

To put show birds into best possible condition, one needs to have a building purposely made for it. A bird short of weight can be stuffed with heavy food previous to weighing and with crop distorted made to weigh a quarter of a pound more. Yet how much better it is to begin a month or more before the show and by feeding well have the specimen standard weight with the body well rounded into fulness of all its parts, so having the symmetry as well up to the standard as the weight.

Rough, scabby shanks and feet can be washed and scoured clean before the showing, yet will show the effects every time. A few years ago some Plymouth Rocks were put into an exhibition at Montreal. I have never yet heard whether the owner had become lost to all sense of right doing or whether he thought the judges did not know their business and could not tell a doctored bird a long way off, or thought he could bluff the exhibition committee, in any event he tried the little game once too often. He smeared the legs with yellow ochre mixed in vaseline or olive oil, I do not know which, but the fraud was exposed and the man's name published and I believe he has never entered a bird in Montreal since, and his prospects as a fancier or breeder destroyed, and his reputation as an honest man gone. Condition is the great thing — the main thing in fact — that goes to make success probable and certain. There is a time when every bird reaches its prime and looks its best; then is the time to show them, no matter whether it be a chicken just reaching its maturity or a fowl finishing its moult, it will score more than it will at any other time. You cannot send a bird round to several exhibitions and expect it to sustain its reputation in each and every subsequent show. Experienced exhibitors know this and plan months ahead to have a successful display at some particular time and prepare later birds for others.

It wears a bird in appearance to show it, yet it does not effect its value as a breeder. The feathered race are not accustomed to being up nights arrayed on saw-dust under electric lights for the benefit of an admiring crowd.

I have been asked if I would send my best birds to a show. I say yes most emphatically, if I send any birds at all, but I would always be at the show myself and look after my birds or I would not send them; not that officers and attendants do not do their best, but there are minor details at they have not the time to look after and that

fraction that may decide the prize can sometimes be saved or gained by the arranging of tail or wing feathers, withholding too much grain: this will cause them to appear more sprightly, and there are other little details incident to showing, too numerous to mention here.

Last but not least look over your birds while getting them ready for showing and be sure that they are not lousy; use some good insect powder on them every few days which in addition to keeping them free from vermin cleanses and brightens their feathers if soiled or stained. Keep your birds for two weeks at least on clean short cut straw at least eight inches deep on the floor of scratching-shed and roosting-room. A reliable poultry judge in the U. S. told me that he often sees the ill effects of lice in many ways. The birds with nibs of their feathers eaten away, with vermin swarming around their thigh and fluffy feathers, making their lives miserable. They grin and bear it, as best they can, but it tells in the scoring: winning less — often nothing — until their owner gets his eyes opened to the fact that lice are there.

The time is passed when scrubs got prizes, and a good thing it is too, for both the farmer, the amateur and the country at large. It is chiefly the result of poultry shows which are held each year in large cities of our provinces, impartial judging allowing no prize money to anything unworthy of it.

Now, to the farmers and the amateurs: men, women and boys; go to the exhibitions as often as you can, particularly the farmers' sons, and read, learn and inwardly digest all the good literature on the subject you can get hold of. Study the particular department your fancy leads you to, and know all you can about it experimentally, theoretically and practically. Knowledge is power on the farm as well as in any other sphere of life.

Some of our best statesmen of to-day, men who are ruling our province, have been educated, lived and worked on farms and are the better fitted for their duties because of that fact, as they are in touch with the people they represent and serve; doing good work and saving the country from disaster and chaos; redeeming the land which is our heritage; knowing our needs and bringing to us peace, plenty and prosperity.

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