels, upon scrub females, the theory being that the brilliant color indicated vitality. Probably some of these males were Shanghais and Javas and certainly some were Malays. Considerably later, Brown Leghorn blood was introduced to improve the laying, always a main point in the eyes of the practical Rhode Islanders. Gradually the dominant color of the old red males spread over the flocks, but neither it nor a definite shape was bred for very systematically; the strongest birds and the good layers were used for breeding, and the long shape and harmonious color of to-day's Reds, though partly due to the recent good work of fanciers, are fundamentally the products of utility qualities and not results of efforts toward an arbitrary ideal.

When Red fanciers began to get together about ten years ago, the breed-standard which they agreed upon had been virtually framed for them by the breed they wished to push. The logical Red was of medium

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weight and active; long, wide, and deep in shape—the generous layer and meat-producer; in color red, with black points, and over the plumage of the male the lustrous sheen inherited from the Malay. But a large proportion of Reds were inclined to be more or less illogical. They did not “breed true.” The widely different elements in their make-up conflicted and gave many short and offcolored chickens.

There were few specimens of exhibition quality, and though showbirds are of little importance in the market poultryman's flock, they are the best of advertisements for a breed. It has been by building up, through line-breeding, strains capable of yielding exhibition birds and by persistent exhibiting that Red fanciers have performed their greatest service. A breed whose supporters were so enthusiastic must amount to something, thought the poultrymen, and they began to give the Reds a fair chance, which was all they needed. One no longer hears them hailed derisively as “dunghill birds.”

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The most significant fact to many about Red history is that at the beginning and for a long time thereafter outbreeding was practiced; that is, there was no mating of closely related specimens, but many different blood-lines were gradually fused. As there had been no degeneration, the fanciers had a firm foundation of vitality to work upon when they started to improve shape and color; and—a point which is of more lasting importance—abundant vitality is present in the large utility flocks.

The Red hen is seldom a poor layer, or sterile. The chicks are sturdy and easy to raise. The young stock grows rapidly and develops a very small proportion of runty or deformed birds, though there are still many culls, from the fancier's point of view. The males are remarkably vigorous and often prepotent; frequently the influence of a sire can be traced through several generations by some inherited peculiarity which his descendants almost invariably possess. Vigor obtains equally in the two varieties; the difference is merely in the comb. Pos-

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sibly the Rose Combs are a little neater looking and the Single Combs a trifle more even in color.

Granting the value of an outbred ancestry, the Reds would not have become so effective if some of the lines which contributed to their making had not been especially good. The blood of the Cornish Fowls, which are famous as table birds, is at least one-third Malay, and doubtless to the Malay strain is due much of the Reds' table excellence. Judging from my own experience, this excellence can scarcely be exaggerated. For a number of years I have sold Red broilers and roasters to a critical retail trade and never had a complaint, though none of them was especially fattened, but all were taken directly from the yards.

The best fowl I ever carved was a yearling Red cock which had been shown twice as a cockerel and used for a season in the pens. He had a tremendous keel of meat and was as tender as a soft roaster. Occasionally, when pressed for a roaster, I have furnished a two-year-old Red hen and escaped without

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injury. The flesh is somewhat looser than that of the Cornish and the breast fuller. The standard weights are a pound less, throughout, than Plymouth Rock weights, and the same, except in pullets, as those for Wyandottes.

Care should be taken to use for breeding only fowls that are as heavy as the Standard requires, since the tendency is, in an active breed, for the birds to run light. To reduce the weights for Reds would be to put them in a class with the Mediterraneans, which are egg-machines and little else. While in their present form they are general-purpose fowls and not recognized egg-machines, they have supplanted the Leghorns on many egg farms, because not only can they be counted on to lay heavily, but they can be disposed of to advantage in the market at any stage, from broilers to two-year-olds, whereas surplus Leghorns cannot be profitably marketed except as small broilers.

Wherever white-shelled eggs are at a premium, as in the district which supplies New York City, Leghorns or birds of that

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type will continue to be used on large plants, but profit in eggs is a matter for close calculation, and where brown-shelled eggs are in demand the extra profit to be derived from roasters, capons and good sized broilers gives the Reds an advantage.

They get much of their laying capacity from the Brown Leghorn cross, but do not mature so early as to lose in vitality. My March and April hatched pullets begin to lay at from five and a half to six months, continue through the autumn and early winter, generally take a short vacation in January, then lay until well on into the summer, with occasional short fits of broodiness. I have had some that insisted on laying through the moult. The eggs are of a good size from the beginning, but yearlings lay larger eggs than pullets and are better to breed from.

As to frequency, while an occasional Red hen lays two hundred eggs a year, that number should not be expected. At this stage of poultry development, the two-hundred-egg hen is rather a freak than a logical pro-

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duct, and I do not know of any responsible poultryman who claims to have a large flock, of any breed, that averages any such output, per bird. I don't mean that such a flock is an impossibility, or that two or even three hundred egg hens may not become quite common in the future, for in considering this matter it should be remembered that the domestic hen, as we now have her, is very largely an artificial product. The jungle fowl, from which she is descended, laid at the most only a couple of dozen eggs per year—one litter ordinarily, a second if the first was destroyed.

The prolific layer is the result of skilful breeding through the centuries, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that further improvement will be made, just as it is probable that we shall learn more about artificial incubation and brooding. He who maintains that egg production has reached its limit is by way of being a back number in a progressive age, as is the poultryman, still irritatingly in our midst, who sniffs at incubators. Nevertheless progress, to date,

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has given us the “phenomenal” layer only as an exception. For the flock of to-day, a hundred and fifty eggs per year for pullets and a hundred and forty for hens is a fine average. Reds will accomplish this, with careful breeding and proper care.

The most noticeable thing about their laying is its reliability; they are always “on the job,” and I once had six pullets which, under very unfavorable conditions, laid a hundred and nine eggs in twenty-one days. On account of press of other work, these pullets were ill-housed and more or less neglected generally, but nothing could stop them from laying.

The faults usually attributed to Reds have mostly to do with the fancy side. The claims are made that even now they do not breed reasonably true to color and that the hens fade. The latter of these two charges is a perfectly true bill; the hens do fade badly and are likely to assume a lighter color with each successive moult. But all colored feathers fade more or less with age. Buff breeds offend quite as much in this

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respect as red ones, and people who rule out the Reds have their hands full, for they must also rule out the Buff Rocks, Buff Orpingtons, Buff Wyandottes, and Buff Leghorns, a fairly large order. Experienced breeders simply accept a certain amount of fading as inevitable and are properly thankful when they possess a few birds that hold their color beyond the first year.

With regard to the other charge, I don't think that, allowing always for the leeway which must be given in color to a new breed, the Reds now breed less truly than other parti-colored fowls. The objection is usually raised by prejudiced people, by unskilful breeders, or by the novice who expects to get from a hundred eggs at least fifty birds of exhibition quality. The imagination of the novice has been heated by glowing advertisements, and when he hatches chicks of which five per cent have down on the legs, and seventy-five per cent develop into birds unfit for the showroom, he is highly indignant and writes a series of violent letters to the breeder who sold him the eggs and who

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may not have been one of the hothouse advertisers.

He doesn't know that the breeder, hothouse or not, would have considered himself extremely lucky if, having kept and incubated those eggs, he had obtained from them two really fine exhibition birds. Fanciers have a saying, which applies to any breed: "It's pretty hard to get a good bird."

Misunderstandings between buyer and seller are bound to occur now and then, but they are unfortunate and especially so in the case of a new breed which needs only a fair and unprejudiced trial. It seems a pity that there should have been any extravagant Red advertising, for extravagant claims and prices do more harm than good in the long run. It is doubtful, for example, if any setting of eggs, Red or otherwise, is worth fifty dollars, except possibly to a millionaire fancier who is willing to take at that price a very long chance of hatching a winner. Eggs for hatching are always a gamble, because on the way to the purchaser they are subject to rough handling and changes of

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temperature and in the purchaser's incubator or under his hen to the possibility of being spoiled or broken.

The buying of grown stock is an entirely different matter; the seller can describe to the buyer exactly what can be furnished for a certain price, and the buyer will get value for his money, with a minimum of risk. Fifty dollars is not too much to pay for a Red cockerel capable of winning at a good show, for the exhibitor of such a bird will get his money's worth from the advertising which the winning gives him; and a good breeding male is worth from three to fifteen dollars, though sometimes it is hard to make a prospective buyer appreciate the fact. Last winter an old farmer came to my yards to buy a Red male. He said that his Reds were running down in size and he thought it was time to bring in fresh blood; pointing to an eight-pound cockerel, he asked what I would take for him. I told him five dollars. Extracting a one-dollar bill, he held it out and said, "Here's what he's worth, son." A dollar was the ordinary price paid

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for a rooster in his vicinity and it was impossible for him to see that the big, healthy cockerel, bred through many generations from carefully selected up-to-weight birds, would put enough meat into his flock to repay him a dozen times over, in hard cash, for the extra expenditure.

His mental squint was full brother to the one which leads antiquated cattle owners to breed their cows to scrub bulls. Fortunately the type is less common than it used to be; the majority of poultry buyers now admit that a bird with the skill and experience of the specialist behind it ought to command a price somewhat in excess of its meat value if put on the block. I suppose it is the spirit of gambling latent in all human nature that allows a man to pay thirty or forty dollars for a setting of eggs, on the strength of a flashy advertisement, when he wouldn't think of paying such a sum for a pair of birds that were actually worth the money.

Undoubtedly the best plan for the buyer of Reds, whether he desire fancy or purely

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utility birds, is to purchase grown stock from a reputable breeder, and the time to buy is in the autumn, before the breeder is put to the expense of housing his flock for the winter. Prices are about one-third less in the fall than in the spring, when birds for breeding are in greatest demand. But at no season will a dollar do much more than a dollar's work.

“Please make me a price on six **R. I. Red** pullets and a cockerel. I want them for winter layers, but they must be **A1**, as I want to show them at our fair, which comes October 1st.” This letter is of a familiar type. What the writer wants is a pen of birds with exhibition qualities, for the price of layers. He doesn't state his limit, but after some correspondence it will probably prove to be about fifteen dollars. Consequently he gets good layers, which, however, do not win at his fair.

Red pullets at two dollars a piece are not showbirds, but they should be up to weight, moderately even in color, and capable of producing in their turn, when properly

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mated, birds as good as themselves. The last quality gives them their greatest superiority over scrubs, because scrubs can't be counted on to produce anything at all. Our buyer, with his six pullets and his three-dollar mated cockerel, has exactly what he paid for, the foundation for an excellent utility flock. Had he put his fifteen dollars, in the spring, into eggs—say forty-five eggs at five dollars per setting—he might ultimately have got more birds and better ones, but the chances would have been against his success.

If one must buy eggs, it is best to put into them no more money than one is perfectly willing to lose. Then one will feel no great disappointment if an absent minded express messenger cooks the eggs over a car radiator, or can properly rejoice if they escape injury and a record bunch of chicks hatches. Red eggs have been known to produce a good percentage of strong chicks after a journey from New York to Alaska.

The housing of Reds is not a hard problem, as poultry-housing problems go. They

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do well in almost any sort of conditions, from free range to moderate confinement, and will even endure the close quarters imposed by some of the backyard "systems." I think they are at their best in open-front houses, with scratching sheds for winter and generous yards for clean weather.

Coddling is bad for them, as they are very hardy; given plenty of exercise, they continue to lay merrily through a zero snap that puts Leghorns out of business. At such times they want deep litter to scratch in and good ventilation without drafts. In summer, they need shade, fresh earth to work in, and protection from lice. Growing stock should of course be allowed abundant room.

Hardy, good layers, good table birds; yes, the Reds come pretty close to meeting the average poultryman's requirements. They have the added advantage of being at their best extremely handsome fowls. An exhibition Red cockerel, in full feather and ready for the judge, is a bird to delight the fancier's eye and to attract the attention of

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the visitor to the showroom. An even prettier sight, perhaps, is a flock of Reds working out of doors, with the afternoon sunlight flashing on their brilliant plumage; any poultryman can appreciate it, especially when he is carrying a full egg-basket.

CHAPTER VI

THE MEDITERRANEANS

IF some benevolent, distant, and previously unknown relative should die and leave me a few thousand dollars and a tract of twelve sandy acres in upper New Jersey and if I should decide to turn those acres into an egg farm, I'd use a part of the cash to stock the place with fowls of a Mediterranean breed. Upper New Jersey serves New York, and the best trade of New York City pays a premium for large, white-shelled eggs; such eggs are laid by the Mediterraneans. Narrowing the matter down still further, I'd buy Leghorns, not because they are better than the others of the same class, but because they have been very thoroughly tested in this uncertain climate of ours and have proved themselves to be

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satisfactory in their special line. In fact, they are really American products.

Fowls called Leghorns were brought from Italy in sailing vessels as early as 1835. It was natural for sailors facing a long return voyage to provide themselves with live poultry, and such of the birds as survived were usually snapped up by eager American fanciers. There is no certainty that the early Leghorns actually came from Leghorn; they may have been acquired at some other Italian port. They were rather small birds, non-setters, with large, irregular combs and streaked earlobes. The colors seem to have been white, brown, and black, though it is sometimes stated that the Black Leghorns originated in England.

Whatever the colors, apparently a Leghorn boom was started; then the breed was dropped, not to be taken up again until about 1850. At that time was begun the steady improvement which has resulted in the modern Leghorn, a fowl that is sprightly and beautiful and, with proper handling, a wonderful layer. No other breed shows

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stronger evidence of the skill and patience of fanciers, and so far at least as White Leghorns are concerned, one has only to compare the photographs of winners of a few years ago with photographs of recent winners to see that progress has not ceased.

Breeders say that Single Comb White Leghorn blood in the best yards has never been subjected to crossing, but has been line-bred toward perfection. The old birds were yellowish white and had large combs, short bodies, and high tails. The latest type is chalk white and has a tail carried at forty-five degrees, a comparatively long body, and a sizeable but neat, five-pointed comb. Much attention has been paid to the head; with its furnishings, it counts for thirty-four points in the Mediterranean scale, whereas in the American class it is allowed only twenty-five. This is logical enough, for a Leghorn, and especially a male, is just about one-third head. If its comb is poor, or in poor condition, it is a melancholy-looking bird.

The gradual lengthening of the body is in

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line with an idea which, though it is not always accepted in theory, has been pretty generally put into practice. There is not any recognized laying shape in poultry, but length is characteristic of most of the best laying breeds; Minorcas, Andalusians, and Rhode Island Reds are long, Rock breeders are lengthening their birds, and the warning has gone forth that there is such a thing as too short a Wyandotte. The White Leghorn's rather narrow body is very light in weight and is balanced on moderately long, thin legs. There is little meat on the bird; its utility value is pretty well confined to the laying side. If one intends to get anything out of the culls, they must be marketed at the small broiler stage—say a pound and a half—which they reach very quickly.

The temperament is timid and nervous; if a careless stranger enters a house where White Leghorn pullets are confined, there will be a unanimous effort to fly out through the roof. Consequently breeders of the variety do not welcome the unprofessional visitor and it is not a good investment for

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the keeper who is at all impatient. Its great stronghold is California, where it is the bird of the hour on the egg farms. The California climate suits it much better than does a colder one, for though, as aforesaid, it does well in a cold climate when properly handled, much care and warm housing are needed to keep the tender combs from being frosted in bitter weather and a zero spell is likely to knock out the egg yield of so slight a fowl. The Rose Comb White Leghorn, which is less vulnerable to cold than the Single Comb, is not quite so good a layer.

Neither Single nor Rose Comb prices run very high, one reason being that the White Leghorn's practical value, aside from its laying, is almost nothing, another, that it is very prolific and the supply approaches the demand. A fair cockerel can be bought for a dollar and a half and pullets at a dollar and a quarter. As utility worth is the true basis for fancy valuation, exhibition White Leghorns, except in unusual cases, are proportionately cheap. Notwithstanding this and notwithstanding, also, the fact that in

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order to stand a chance at a good show white birds must be put through the tedious process of washing—four changes of water and a drying before the fire!—they form large classes in the showrooms.

The Brown Leghorn has the same shape and the same qualities, in general, as the White. It is rather less timid and therefore better suited to the average keeper. The variety is a favorite one among old-time fanciers and their discussions about it have been long and thorough. Concerning its production, in the modern form, Mr. I. K. Felch wrote:

“The modern acquisition of white earlobes, long legs and not more than five points in the comb, the dark brown color and greater weight have been the result of the following crosses known to the writer: Spanish sires bred upon black-red game hens, and the progeny to Brown Leghorn cocks, and this progeny inbred to sire. Again, black-red game sire upon Spanish dams, and the progeny bred to Brown Leghorn cock, and inbred as before, Black Span-

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ish hens to Brown Leghorn cock, and the progeny inbred."

To put the matter simply, the modern Brown Leghorn has behind it a scientific mingling of Black Spanish, early (Italian) Brown Leghorn, and Black-Red Game blood. To-day, it is bred by fanciers in accordance with a difficult double mating system. Double mating is due fundamentally to the fact that in parti-colored breeds or varieties, the sexes tend naturally to differ in the strength and distribution of the coloring. Occasionally there is found a sire that gets mediocre pullets but extraordinarily well-marked cockerels—or the reverse. These cockerels (or pullets) are bred from and their excellence is accentuated in their offspring. Possibly a new and pleasing shade or striping appears. Other fanciers buy birds from the fortunate one, and ultimately the standard is revised to accommodate the new stripe. In the meantime the coloring of the other sex has remained unchanged and birds of the old stamp are necessary in order to perpetuate it. The

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fancier must keep a stock that virtually includes two breeds, or else devote himself exclusively, on the exhibition side, to the production of either cockerels or pullets; and the talk is all of matings—pullet matings from which the cockerels can be used only to breed pullets, and cockerel matings that give pullets unfit for exhibition.

Absurdity is reached when the requirements for either sex, or both of them, are made so hard that it becomes next to impossible to produce birds sufficiently good to be eligible for a first prize. Short of such a point, double mating can be defended against those who condemn it on account of the difficulties it presents, for reasonable difficulties are admirable incentives; if it were easy to breed excellent birds, there would be neither fun nor extra profit in doing so. But I have never heard an adequate answer to the contention that a standard which absolutely necessitates double mating is less reasonable than one which makes it possible for well-marked males and females to be bred from the same sire and

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dam. In actual practice, we find that even in solid-colored breeds, matings that result in cockerels and pullets of unequal value are common; but a standard which encourages the tendency has the effect of discouraging interest in the breed.

Most poultry keepers like to have a chance at the blue ribbons, but haven't the time or inclination to indulge in a double portion of labor and then fall short of the standard. Double mating, carried to an extreme, has hurt the Brown Leghorn and is hurting the Barred Rock. The Brown Leghorn is still an excellent fowl for the egg farmer; I suppose it has been outstripped in this line by the white variety because its egg is a little smaller and not quite so chalky-white. It is a bright, attractive little bird, and while the pullets are perfectly capable, with provocation, of doing an aerial act, they are not so uncannily fidgety as their White cousins. The Rose Comb Browns are as good layers as the Single Comb.

The Buff Leghorn is a comparatively new variety. It was developed in England, and

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the first birds brought to this country were Crystal Palace winners, imported in 1892. Buff is a serviceable color for poultry, and Leghorn breeders say there is little choice between the Whites and the Buffs for laying.

Black Leghorns are recognized by the American Standard of Perfection. They are good Leghorns, with nothing against them, as such, except their color and the misfortune of being out of fashion.

The Anconas form a link between the Leghorns and the Spanish Mediterraneans. Their modern shape, as given in the Standard, is almost identical with that of the Leghorn, but in their earlier form, as bred in Cornwall, England, they were clearly related to the Minorcas. Lewis Wright's (Book of Poultry) theory is that they were developed from Black and White Minorca crosses; some think them descended from the common barnyard fowls of Ancona and Tuscany. The probability is that they are a blend of the two types, the Italian blood being in the ascendant at present. They have been injured in America by the un-

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scrupulousness of a few dealers, but that is not to the discredit of the breed itself. Its only evident fault is a negative one; it seems to have no quality that marks it especially. When one has said that Anconas are prolific layers of good-sized white-shelled eggs, one is through.

The old Black Spanish, with its picturesque white face, is the patriarch of the so-called Spanish class. Its present position is like that of the wagon in the popular song of ten years ago—"We shall not need it now." It has always been a good breed, but now is cherished by only a faithful few, and recently I saw that a flock had been sold "to make room for Orpingtons."

Having mentioned a ditty of my own collegiate generation, I'll risk a twangle on a harp that is, perhaps, too ancient and dreary-sounding for my years, by suggesting that there's an element of pathos in this easy dismissal of old breeds. Along come some advertisers with loud cries of a marvelous discovery, people flock to buy, and dealers must follow the rush and try to

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profit by it. Inevitable, but sad. Where are the Brahmas now? Marooned, mostly, in Massachusetts yards, and the Brahma colors are carried to the front by the Columbian Wyandottes. Yet the Brahma is a profitable bird and a striking one, beside which the 'Dotte looks insignificant. It has feathered legs, but so has the Langshan, and interest in the latter, though not rampant, is by no means sleeping. Unreasonable is a populace that neither remembers nor cares to remember the days when the stately Brahma was monarch of the roost and of the showroom; truly Fashion leads us by the nose!

To return to our drumsticks. The White-Faced Black Spanish are supposed by writers in English to have been brought to Spain from some Eastern country, or possibly from the West Indies. This explanation of their origin is probably a good guess and nothing more. They were introduced into the Netherlands, and it would be interesting to know what influence, if any, they had upon the development of the Laken-

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velder and the Braekel-Campine, Dutch and Belgian breeds, respectively, which are approximately of the Mediterranean type. Carried to England, they became, under the handling of the Cornish fanciers who made so many crosses, the progenitors of the Red-Faced Spanish, or Minorcas. Whether the latter name was bestowed arbitrarily, or was adopted for a logical reason doesn't seem to be known.

At present, the Black Minorcas are more popular in America than any other Mediterranean except Leghorns. They are still bred in England, as are White Minorcas, the first of which may have been sports from Black matings. One imagines that Cousin John must look at the legs when he wants to separate his White Minorcas from his White Leghorns, for British Leghorns are comparatively large and have coarse combs and sloping backs—Standard Minorca characteristics. Black Minorcas are not beautiful, but are splendid layers. The Rose Comb variety is a good example of the new varieties of poultry for which there have been

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honest calls. Owing to their large combs and long wattles, the Single Combs are hard to keep in a cold climate; therefore the Rose Combs have been a real help to the Minorca breeders of the Northern States and Canada.

I've always thought the Blue Andalusian the most beautiful Mediterranean. The chief objection to it is that many of the chicks come black and white, instead of following the parents. It breeds more than fifty per cent true to color, however, and is, so far as I know, the only blue fowl, except the old Jersey Blue, that does. One can make a blue variety of almost any breed by mating together white and black birds, breeding back the offspring, and then cross-mating, but a majority of the chicks will revert—only a few will come blue. Blue Leghorns, Blue Rocks, and Blue Orpingtons are unreliable. The Andalusians are a breed, not a variety. In shape and size, they are between the Minorca and the Leghorn.

How they got their name, and in what manner they are related to the Minorcas,

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are debatable questions. A cheerful way to settle the matter, out of court, would be to say that the Andalusians came from Andalusia and the Minorcas from Minorca and the shipments got entangled on the voyage; but, to borrow the phraseology of the authorities, "this will not hold." The body plumage of the Andalusian is slaty blue, with a lacing of a darker shade on each feather. The male's hackle, back, and sickle feathers are lustrous bluish black. The birds are graceful and a nice flock is worth seeing. Unfortunately, good flocks are rare because of the trials and tribulations occasioned by the color. Even when an Andalusian comes blue, one cannot be certain that it will stay so; Mr. J. E. Bliss once showed me a pure white hen which, in her pullet year, had been blue. It is only fair to mention, in contrast, another hen belonging to Mr. Bliss, that has thrice been returned from Boston a winner and that is a marvel in color and shape.

The Mediterraneans are invariably non-sitters, and breeders must have incubators, or obtain fowls of a different class for use in

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hatching. Many plants of medium size carry a Mediterranean breed and an American one and let the two supply each other's deficiencies. Mediterraneans are frequently kept in village yards, and often a fancier breeds them because he happens to have fallen in love with some special variety. But their true place is on the egg farms, in districts where white-shelled eggs are in demand. Intricate, tireless, productive little bundles of energy, they approach mechanical egg-machines more closely than any other fowls we have. They hatch easily, therefore there is small loss in the incubating; they mature very early, so the cost of raising is lessened. As soon as forcing has worn them out, they are discarded and others lay in their nests.

CHAPTER VII

CORNISH

AS a general proposition, it is safe to state that a popular breed of poultry offers a better opportunity than does an unpopular one. Public opinion, in a rough way, winnows the wheat from the chaff and may be taken as indicating honest worth, if due allowance be made for spasmodic "booms" and for temporary enthusiasm induced by liberal purchases of advertising space. With possibly one exception, the breeds most widely known and liked in America to-day are the best from a utility standpoint and on the fancy side are profitable because of the big demand, which in most cases so far exceeds the supply as to fix high prices for first-class specimens.

In poultry keeping, as in groceries, one

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must move stock rapidly, and naturally there is advantage in catering to the market. If Wickercoop, the well-known Rock man, secures from one of his standard-bred lines an extraordinarily fine cockerel, he can name virtually his own price and get it, while his neighbor, who handles a minor breed, may produce a bird of equal quality, but must set a lower figure. On the other hand, there is something to be said for the position of the big frog in a small puddle. The demand is not so large or so intense, but it is fairly steady, and he supplies a major share of it. Competition, which is meat to militant appetites, is infrequent in his purlieus; he can acquire blue ribbons almost at will.

Certain inferior or uneven breeds have faithful though limited followings that furnish good customers to a professional breeder here and there. It is also true that there are a few breeds which have been side-tracked by chance or prejudice, or injured by their friends, and which deserve better treatment than they have received. Of this latter class I have in mind the Cornish.

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They are sometimes carried as a sideline on account of their table excellence, and one sees them advertised as "competitors of the turkey," but their possibilities as general-purpose fowls are seldom recognized.

It is perhaps suggestive of the limited interest in Cornish that two fundamental errors concerning them appear in the 1910 edition of the American Standard of Perfection. The first is their classification as Orientals; the second, the statement that the Dark Cornish carry Sumatra Game blood. The breed's history does not support either of these decisions. It is of English make, dating from the middle of the last century, when fanciers of Cornwall mated Red Aseel (Azell) males from India to Lord Derby Game females with the purpose of getting more weight into the fighting stock.

The determinant cross behind Dark Cornish as we have them to-day was not Sumatra, but Malay, and seems to have been made by the Cornishmen in an effort to go themselves one better, that is, to produce a fight-

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ing bird of still greater weight. The result of that cross was a fiasco, so far as the game fanciers were concerned; the Malay-Aseel-Lord Derbys—"Indian Games" as they were then called and still are called in England—were too clumsy for the pit. They were, however, solid, sizeable, and hardy, and were developed for their meat quality.

They were introduced into America in the eighties by a New York firm, which boomed them violently and reaped a considerable harvest. Prices ran high for a time, then dropped, partly because the laying was unsatisfactory, partly on account of a glut of high, black, narrow, and generally inferior specimens. The name was another drawback; coupled with the savage appearance, it gave the impression, ludicrous to persons aware in what way the ancestral Indian Games had failed, that the birds were pit stock, and even now many people suppose the breed to be primarily a fighting one.

Quite recently the name "Cornish" was officially adopted, and breeders at present

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are trying to correct the old impression. There are indications of activity. A new and apparently good variety, the White Laced Red, has been brought out. The Cornish Club is increasing in membership. I have before me the premium list of the Baltimore exhibition, designated this season (1911-12) as the club show, and the "specials" offered for the three varieties of Cornish make a long list.

Dark Cornish are greenish-black and bay. Formerly the standard allowed three or more lacings of black on the feathers in certain sections of the female, but now the number is limited to two, and the effect of the ruling has been to open up the color and make the bay, which should approach mahogany, predominate. The male is lustrous greenish-black, with minor bay and dark red markings. Purple barring in the surface-color of either sex is a bad fault. The undercolor of both sexes is slate. In shape, the birds should be broad and deep, long in the keel, with thighs of medium length, but short, very stout shanks. Viewed from

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above, the body is a heart. The head has the cruel look of the Malay and carries a pea comb and short wattles.

The feathering is hard and so tight that a person unaccustomed to the breed will underestimate a specimen's weight by a couple of pounds. The flesh is close and fine in texture. The temper, though not vicious, is the reverse of sweet, the females being inclined to nag each other and the males to be peevish, but a careful handler can keep order without much difficulty. The laying capacity has, I think, been misjudged. While Cornish hens cannot be classed as among the most prolific layers, they lay remarkably well in the breeding season and some strains maintain a good average during autumn and winter.

The laying depends a good deal upon the feeding. It is characteristic of the breed to take on fat easily, so a ration composed largely of carbohydrates will soon smother the egg production. Corn should never be fed to Cornish layers, except in cold weather, and then sparingly. Good layers are be-

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coming more common, now that the high, narrow type has been discarded.

While it is customary to breed Dark Cornish from double matings for exhibition, there is no necessity for the practice, if males with red in the back and hackle are used on females of standard color. Some of the cockerels from such a mating will show red in the breast, but though the standard calls for a male breast of solid greenish-black, a judge ought not to cut red hard in that section, especially as most Cornish males at present have too little red in the plumage rather than too much. A male that lacks red should be avoided, for if he is mated to exhibition females he will get cull offspring on the female side.

White in any part of the feathering of Dark Cornish is a very serious defect. It will appear, irrespective of matings and parental quality, unless the growing stock is given plenty of room and a nourishing ration. Plenty of room need not be interpreted as meaning free range; I don't agree with the dictum that Cornish can't be raised

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in confinement. Young Cornish may safely be yarded by a skilful keeper, provided the parent stock has not been closely inbred, or over-exhibited.

It may be worth while to mention here that the over-exhibiting of breeding birds should be discouraged, whatever the breed or variety. Winnings in the showroom are the best of advertisements and prove quality, but the fact that a cockerel has won three or four blue ribbons is no guarantee that eggs from his pen will be worth buying. On the contrary, his travels and the foul air and close quarters of so many exhibition halls have very likely sapped his vitality.

Birds to be used for breeding should not be exhibited more than once, or at most twice, a year, and the only good reason for showing them at all is the preference of most buyers for eggs or stock from actual winners. The foolishness of this preference becomes evident when it is remembered that the purchaser is utterly dependent on the word of the seller; the latter, if dishonest, may substitute eggs from another pen, or

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stock from another sire. Assuming honesty in the dealer, it is best to limit him only by a clear statement of the purpose in mind and the price one is willing to pay, and let him give the best value that he can for the money.

Fashion compels him to advertise eggs from birds that have taken prizes, but he may be able to furnish much better eggs from unshown brothers and sisters to those birds, if he is allowed to do so. As one is paying for his knowledge, one may as well have the full benefit of it. The conventional tricks of the trade do not protect either the honest seller or the purchaser, but hamper both sides. I think that most dealers would welcome an increase of knowledge on the part of the buyer that would enable them to dispense with humbuggery.

The White Cornish are descended from white sports of the Dark variety, crossed with White Aseels and possibly with other white fowls. They tend to run a little smaller, narrower, and lighter in weight than their Dark cousins and are proportionately less powerful. Their appearance in

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the yards is fairly neat, because the hard, close feathering sheds dirt. The comb is usually low and regular, whereas the Dark Cornish comb is lumpy. Altogether the birds are very pretty and attractive and may be recommended—with the repeated caution that the breed's weakness is on the laying side—to a person on the lookout for white chickens a bit out of the ordinary. It is wise, in buying, to choose a strain that has been bred with proper attention to size and weight.

The White Laced Red variety has, I believe, the distinction of being the only variety of poultry that combines a parti-colored surface with pure white undercolor. The thing which strikes me as most in its favor is that it isn't advertised as peerless and perfect. The admission is freely made that it is still rough in color and shape, and its friends, with remarkable self-control, have allowed the publication of pictures that don't show even lacing on every feather. The originator's account of his work is refreshingly frank; he mentions the difficulties he en-

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countered and states that few persons, in proportion to the number of inquiries, have actually adopted the variety. Doubtless there have been recruits, since this account was written. The birds that I have seen have something of Cornish type and are nicely laced in some sections.

The ground-color is described in the Standard as bright, rich red, and the lacing is silvery white. The originator claims fine laying power for his flock, and I see no reason to question the claim, though it may be doubted whether, as characteristic Cornish shape is more closely approached, egg production can be kept up to a very high mark. If the White Laced Reds are bred to the Cornish ideal, they will acquire, I should think, not only Cornish qualities but the defects thereof, and must lose somewhat in both laying capacity and "biteability" (Mr. Card's expression). The ideal specimens, as the Standard artist draws them, are shaped and posed exactly like ideal Dark Cornish of the same artist's creation. Perhaps the lighter weights—a pound less,

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throughout the classes—are expected to help in the retention of “biteability” and sprightliness.

Cornish blood is exceedingly good for giving weight to crosses, is often used by marketmen, and probably has been introduced to some extent into many standard-bred varieties. The Buckeye is a bird that carries a large proportion of it. Buckeyes have been praised by some of their supporters as superior to the Rhode Island Reds, and condemned by their enemies as the worst imposition ever crowded into the Standard of Perfection. Most people do not take them so seriously. The standard description is rather weak, suggesting a Red with a pea comb, slate in the back, and poorly marked wings and tail.

A successful breeder writes: “Imagine a Cornish with the rough edges taken off and not nearly so upright in shape, a smaller head and face, and a dark bay color and you have a Buckeye.” This description gives the breed some individuality, and a poultry artist who is a close student is quoted as say-

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ing that the typical Buckeye is different from the Reds.

It may be noted that Malay blood, present in Red ancestry and strong in the Buckeyes through the Cornish, forms a connection. To my eye, the resemblance as shown by specimens at the exhibitions is very strong indeed, and I think that without the pea comb, it would be difficult for Buckeye breeders to accentuate a difference. Theirs is the burden of proof, because the Reds are established. Looking at the matter without an attempt at comparison, one may say that the Buckeyes are fair general-purpose fowls, running a little uneven in color and having a kind of comb which is nearly frost-proof and therefore desirable.

It is permissible, when writing advertisements, to be reasonably enthusiastic, and if I were advertising Cornish, I shouldn't forget that I was pushing a breed that is better than some concerning which more noise is made. Cornish are hardy and have excellent table quality, and my opinion, based on some experience with the Dark and White

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varieties, is that they can be developed, by careful selection, to a fair degree of laying efficiency. Their peculiarities make them interesting, and I think the demand for them will increase as the prejudice against them wears off. They are good enough to graduate from the sideline division. To pretend that they can compete with the best of the general-purpose breeds would be to put them ahead of their class.

CHAPTER VIII

HOUSING AND MANAGEMENT

FOR the successful housing of poultry there are three main requisites: a southern exposure, a tight roof, and a wind-proof north wall. Be the building large or small, the system in use "intensive" or "extensive," these are the essential features of a good house. The birds need defense against wind and rain, and there must be opportunity for sunlight, on clear days, to penetrate into the roosting quarters. The number and kind of improvements to the open shed, facing the south, depend upon the climate to be encountered and upon the size of the flock. In a so-called temperate district, where the conditions may range from a hundred degrees in August to blizzards in January, one may count on half the year

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being bad, in the sense that extra protection will be required in the way of shade and shelter; the number of fowls to be kept regulates not only the size of the house, but its style, because the larger the flock, the heavier the labor, and therefore the greater the need for simplicity—elimination of all doors, shutters, and other appliances that are not absolutely necessary.

The matter of cold, aside from its accompaniments of snow and wind, demands comparatively little consideration, unless a Mediterranean breed is in question; the normal heat of a fowl's body is over a hundred, and the utility breeds have small combs that are not easily frosted. Reds, Rocks, and Wyandottes get along comfortably in a low temperature, if they have plenty of exercise and good ventilation without drafts.

On a large commercial plant, success is likely to be proportionate to the degree of skill with which the work is systematized, and in laying out such a plant, the services of an expert are needed, but any person of average common-sense should be able to plan

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quarters for fowls up to a hundred, if he bear in mind the three chief requisites and add a little knowledge of ventilation and drainage. A house planned by the owner to meet his special needs is usually more satisfactory than one built according to a stereotyped pattern and is a money-saver, especially if time permits the owner to build it himself. A few inches one way or the other are of little importance in the dimensions of a poultry house, so the building may be planned in such a way that lumber on hand, or easily obtainable, can be utilized without waste.

Purchased plans nearly always specify width and thickness of siding, whereas in fact almost any siding will do, provided it is reasonably sound. Two by four stuff is heavy enough for the plates and sills, as well as the studs, of an ordinary house and has the advantage of being readily handled. The shingles and patent roofing that were left over from the dwelling will do wonders for the roof and the north wall and eight-inch chestnut fence posts are just the things for

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a foundation. On the other hand, it is not worth while to use scraps for the sake of saving a few cents of initial cost. Cracks, holes, and patchwork soon make trouble for both hens and attendant, and a house that is an eyesore furnishes a poor start for profitable poultry keeping.

Extremes are dangerous. Too high a house is drafty, too low a one stifles the birds on hot summer nights. Great depth in proportion to width makes for dampness, because the sun cannot get back to the roosts. A very shallow building is needlessly cold. Authorities differ on definite questions of height and depth, as they do on the amount of floor space which should be allowed per bird, but it is safe to say that fowls ought not to roost nearer than eight feet to a window or muslin screen and that a roost so far from an opening that the sun doesn't strike it at some time of the day is unsanitary.

Some excellent hints on the subject may be found in the poultry journals, and in the catalogues of poultry-supply com-

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panies. It is well to remember, however, that the advertisers of houses and plans emphasize the good qualities of their offerings, not the faults. The literature of one of the well-known "systems," for example, is enthusiastic about the compactness and convenience of the house recommended, but doesn't mention that the attendant gets a soaking from the back of the neck to the end of the spine every time he feeds or cleans in inclement weather. Another "system" furnishes a house in which the fowls roost within six feet of a front wall that is about one half glass. Another confines them in a six by six box, into which the only light comes by the door.

The inexperienced builder is perhaps more likely to allow his birds too much light, through glass, than too little. Large windows make a house cold in winter and hot in summer. The best plan is to use small windows and supplement them with screens of unbleached muslin, placing the opening at such a height in the south wall as to get the greatest benefit from the sun

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for all parts of the house. For instance: in a wall eight by eight, an opening four feet long by three high, giving onto a floor eight by ten, should have its sill about three and a half feet up.

As to the size of the floor space in relation to the number of fowls, that is a matter which allows some latitude for choice. Many poultrymen figure on only two square feet per bird and depend upon large yards to give exercise; others allow as much as six feet. I doubt if the latter amount is any too liberal, especially if the birds are to be used for breeding. Large yards are all very well in fair weather, but a long look at a large space doesn't satisfy birds cooped up for the winter and crowding encourages disease and bad habits.

I think that in preferring a two-story house I am against the majority of poultry keepers. The one-story house seems to be the rule, and when a scratching shed is provided, the building is lengthened to accommodate it. In the two-story house, one roof does double duty, the lower story being

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used for a scratching pen, the upper for roosting quarters. One advantage is that the roosting room is never damp; another, that the stairways provide exercise. The difficulty is to get height enough in the lower story for the attendant, yet arrange the stairways in such a manner that the fowls can negotiate them easily.

Most of the photographs which one sees of existing double-deckers show scratching pens only two feet high. How such pens are cleaned I don't know; the inference is that either they are cleaned very imperfectly, or African pygmies are imported, regardless of expense, to do the work. The lower story of my house is five feet high and the stairways are broken by landings, with the lower ladders facing the light. The openings in the floor, leading to the stairways, can be closed by slides. In the morning, grain is scattered in the scratching pens, the slides are opened, and the flock comes down to breakfast. The water troughs are in the roosting room so that the birds must go upstairs to drink. The

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noon mash is fed below and the supper of grain in the litter above. Thus every bird must use the stairs at least four times a day.

If all food and water were given in one room, the birds would rarely or never venture into the other, for conservatism is a peculiarity of hen nature; curious though she is, Biddy approaches any new thing with fear and cackling and won't take exercise for the sake of doing so. She is, however, imitative; therefore, when putting pullets into the house, I give them a couple of old hens for leaders and show two or three the way to the stairs. In a few days all of them go up and down like veterans. Stairways five feet in height would be impracticable for heavy Asiatics, but do not give active American fowls any trouble. Light Mediterraneans, such as Leghorns, will travel a cleated board.

I use earth in the scratching pens, keep it loose, and renew it to a depth of eighteen inches once a year. Spading is necessary, and muslin curtains are let down on cold nights to prevent snow and frost from get-

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ting in. Cement, covered with litter, would make less work for the attendant, but would also be less beneficial to the hens, which enjoy dusting and scratching in the loose earth. The usual dust bath, in a box in the corner, is messy and meager and has not ordinarily the virtue claimed for it in a recent article, the writer of which announced that he never had to spray for mites because his hens, in using the dust bath, propelled dust into all the cracks and crevices of the house with such violence and thoroughness that the mites became discouraged.

Scratchers so redoubtable are uncommon, and as a matter of fact dust in the roosting room does more harm than good. The material to have there is deep litter. Leaves, if dry and clean, are excellent and cost nothing except the labor of gathering. A supply can be raked up in the autumn and stored against need in the bran bags which grain dealers do not redeem.

Vermin will infest any poultry house in time, unless proper precautions are taken. Some of the commercial powders are good,

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but few keepers have time to apply powder often to the individuals of a flock and a healthy hen will rid herself pretty well of body-lice, if she has clean quarters and plenty of earth to work in. Mites are the worst foes. They breed in the droppings, hide in the cracks near the roosts, and if left in peace, swarm over the whole house in an incredibly short time, trooping back to the roosts at night to torture the helpless fowls. While special liquid preparations can be bought, I don't know of anything more effective than a combination of kerosene and crude carbolic acid, sprayed over the roosts and droppings boards once a week and over the whole house twice a year.

Against larger vermin—mice, rats, skunks, foxes, weasels, and thieves—a four footed police force gives the best protection. Cats, dogs, and chickens can easily be brought up together, if one begins when the animals are young. I have two yellow tomcats that have had the run of the pens since they were kittens. Irish John is my burglar alarm, and a good guardian he is,

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for his weight. I would police a large plant with Airedales. They run about fifteen pounds heavier than the Irish, and like them, are gentle in the house, but watchful, aggressive, and savage fighters in the open.

In fixing the size of yards, the chief determinant in each case is of course the amount of space at the individual keeper's disposal. In general, extent is of less importance than condition; a small yard, kept sweet, will give better service than a large one allowed to go sour. Alternate yards, one to the north and the other to the south of the house, make the best arrangement of all. Take a plot fifty feet square, run a house ten feet deep across the middle of it, divide into pens, and one has an almost ideal arrangement for a small plant. Growing stock should be given considerable room and may be housed in colony coops until the culled flock is put into winter quarters.

As the housing on a small plant differs in kind from the housing on a large one, so does the feeding. The small fancier may

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take time to rake grain into the ground or sift it into the litter, while the poultryman, making his long rounds, must feed each pen as expeditiously as possible. Hopper feeding, which permits the birds to eat when they please, is often used to simplify the work of caring for a large flock, but because it discourages exercise, is not the best method when there is no special object in saving time; the simple-souled hen fills her crop from the hopper, then loafs until digestion makes room for another cropful. Nothing tells her that she has had enough until she has had too much. Also, the hopper hasn't been invented that isn't more or less wasteful. The fowls pick out what they like best and leave the remainder, scattering and befouling it if possible. The fussier the hopper, the worse it is as a rule, and the same is true of fountains.

A drinking device operated by a trap may furnish clean water, but is also likely to catch a hen or two in the course of a morning. Simple water troughs are the safest and most serviceable. They may be put

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through disinfecting processes if that sort of work appeals to the keeper, but an occasional scrubbing with a dishmop insures sufficient cleanliness. Fresh water should be supplied frequently and the vessels emptied at night; and—here is a warning that doesn't appear often enough in print—the watering should be delayed on cold mornings, lest the wet wattles of the male birds frost before the blood gets into circulation. On the small plant, mash may be fed in troughs, but it is best to make the birds work for all their hard grain.

For shell material and grit, I have found the commercial preparation called Heneeta excellent. The price is rather high, but as it contains some animal matter and takes the place of commercial beef scrap as well as of grit and shells, it is really economical. It does not supply all the animal food necessary for yarded hens. Fowls in confinement need an allowance of "butcher's meat" two or three times a week. Comparatively little of this need be bought for a small flock, if the table scraps are saved,

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but an occasional ration of lean raw beef pays for itself by increasing the egg yield. The bits of beef can be fed in the mash, or by hand. I like the latter way, because each bird can be given its share and feeding by hand tames the flock.

Nearly every poultry keeper has his own special system of mixing and feeding mash. Some mix it dry, others wet; Smith feeds it in the morning, Jones at noon, and Tomlinson at night. I am with Jones. Mash, being soft, digests quickly and is therefore a poor substance for a fowl to fill its crop with before going to roost for the night. Its bulk causes it to be an equally bad breakfast, since a full crop makes a lazy bird.

Hens ought to scratch for their breakfast, to be active during the morning and to lay before noon. They are then ready for a mash dinner, most of which passes out of the crop before the supper of hard grain is given. The mash furnishes variety to the balanced ration. Table scraps, stale bread, and roots (mangels, carrots, runt potatoes, etc.) may be ground up, slightly moistened

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with water or sour milk, and mixed with a binder of coarse wheat bran. Warm cornmeal mush is appreciated on cold days, but care must be taken, when feeding grains rich in carbohydrates, to balance them with plenty of protein. Both corn and wheat are fattening.

Sprouted oats and alfalfa are highly recommended as winter green food by the poultry journals. The only objection I have to sprouted oats is that my fowls won't eat them. Possibly they are like a certain substitute for coffee, which is said to be delicious if properly prepared, but otherwise is—well, otherwise. Alfalfa I've never tried. Cabbage and mangel-wurzels are good old standbys, of which the former can easily be kept until mid-January, the latter, all winter. Mangels are especially satisfactory, because a generous quantity can be grown on a very small plot with a little help from the droppings barrel.

The chicken business is like any other, in that success in it requires hard work and cleverness. Anyone can keep hens at a

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loss; to get a profit from them calls for close attention and good planning. A hen isn't quite a machine. She remains to some extent a pin-headed female, with peculiar habits, fancies, and an alarming fund of obstinacy. If carefully bred and raised and skilfully cajoled, she will probably lay well, but there is no absolute guarantee of it. The personal element is strong—the man behind the hen counts; and he who would persuade the multitude that poultry profits are merely a matter for mathematical calculation, so many eggs from the hen, so many dollars for the eggs, is a mountebank.

In actual practice, the mathematical side of the matter is the least encouraging. Reckoning initial expense for stock, buildings, and equipment as capital, and excluding labor, the profit from the plant is the difference between the cost of feeding and marketing and the amount received for the produce sold. It is easy to figure a good yearly gain from a dozen hens. The table refuse and a couple of dollars' worth of grain support such a very small number and one

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credits them at the full market price with eggs used by the family; a neighbor, perhaps, buys a few. Increase the number, and the table scraps don't go so far. If the eggs are sold to a middleman, he will take out his profit; if to a retail trade, the flock must be kept up to the notch all the time, or customers will be disappointed, and trade lost. On the fancy side, the expenses of printing, advertising, and exhibiting must be met.

Branch out a little farther, and labor can no longer be left out of the reckoning, but becomes a very important factor. Considering the heavy drains, one is astonished, not because people fail with poultry, but because so many good incomes are made. The explanation is that the shrewd poultry keeper is always a jump ahead of the regular variations of the enormous demand. He disposes of broilers early, has market eggs to sell when the price is high, and caponizes surplus cockerels. He culls out drones and weaklings and keeps one eye constantly on the feed bill. He establishes a reputation for good, sound, up-to-date stock, at honest

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prices according to quality. He enlarges his plant gradually and carefully, and doesn't buy the big new farm until he is reasonably sure he can make a go of it.

If you ask him whether poultry furnishes a short cut to wealth, he'll laugh at you. The quick "killings" that one sees advertised are the results of clever applications of large capital or credit, chiefly through printer's ink. One current advertisement mentions the amount of the farm's income and challenges the reader to examine the records. I don't doubt the owner's statement at all; I should merely like to know how much money, made in other ways, he has invested in his poultry business. The evil done by big claims is in faking, whether intentionally or not, the beginner into imagining that he can build up an enormous success in a short time from a "shoestring"—or, to be accurate, from a pen of birds or a setting of eggs bought from the advertiser. I believe thoroughly that it is good policy to sprain the purse, if need be, in order to obtain good stock, but not with the idea of big

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immediate returns. Fancy stock is sold chiefly on reputation, and the poor man's reputation is a long time a-growing.

I doubt if a man of small capital ought to take up poultry with the idea of making money, unless he has a genuine love for the birds. The capitalist, by buying expert help and applying business methods, can establish a large farm that will show a profit from the outset, and a faker may hit upon a profitable trick or glean to advantage for a little while behind a sensational success, but the average man who starts in a small way will quit in disgust unless he really likes his job. Few things are more satisfactory than a pretty pullet, if you happen to like her; if you don't, nothing is more aggravating.

The keeper who is rough with his birds will never get very far, and there's a natural knack in handling hens, as there is in handling horses or dogs. Patience is particularly necessary, because a hen has a minimum of reasoning power; almost everything she does is the result of inherited instinct or of acquired habit. When a situation pres-

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ents itself, for which neither habit nor instinct supplies a precedent, she goes up in an attack of hysterics and her brainstorm is amusing or irritating, according to the point of view. Enthusiasm and the desire to make sales sometimes lead writers to pass lightly over the difficulties of the trade, and it is because I am very enthusiastic about poultry possibilities that I want to be especially cautious.

One merely grins when a man of means rises to a gaudy bait, but I have known poor men and women who risked, and lost, money that they could ill afford, under the delusion that eggs from the pen of Gimcrack II, the Sure Sire of Winners, would put them in the way of astonishing the local bank. The raising of poultry is not a get-rich-quick scheme. Viewed sanely, it is either a pleasure-giving avocation, or a handy method of deriving generous interest from an investment of money, skill, and persistent and sympathetic labor.

THE END

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APPLE GROWING. By M. C. Burritt. Mr. Burritt takes up the question of the profit in apple growing, the various kinds best suited to different parts of the country and different conditions of soil, topography, and so on. He discusses also the most approved methods of planning a new orchard and takes up in detail the problems connected with the cultivation, fertilization, and pruning. The book contains chapters on the restoration of old orchards, the care of the trees, their protection against various insect-enemies and blight, and the most approved method of harvesting, handling and storing the fruit.

THE AUTOMOBILE—Its Selection, Care and Use. By Robert Sloss. This is a plain, practical discussion of the things that every man needs to know if he is to buy the right car and get the most out of it. The various details of operation and care are given in simple, intelligent terms. From it the car owner can easily learn the mechanism of his motor and the art of locating motor trouble, as well as how to use his car for the greatest pleasure. A chapter is included on building garages.

"It is the one book dealing with autos, that gives reliable information."—*The Grand Rapids (Mich.) Herald*.

BACKWOODS SURGERY AND MEDICINE. By Charles S. Moody, M.D. A handy book for the prudent lover of the woods who doesn't expect to be ill but believes in being on the safe side. Common-sense methods for the treatment of the ordinary wounds and accidents are described—setting a broken limb, reducing a dislocation, caring for burns, cuts, etc. Practical remedies for camp diseases are recommended, as well as the ordinary indications of the most probable ailments. Includes a list of the necessary medical and surgical supplies.

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EXERCISE AND HEALTH. By Dr. Woods Hutchinson. Dr. Hutchinson takes the common-sense view that the greatest problem in exercise for most of us is to get enough of the right kind. The greatest error in exercise is not to take enough, and the greatest danger in athletics is in giving them up. The Chapter heads are illuminating. Errors in Exercise—Exercise and the Heart—Muscle Maketh Man—The Danger of Stopping; Athletics—Exercise that Rests. It is written in a direct

matter-of-fact manner with an avoidance of medical terms, and a strong emphasis on the rational, all-round manner of living that is best calculated to bring a man to a ripe old age with little illness or consciousness of body weakness.

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"Will encourage the beginner and give pleasure to the expert fisherman."—N. Y. Sun.

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FISHING KITS AND EQUIPMENT. By Samuel G. Camp. A complete guide to the angler buying a new outfit. Every detail of fishing kit of the freshwater angler is described, from rod tip to creel and clothing. Special emphasis is laid on outfitting for fly fishing, but full instruction is also given to the man who wants to catch pickerel, pike, muskellunge, lake-trout, bass and other fresh-water game fishes. Prices are quoted for all articles recommended and the approved method of selecting and testing the various rods, lines, leaders, etc., is described.

"A complete guide to the angler buying a new outfit."—Peoria Herald.

"The man advised by Mr. Camp will catch his fish."—Seattle P. I.

"Even the seasoned angler will read this book with profit."—Chicago Tribune.

THE HORSE — Its Breeding, Care and Use. By David Buffum. Mr. Buffum takes up the common, every-day problems of the ordinary horse-user, such as feeding, shoeing, simple home remedies, breaking and the cure for various equine vices. An important chapter is that tracing the influx of Arabian blood into the English and American horses and its value and limitations. Chapters are included on draft-horses, carriage horses, and the development of the two-minute trotter. It is distinctly a sensible book for the sensible man who wishes to know how he can improve his horses and his horsemanship at the same time.

"I am recommending it to our students as a useful reference book for both the practical farmer and the student."

—T. R. Arkell, *Animal Husbandman, N. H. Agricultural Experiment Station.*

"Has a great deal of merit from a practical standpoint and is valuable for reference work."—Prof. E. L. Jordon, *Professor of Animal Industry, Louisiana State University.*

MAKING AND KEEPING SOIL. By David Buffum. This deals with the various kinds of soil and their adaptability to different crops, common sense tests as to the use of soils, and also the common sense methods of cultivation and fertilization in order to restore worn-out soil and keep it at its highest productivity under constant use.

THE MOTOR BOAT—Its Selection, Care and Use. By H. W. Slauson. The intending purchaser of a motor boat is advised as to the type of boat best suited to his particular needs, the power required for the desired speeds, and the equipment necessary for the varying uses. The care of the engine receives special attention and chapters are included on the use of the boat in camping and cruising expeditions, its care through the winter, and its efficiency in the summer.

NAVIGATION FOR THE AMATEUR. By Capt. E. T. Morton. A short treatise on the simpler methods of finding position at sea by the observation of the sun's altitude and the use of the sextant and chronometer. It is arranged especially for yachtsmen and amateurs who wish to know the simpler formulae for the necessary navigation involved in taking a boat anywhere off shore. Illustrated with drawings.

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"One of the finest things of the kind I have ever seen. I believe my seven year old boy can learn to use this system, and I know that we will find it very useful here in our 'Boy Scout work.'"—Lyman G. Haskell, *Physical Director, Y. M. C. A., Jacksonville, Fla.*

PRACTICAL POULTRY KEEPING. By **R. B. Sando.** The chapters outlined in this book are poultry keeping and keepers, housing and yarding, fixtures and equipment, choosing and buying stock, foods and feeding, hatching and raising chicks. Inbreeding, caponizing, etc., What to do at different seasons, The merits of "secrets and systems", The truth about common poultry fallacies and get-rich-quick schemes. Poultry parasites and diseases. A complete list of the breeds and subjects is attached. It is in effect a comprehensive manual for the instruction of the man who desires to begin poultry raising on a large or small scale and to avoid the ordinary mistakes to which the beginner is prone. All the statements are based on the authors own experience and special care has been taken to avoid sensationalism or exaggeration.

PROFITABLE BREEDS OF POULTRY. By **Arthur S. Wheeler.** Mr. Wheeler has chapters on some of the best known general purpose birds such as Rhode Island Reds, Plymouth Rocks, Wyandottes, Mediterraneans, Orpingtons, and Cornish, describing the peculiarities and possibilities of each. There are additional chapters on the method of handling a poultry farm on a small scale with some instructions as to housing the birds, and so forth, and also a chapter on the market side of poultry growing.

RIFLES AND RIFLE SHOOTING. By **Charles Askins.** Part I describes the various makes and mechanisms taking up such points as range and adaptibility of the various calibers, the relative merits of lever, bolt and pump action, the claims of the automatic, and so forth. Part II deals with rifle shooting, giving full instruction for target practice, snap shooting, and wing shooting.

SCOTTISH AND IRISH TERRIERS. By Williams Haynes.

This is a companion book to The Airedale and deals with the origin of the breeds, the standard types, approved methods of breeding, kenneling, training, care and so forth, with chapters on showing and also on the ordinary diseases and simple remedies.

SPORTING FIREARMS. By Horace Kephart. This book is divided into two parts, Part I dealing with the Rifle and Part II with the Shotgun. Mr. Kephart goes at some length into the questions of range, trajectory and killing power of the different types of rifles and charges and also has chapters on rifle mechanisms, sights, barrels, and so forth. In the part dealing with shotguns he takes up the question of range, the effectiveness of various loads, suitability of the different types of boring, the testing of the shotguns by pattern, and so forth.

TRACKS AND TRACKING. By Josef Brunner. After twenty years of patient study and practical experience, Mr. Brunner can, from his intimate knowledge, speak with authority on this subject. "Tracks and Tracking" shows how to follow intelligently even the most intricate animal or bird tracks. It teaches how to interpret tracks of wild game and decipher the many tell-tale signs of the chase that would otherwise pass unnoticed. It proves how it is possible to tell from the footprints the name, sex, speed, direction, whether and how wounded, and many other things about wild animals and birds. All material has been gathered first hand; the drawings and half-tones from photographs form an important part of the work, as the author has made faithful pictures of the tracks and signs of the game followed. The list is: The White-Tailed or Virginia Deer—The Fan-Tailed Deer—The Mule-Deer—The Wapiti or Elk—The Moose—The Mountain Sheep—The Antelope—The Bear—The Cougar—The Lynx—The Domestic Cat—The Wolf—The Coyote—The Fox—The Jack Rabbit—The Varying Hare—The Cottontail Rabbit—The Squirrel—The Marten and the Black-Footed Ferret—The Otter—The Mink—The Ermine—The Beaver—The Badger—The Porcupine—The Skunk—Feathered Game—Upland Birds—Waterfowl—Predatory Birds—This book is invaluable to the novice as well as the experienced hunter.

"This book studied carefully, will enable the reader to become as well versed in tracking lore as he could by years of actual experience."—Lexington Journal.

WING AND TRAP-SHOOTING. By Charles Askins. The only practical manual in existence dealing with the modern gun. It contains a full discussion of the various methods, such as snap-shooting, swing and half-swing, discusses the flight of birds with reference to the gunner's problem of lead and range and makes special application of the various points to the different birds commonly shot in this country. A chapter is included on trap shooting and the book closes with a forceful and common-sense presentation of the etiquette of the field.

"It is difficult to understand how anyone who takes a delight in hunting can afford to be without this valuable book."—Chamber of Commerce Bulletin, Portland, Ore.

"This book will prove an invaluable manual to the true sportsman, whether he be a tyro or expert."—Book News Monthly.

"Its closing chapter on field etiquette deserves careful reading."—N. Y. Times.

THE YACHTSMAN'S HANDBOOK. By Commander C. S. Stanworth, U. S. N. and Others. Deals with the practical handling of sail boats, with some light on the operation of the gasoline motor. It includes such subjects as handling ground tackle, handling lines and taking soundings, and use of the lead line; handling sails, engine troubles that may be avoided, care of the gasoline motor and yachting etiquette.