

fect ducks with the drake, they are not particular about the next one or two ; these may or may not throw a prize bird ; at any rate, they (the breeders) will risk it. This is rather a speculative way of breeding, and is not to be recommended ; the probability is these defective ducks will not throw a passable duckling, but if they do the breeder is almost better without them, as in the following generation the faults of the parents are sure to assert themselves. Be it understood I am not speaking of small faults ; it is the art of mating to breed out faults and to keep on improving the standard of the stock, whatever they may be, but to put a duck into the breeding-pen with an imperfect shaped or leaden-coloured bill, a high back, or with a wry tail would be folly. Independent of this, however, I am strongly in favor of breeding only from the best, however few they are in number. Why crowd your yard with wasters when your aim is exhibition birds? From the very best mated birds you will have some worthless specimens, so do not breed wasters knowingly. They require as much food and rearing as good ones, and weeding out cannot be enforced so early with exhibition ducklings as with ordinary stock or with poultry.

We will now repair to the runs, and select our breeding ducks. We have no special ducks pensioned off for a summer's ease, retirement and good living, the same as our old champion drake ; their nature forbids it at this season, as they are coming on to lay, and confinement and liberal diet would ruin them. Since Candlemas Day we have given our ducks an unlimited range, then we keep the oldest and the fattest ducks separate from the young ones for a few weeks, for this reason : the former not only require poorer diet, but we give them a little Epsom salts once or twice a week, to take off some of their surplus fat, to keep them cool, and to

check inflammation ; we find we have more good eggs and fewer casualties from our oldest and fattest ducks when so treated. Most of these are now looking pretty active and well. There are some two or three, perhaps, rather heavy behind, which is not entirely due to their coming on to lay. There is an accumulation of fat there which is natural to all fowl if excessively fed, as these ducks have previously been, and there it will remain, however much they are reduced in condition, with due regard to health ; but under our treatment, as stated above, they lay fairly well, and we are not much troubled with shell-less or double-yolked eggs from them.

We will set ourselves the task of selecting twenty ducks to mate with the four drakes previously mentioned. Few breeders require so many, but in a discussion of this kind it will answer our purpose better not to limit operations. Two drakes with three ducks each, if all are young and healthy, will throw as many ducklings as even a large breeder would care to rear. Five ducks to each drake should not be exceeded in any case, and especially with exhibition ducks.

From twenty high-bred ducks we may expect to rear an average of from ten to fifteen ducklings each. We do not wish to encourage a "*Field*" of discussion from a certain quarter in announcing such a small average from our exhibition stock. If we kept the whole of them in ordinary condition from the first they would lay and rear as well as any Rouens ever did, and this, by the way, applies to most of our exhibition fowl, so it is absurd to state that the fancier is ruining their useful properties. Has the breeder and exhibitor ruined the useful properties of horses, cattle, sheep and swine? We will admit that the impotency of all over-fed animals is impaired, but the useful properties of other members of

these families reared judiciously are not impaired, but increased.

Now to proceed with our selection. We will simplify matters by first of all throwing out those ducks which have the most confirmed faults. We will then select those most suitable in points, shape and shade of colour for our several drakes.

There are some with green and others with leaden coloured bills ; other bills, we see are tipped with orange, but all the rest is black. A proper duck's bill should be orange at the end, sides and base, with a solid black saddle in the centre. Some we notice nearly approach this, but their bills are spotted with black at the sides, a bad fault to encourage. Then in shape the bill should be long and broad, and fairly straight, whereas we see some here short and narrow and dished. Very light-coloured throats and eye-marks are faults ; these parts should be minutely pencilled with brown, which gives the head and throat a grey appearance.

Rouen ducks have a great tendency to be light in the centre of their breasts, especially those which have light-colored throats ; it is a great fault in the show-pen, and should be avoided as much as possible in breeding. Others have a tendency of being too dark on the top of their heads and down the back of their necks ; these feathers are naturally darker, but in some they run almost black. Light and washy-coloured flanks and under-colour is another failing ducks are very subject to, and it is one of the worst in a breeding duck. White or unsound secondary wing feathers and light pencilled tails are to be avoided ; a broken or miscoloured wing-bar is another fault. The most general failing in our modern dark coloured ducks is a dark back, which, if pencilled at all, is coarse and wide. The injudicious use of cloudy-backed drakes is, in our opinion, answerable for this grave fault.