

Disposing of and Selecting of Breeding Stock.

The season of the year has again arrived when breeders find it necessary to dispose of their surplus stock. We find our fall exhibitions are excellent markets, and although all birds sent there cannot take prizes, the exhibitor may be rewarded by the sales made, and the attention drawn to his stock when placed in the show pen. Every year brings out a great number of new fanciers, who generally resort to the exhibitions to procure their breeding stock, or they take other means of communicating with exhibitors for that purpose. Again, brother fanciers often find it necessary to introduce fresh blood into their yards, and there is no more likely place than a good exhibition at which to make selections, and many pens passed over by the judges will contain fowls suitable to these fanciers' wants.

The number of those who commence poultry keeping, and continue it for a few years, and then give it up, is very great; and this leads to the opinion that instead of being profitable, it is an expensive and costly business, and thus deters many from engaging in it. But such is far from being a correct conclusion to arrive at. Many such fanciers engage in the pursuit of poultry raising, not from any love of fowls, or even a moderate acquaintance with the principles of breeding, but merely from a feeling of pride in possessing birds which take first prizes at the exhibitions; too careless, as a rule, to attend to their own fowls, they are generally to be left for servants to look after, who know little and care less for the birds, and the result is they soon get out of condition and die, and the so-called fancier lives up the pursuit, which he really never entered into. It is, however, to these and others of a similar turn of mind, that surplus stock must be sold, and thus it is that poultrymen may be divided into two classes, namely, breeders and buyers. There is, however, another class, beginners, who enter into the business with a desire to succeed, and to such we have a few words to say regarding the purchase of breeding stock.

Let us first, then, suppose the beginner has determined on the breeds he will keep, and also here state that the failure of many amateurs, in the first instance, is attributable to attempting to keep too many breeds. Each variety demands not only judgement and care, but also a trained eye. By attempting more than one or two varieties, the practical business of breeding, hatching and rearing, as well as selecting for the show-pen is tremendously increased, and what might otherwise be a pleasure becomes a painful anxiety, burdensome alike to the body and the mind. The very best and most successful breeders and exhibitors, with

few exceptions, are those who confine their attention to a few breeds only; and this lesson should be well regarded by both beginners and fanciers. The usual first thought of the beginner and young fancier will be to secure a pair or trio of first prize fowls, regardless of cost, to be used as breeding stock, with the hope of next year producing chicks which will carry off the prizes in their class. In this he will in all probability be mistaken. This is not the way to begin successfully, as it will but very seldom answer expectations. Very rarely will birds matched for the show pen be properly adapted for breeding together, and their progeny will, in all likelihood, be nothing but trash from a fancier's standpoint; and should he, as not unfrequently is the case, advertise eggs for sale from these prize birds, he will most likely receive very unsatisfactory hints about dishonesty from his purchasers. It is just this sort of thing which causes so many to give up the fancy altogether, saying to their friends that it is a fraud on the public, and quoting their own experience in support of their argument. To procure birds for breeding stock, the fancier requires not only a knowledge of the points and colors necessary to produce exhibition chickens, but also some knowledge of the pedigree of each bird, as the points in these birds must not be the result of an accident, but of careful breeding for generations. It must not be forgotten, that every desired quality in a fowl is the result of repeated and continuous selection year after year of those birds for breeding stock which exhibit that particular point in the greatest perfection. A thoroughly good strain of fowls can only be the result of art, care, study and time—it cannot be attained all at once as many people imagine, but it requires a real and steady interest and perseverance.

The best plan for the amateur to pursue in the first instance is to purchase a few good birds from a well known and reliable breeder of the variety he prefers, and with them commence to breed. He will in this way obtain both the needful experience in management and practical knowledge of the breed itself. He could also procure some eggs from a first-class breeder of the same variety, and rear some chickens of both, which will be advantageous as to comparison as well as to form a beginning for successful breeding another season. By thus judiciously employing one season, anyone who has a genuine interest in the subject ought at the end of it have acquired a very useful and sound knowledge of the variety he has adopted. He will practically have learnt its qualities and management, its points and defects, from an exhibition point of view, and also how these manifest themselves as the chickens grow, and therefore can estimate for himself the real value of a bird. Another