

Profitable Business of Poultry Raising in America

Individual fowls vary greatly in their characteristics. For instance, exceptional layers and poor layers are found in all breeds. But in all breeds the general type is well fixed, and the various individuals of a given breed greatly resemble each other in such important matters as shape and size, hardiness, color of egg shell, activity, etc.

Therefore, the poultryman will do well to adopt that breed which best meets his needs, or personal preference, take full advantage of its desirable qualities, and seek to improve his flock through careful selection and breeding.

The prominent characteristics of our various kinds of domestic chickens are discussed below.

BY PROF. FREDERIC H. STONEBURN.

FOWLS have been kept under domestication for untold centuries.

They are referred to in Holy Writ; are reproduced on ancient coins minted long before the Christian era; are mentioned in the most ancient books. Poultry-keeping, therefore, is an ancient art.

Just what wild forms were first domesticated, how they were selected and crossed to produce new types, will probably never be known. Most students believe that the jungle fowl of India—the *Gallus bankiva* of the scientists—is the progenitor of our domestic sorts.

From Asia the stock was carried westward, by sea and overland. In most countries some special type was finally evolved, and later these were so blended that it is almost possible to trace the ancestry of even the newer breeds. But this process has worked for improvement, and today the better kinds of fowls are the most efficient machines that we have for transforming raw materials into food products for man.

When securing a flock of fowls it is always best to obtain birds of pure breeding. Crosses and mongrels may in themselves be profitable under certain conditions, but they have so many serious faults that one is hardly justified in working with them, especially in view of the fact that really good stock may be secured at such moderate prices. The great advantage of the thoroughbred flock is due to the fact that the various individuals are reasonably alike in size, color, temperament and habits, and will produce eggs and chicks which are uniform, and, therefore, more available. When breeding mongrels no one can be sure of the type of the resulting offspring.

It is not necessary to buy exhibition birds for which high prices are charged. But it certainly is advisable to take full advantage of the work already done by breeders in fixing the type of the various breeds so that the future operations may be conducted with reasonable confidence that the results will be satisfactory.

But breed is not everything. We find poor individuals in all breeds. One should carefully consider his problem, definitely determine the object to be gained, and then select those fowls which have in greatest degree the characteristics he most needs. If the market demand is for eggs having white shells, it is poor business to keep a flock of layers of brown eggs. If the production of table poultry is to be the main consideration, the light-weight breeds should be considered.

So much for the utility poultry keeper. The fancier, the producer of exhibition stock, valued because of perfection in form and color, may give his fancy free reign and devote himself to the kind which best pleases him, regardless of any other consideration.

Class, Breed, Variety.

In connection with fowls we hear such terms as class, breed, variety, strain, etc. These are often confused, so a word of explanation may be in order.

In the American Standard of Perfection, fowls are grouped in classes largely according to the country of their origin. Each class contains one or more breeds, the latter consisting of fowls which are alike in size and shape. Breeds are further subdivided into varieties, the determining characteristics usually being plumage color or comb shape. For example, the White Wyandotte is the white plumaged variety of the Wyandotte breed, and the latter belongs to the American class.

Let us take up the classes in order. First comes the American, containing the Plymouth Rocks, Wyandottes, Javas, Dominiques, Rhode Island Reds and Buckeyes in their several varieties. These are all general-

purpose breeds, medium in weight, generally yellow-skinned, excellent table stock at all ages, good layers of brown-shelled eggs. The hens are dependable sitters and careful mothers.

As a rule the members of this class are hardy and vigorous. They are rather heavily feathered and are able to endure without apparent discomfort the cold Winters of our northern section. They stand confinement, but will "rustle" if given an opportunity.

The Asiatic class embraces the Brahmas, Cochins and Langshans, our heaviest breeds. The Brahma is the giant of domestic chickens, males often weighing 12 pounds and upwards.

These breeds produce dark brown eggs but, excepting the Langshan, are only moderate layers. They are gentle, easily confined, unusually hardy, much inclined toward broodiness.

The Brahma is often used by growers of heavy-weight table poultry, either in its purity or crossed with lighter stock. This seems to be its greatest value.

The Cochin, formerly a very good utility fowl, as now bred, is of little practical value.

In the important Mediterranean class are grouped the Leghorns, Minorcas, Spanish, Andalusians and Anconas. These are the so-called "laying machines," enjoying a high reputation as layers of the white eggs, so much wanted in the New York markets and those controlled thereby.

These breeds are small in size, excepting the Minorca, active, nervous, non-sitting. Owing to the size of their combs and their comparatively light plumage, they are seriously affected by the cold.

The White Leghorn is one of our most widely-bred fowls and is a prime favorite on commercial egg farms. Though small in size, it dresses off nicely, being full-breasted and having the desired yellow skin.

Turning to the English class, we

find the Dorkings, Redcaps and Orpingtons.

The former is one of the most ancient breeds, and in England is considered one of the best table fowls. It has not made much progress in America.

The Orpington is a general purpose breed, in many ways resembling our Plymouth Rocks. It is hardy, a very good layer, will hatch and rear its young and makes very fine table poultry. The fact that it has white skin places it at a disadvantage in our American markets.

A Promising Fowl.

The newly introduced Sussex fowl also belongs to this class. This breed is a great favorite in the Sussex district where such great quantities of fine table stock are produced. The American sponsors for this fowl claim that it possesses unusual business qualities, and predict that it will become most popular here as soon as its merits are recognized.

One breed, with eight varieties, forms the Polish class. This is one of the oldest breeds known, and though a fair producer of white eggs, is now regarded as being strictly ornamental.

In this class are found some of the most beautiful of all domestic fowls, graceful in form, with huge crests and wondrously marked plumage.

The Hamburg class also contains but a single breed, of which there are six varieties. Though now bred almost exclusively by fanciers who have brought it to a remarkable degree of perfection, the Hamburg was formerly a universal favorite. It produces an abundance of white-shelled eggs which are, unfortunately, rather small in size. In earlier times its ability as an egg-producer earned for

Fine Table Stock From France.

it the name "Dutch Everyday Layer."

Some excellent table fowls are found in the French class, which includes the Houdans, Crevecoeurs and La Fleche. These breeds are all

black or mottled in color, and this may account for the slow progress they have made in America. They are very fair producers of white-shelled eggs which are satisfactory in size.

The remaining classes are made up of Games, Game Bantams, Orientals and Ornamental Bantams. None of these is considered valuable by utility poultry keepers save one breed of the Orientals—the Cornish. This is an excellent meat producer, and is often used for crossing purposes. It is bred in three varieties, one of which, the White-laced Red, was brought out by an American breeder.

Two other breeds which have recently been brought to America deserve mention here. The Campine, from war-torn Belgium, is an excellent layer, and its eggs are of pearly whiteness. The Faverolle, from France, is attracting much attention from admirers of general purpose fowls.

If public favor is a reliable guide to the relative utility value of our various breeds and varieties, we may safely class them as follows:

For the production of large table birds: Light Brahmas and Plymouth Rocks.

For brown-shelled eggs and table stock of medium weight: Rocks, Wyandottes, Reds and Orpingtons.

For white-shelled eggs: Leghorns, Anconas and Campines.

For squab broilers: White Leghorns.

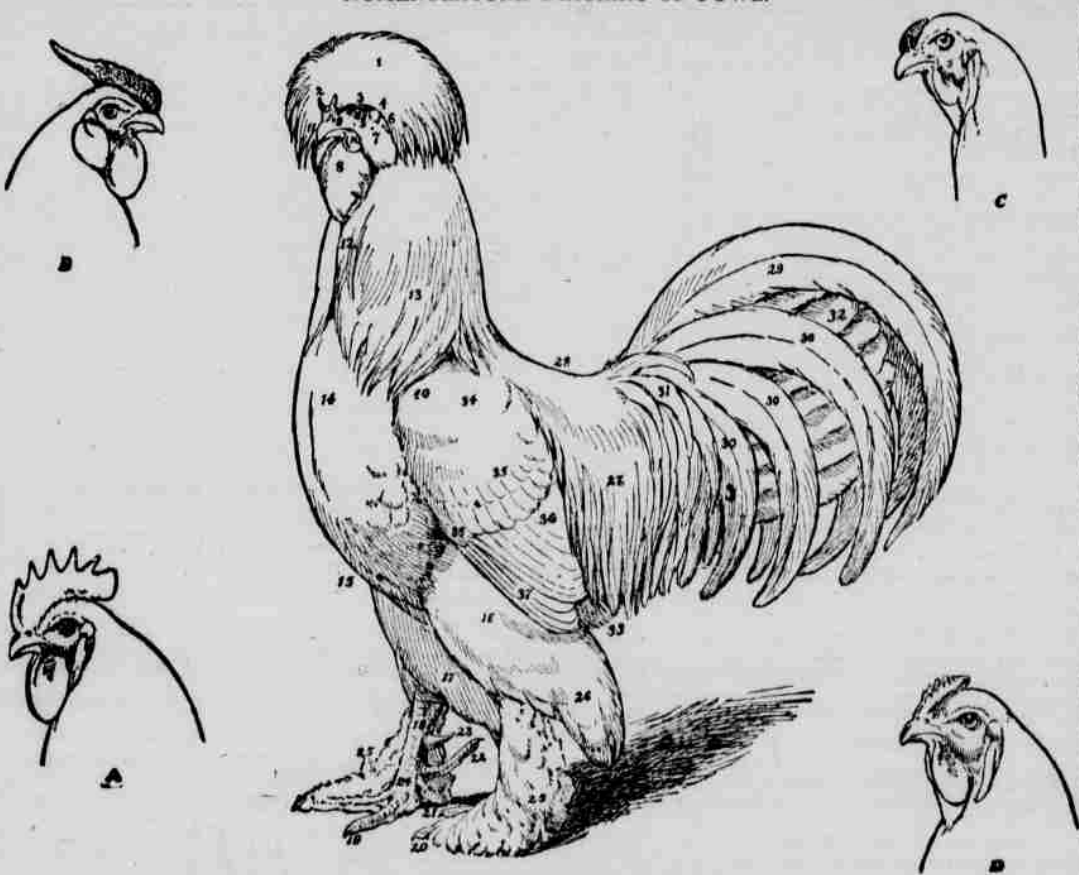
But regardless of the breed for variety selected, the very foundation of success is health, strength, vitality and vigor in the flock. Without these, success can hardly be reached. Next is the inherited tendency along definite lines, whether for egg or meat production, and this follows careful selection and breeding.

Choose a suitable breed, then select sturdy specimens of proper breeding.

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Poultry Breeders Will Find This Chart Useful

NOMENCLATURE DIAGRAM OF FOWL.



EDWIN MEGARGEE

In order to make descriptions of fowls intelligible poultrymen have named the various body sections. The accompanying chart plainly shows each feature and should be preserved for future reference. The drawing is of a Sultan male. Various types of combs are illustrated by A, B, C and D.

BY EDWIN MEGARGEE.

AS the art of poultry breeding was developed, poultrymen began to feel the necessity of giving each section of the fowl some descriptive name. In the course of time, a complete system was evolved which greatly simplified a condition that was becoming decidedly complex.

The accompanying diagram shows every section of a domestic fowl, and the following list gives the name of each. This is in accordance with the system adopted by the American Poultry Association.

In the descriptive matter accompanying the drawings of thoroughbred fowls which will appear regularly in these columns, we will have occasion to refer by name to the various sections of the birds shown. Therefore, this cut should be preserved for future reference. It will be found most useful.

A, shows a single comb; B, a rose comb of the Hamburg type; C, a "strawberry" comb; D, a pea comb. (1) crest, (2) comb, (3) eye, (4) ear, (5) face, (6) ear-lobe, (7) muffs, (8) beard, (9) nostril, (10)

wattles, (11) beak, (12) neck, (13) hackle, (14) breast, (15) keel, (16) thigh, (17) hock joint, (18) shank, (19) third toe, (20) middle toe, (21) fourth toe, (22) fifth toe, (23) spur, (24) foot, (25) toe feathers, (26) vulture hook, (27) saddle, (28) back, (29) sickles, (30) lesser sickles, (31) tail coverts, (32) main tail feathers, (33) abdomen, (34) wing-bow, (35) wing-bar, (36) secondaries forming wing-bay, (37) primaries or flights, (38) flight-coverts, (39) shoulder.

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