

nearly; and this loss of color is caused by loss of strength consequent upon old age or some premature decay. But if a man be improperly or insufficiently fed will his hair turn white? Yes, sooner, and will soon be wanting in lustre. Any person knows that during or after an attack of sickness how dry and inclined to break off the hair is.

As a proof that severe in-breeding is followed by the results described, (by severe I mean without any precaution being taken to delay this degenerating process by carefully selecting the best specimens to breed from,) permit me to cite the following instances which have come under my own observation: A flock of common birds in this neighborhood has been allowed to in-breed for years, and the result is that many of them are not larger than pigeons, and all look as though a hawk had had hold of them; and the owner has frequently informed me that though a large flock are kept, and well fed, he gets very few eggs. such flocks are not plenty, for, as "K" remarks, farmers exchange eggs; but in this case even that has been neglected. Now, a part of this flock passed into the hands of another party, who, not satisfied with his returns from them, obtained a sitting of eggs from a neighbor, from common also, and now you could not recognize the young birds as being anything akin to the older part; and the owner assures me that their laying capacity is doubled. So marked has been the change for the better that the original owner has put a thorough-bred cock into his yard. Again, the writer was offered a Light Brahma cockerel in exchange by a neighbor, who seemed surprised when told it was a poor specimen, as he had obtained the breed from one of our best breeders, and had carefully kept them from crossing with any other kind, and had in-bred them. The black in this specimen had faded to a dirty brown, and the white was as yellow as a guinea.

But whence arises the difference of opinion among men of experience and intelligence? In my humble opinion it arises from each employing a different standard; one takes the standard which men's fancy has built up, and the other the more abstract standard of perfection. But is not the standard towards which we direct all our efforts in breeding the description of a perfect bird? Undoubtedly, according to fancy, but not according to nature. What would the breeders of pure-bred cattle think, and what would be the result, if popular taste laid down a rule that a cow of any particular breed had to be of exactly such a color, and when of mixed colors, each color to occupy just so much space and no more, and to be exactly located, and even the horns and hoofs to be of a given color? In the first place they would think the breed was on a fair way to be destroyed, and in the

second, when a breeder got a specimen or two filling the requirements of this standard, he would in breed them to produce the like, as he knows that like in nature produces like. Has not our present standard rules been built up upon this system of in-breeding, and if so how are birds to be kept up to it except by a continuation of the system. Let a Light Brahma, a very model of physical beauty, be exhibited, and if it have too much black about it—as it is very likely to have—it is disqualified. I am not finding fault with the *Standard*, but it is evident that there is a misunderstanding somewhere, and if, in giving my opinion, I can throw any light upon it I shall be well pleased. The Light Brahma, I am informed upon good authority, was formerly a much darker bird than now, but the in-breeding necessarily practised to meet the standard requirements has bleached it out considerably. And in the case of Black Spanish are we not aware that they have greatly deteriorated in many ways from the in-breeding necessarily practised to get the white face.

As "X Roads" remarks, there is a wonderful likeness or sameness of color and shape among wild birds and animals; one looks in vain for a mark or feather by which one specimen can be distinguished from others, and if the argument that this is the result of in-breeding can be substantiated, in my opinion it is more in its favor than all that can be brought against it. But do wild animals and birds in-breed to any extent? We can best determine this by taking their habits into consideration. Let us notice the habits of some of our most common and well known varieties, gray-birds, black birds, and partridges, and the weight of evidence seems to be against in-breeding. As soon as the breeding season is over we see them gathering into flocks or wandering singly about, and assuredly with all family connections severed; the feeling of attachment or fitness for the successful propagation of their species which bound them together during the breeding season has passed away with the completion of the task. Upon the return of the breeding season a selection is again made, based, no doubt, upon fitness—there may be a secret here—and there is no reason to believe that these matings form any part of the previous year's. Again, let us take the deer: in fall and winter a herd of bucks is found living peaceably together, or wandering singly through the forest, plainly without any family connections or affections, and we look in vain for those signs of strife at these seasons which are so often met with during the breeding season. These family ties must be permanent in order that there be much in-breeding either among animals or birds; and we know also with those which have been domesticated