

say 3 or 4 houses, each 5 feet square and 6 feet 6 inches high in front, the doors all opening to the front. The covered shed will run in front of all and should be divided by doors into spaces of the same size as the house. In front of these again will be the gravel runs, each 5 feet wide and as long as you have space for; accessible by separate doors and each communicating by a trap door with the grass run.

Besides these there should be a sitting house, and a dry, large shed where young birds may be protected in early spring, and if possible an incubator and foster mother. The last two I recommend because by their aid chicks may be reared much easier than by the natural mode, and as all birds for show purposes are supposed to be hatched on the first of January, the start thus gained is of great value especially at the early shows.

So much for the apparatus, now for the stock. It is of course possible, though requiring a good many years of patience, to build up a good strain from somewhat inferior progenitors. In fact, so wide are the possibilities attainable by careful selection and mating that I believe a good selection of bright, good laying barn door fowls, of somewhat the same color and of good shape might in 10 or 15 years be made the progenitors of an entirely new variety of great commercial value.

But as most men (and women too) are not disposed to such great patience it would be necessary to start with thoroughly good birds. By these I do not mean prize birds. A cock for example of perfect color and good parentage, might be utterly useless for the show pen on account of inferior size or somewhat faulty shape, and yet prove the sire of excellent stock; and so too, a hen, though faulty in color, might breed almost perfect chickens. In selecting pens to begin with then, this rule is of prime importance. The cock transmits chiefly color, comb, and fancy points to his progeny; while the hen is chiefly responsible for size, form, and probably constitution.

The next point to be considered is that since the mating of near relations invariably deteriorates the breed if persisted in and since I have supposed that you will wish to keep your yard as free from foreign admixtures as possible your separate pens must be entirely unrelated to start with. Hence it is well to get them from separate establishments, though their general characteristics should be as nearly alike as possible.

TO BE CONTINUED.

The Good Points of Houdans.

THE Houdans are favorites with some, though not very common or well known beyond those who fancy them. They are of French extraction, of upright carriage, very much resembling the Polish Dorking in shape and general appearance, large birds, weighing from 8 to 10 pounds; combs large, like a butter fly with wings extended, with a serrated bunch of coral; lobes almost invisible, being hidden by full muffling beard, and a large full crest, very ornamental. They have five toes and a foot like the Dorking, and a fine flowing tail. Hens, well kept, will weigh from 6 to 8 pounds, the legs are whitish pink, and plumage speckled black and white, very evenly mixed. The cock's tail is black and white, crest more white than black.

This breed is excellent, both for market and table use, they have small bones with very fine, white flesh, they mature early, being ready for the table at four months, and when well fed and cared for they will weigh from four to five pounds; they are non-sitters, and lay a fairly large white egg. On account of the irregular markings, it is difficult to rear them for feathers. The chicks are very precocious and exceedingly active, presenting a mottled appearance, they bear confinement well but are addicted to feather eating unless properly brought up. The chicks like other bipeds, need careful training. They are one of the most useful birds we have, and not hard to acclimatize here. It is a breed adapted for the use of the farmers who have not a very dry or warm soil, or those who sell eggs, as it is an excellent layer.

In purchasing I would not advise buying from the show pen but from reliable breeders, where birds have been bred and kept for economic uses, rather than for exhibition purposes. You will then obtain valuable birds which may be regarded as the Dorking of France, or as Tegetmeir affirms: "Large, heavy, short-legged, five-toed fowls with small light bone, a remarkable absence of offal, with mottled plumage, they strongly recall to mind the old fashioned Dorking as it existed before my attention had been directed to uniformity of feathering by poultry shows." This distinguished authority further remarks: "Their merits as a table fowl are of the highest excellence. No pure bred chickens mature with greater, or perhaps, with as great rapidity, they feather early, are extremely hardy and therefore easily reared. The old birds are robust and, the eggs, which are numerous, are remarkable as being almost invariably fertile." I have known several breed

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