

is popularly called "full blooded" or "pure-blooded"—terms which generally refer to a single origin but are also used as synonymous with thoroughbred—or whether it is the result of the union of several well-known breeds or varieties. Origin is not the test of the thoroughbred character of a fowl, or for that matter of anything else in the animal world. If one could find a race of fowls whose pedigree could be traced in an unbroken line back to the original wild progenitor, it would not necessarily be a thoroughbred race of fowls. It probably would be a thoroughbred race, not, however, on account of its origin, but it would not *necessarily* be such. I am aware that such statements are liable to shock some who are great sticklers for purity of blood, but it is better to be shocked by the truth than to spend a life-time in holding as true what is false.

The length of time a fowl has been bred is not the test of its thoroughbred character. In the yards of the farmers, the world over, there are true mongrels that have been bred from "the time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." If time were the test, then there would be the most distinctly thoroughbred of the fowls of which we have any knowledge, unless possibly the Game fowl be an exception. Before history lighted its torch from the waning fires of myth, these fowls existed. They were mongrels then—they are mongrels now.

What then do we mean by the term thoroughbred? What is the test by which the thoroughbred character is determined? The answer is as simple as truth. Thoroughbred means thoroughly bred, that is, when applied to fowls it means that they will produce their characteristics with great uniformity. The progeny will have the characteristics of the parents and will breed them down to the next generation and so on, so long as the breed or

variety exists. There will not be absolute uniformity, for variability steps in to prevent that, but there will be a tolerably close adherence to the breed and variety type in the most of the progeny. Any fowl which is capable of doing this is thoroughbred, even though it has many more ancestors than it has years of existence.

Of course I am arguing that length of time is a matter of no importance, for the longer a fowl has been bred to a given type, the more likely will be its adherence to that type, and the less likelihood there will be of revisions to some of its original progenitors. But the time itself is of no importance, save as it assists in securing the transmissibility of the type. As soon as the type is a certain heritable property, so soon is the fowl a thoroughbred. This may occur as it has in some white „sports," almost at the outset, or it may require five, ten, or even more years. The one thing necessary is that the type be capable of transmission with reasonable uniformity.

REPLY TO MR. MORTIMER.

BY F. M. CLEMANS, JR.

MR. MORTIMER in his notes in December number advances such ideas as one might look for from a disappointed exhibitor. Not that we wish to infer that Mr. M. has been so disappointed, but the fallacy of his position is so apparent that the note referred to sounds a good deal more like spleen than cool argument. This idea of reducing the breeding of thoroughbred fowls wholly to a standard of utility has been often advanced and as often knocked on the head. It is not hard to foresee what would be the result were such a theory carried into actual use. If disqualifications are removed from the Standard the day is not far distant when mon-

grels will be the rule and thoroughbreds the exception. The rigid requirements of a Standard have brought to a high degree of uniformity all the older breeds and will have the same influence in time on the new breeds. To make the Standard adjustable to the various ideas of breeders and hucksters means a prompt halt in the march of improvement and a sure falling off of the quality of fowls now bred from both the Standards of use and beauty. Mr. Mortimer is greatly grieved that small defects debar an otherwise fine bird from competition. For instance we take the light Brahma. A bird with a single comb will be debarred, and from Mr. Mortimer's standpoint, so small a point should not be considered. I wish to ask how long the light Brahma would remain the grand breed it is, if distinct Brahma characteristics were not required to appear in every Brahma exhibited. The Standard not only protects the purity of the breed, but also fosters the economic points. The required shape for all the utility breeds is the best practical shape that can be acquired by that breed, and if the Standard requirements were reached the farmer or market poultryman could ask no more. The weight standard for all breeds in which good weights are to be expected is high enough, in fact if anything, is rather extreme. Above all things let us have no letting down of Standards, but rather seek to elevate. Mr. Mortimer's assertion that first premium birds are usually the most worthless in the show, is too transparently unreliable to require much attention. No one with an eye to beauty can deny that the Standard requirements for nearly all breeds are the most desirable that could be conceived of. Breeding to a Standard is the best and fairest of methods. Judging by the Standard insures to all fair and impartial treatment, and a scale of points is absolutely necessary to accuracy in judging.