

SYMMETRY AND OTHER QUESTIONS.

BY W. C. G. PETER.

I am sure all your readers were, like myself, proud of their Canadian Journal's New Year Number. It's old friends of a few years ago would hardly believe the progress it has made, had they not watched with affectionate eyes it's steady march upward. Long may it climb, till it reaches the topmost limit of success.

The article by MR. M. SNIDER is exceedingly interesting to me. He says he hardly knows whether to call himself a fancier or not. Well, Mr. Editor, I think none but a "natural born fancier" can love fine fowls from their youth up: he whose affection can outlast the many petty trials, mistakes, and "aggravations" to be encountered through years of poultry culture is the fancier I like to meet and talk to, I can "do a gossip" with him, swap experience and be happy. "Bother" us again friend and that soon. Re ducks, I think with you Mr. Editor, that it is too little moisture, or the old birds are kept too short of water, for these two things are very essential, I may say imperatively necessary.

I am pleased to see some attention given to symmetry, although against me, it is by exchange of ideas we learn; who can have a good argument knowing only one side of the subject? I take it for granted that A. R. N. has given more than a passing notice to this question. As to defining symmetry, I think it can only be defined, in part, I mean that there is a kind of *spirit* in the make up of all the perfect parts that no definition I have seen supplies or provides for, it may be that it is the life element in the bird, coupled with a way of its own (in each specimen) of showing us what its individual idea is of what such a bird ought to be. Some fail to impress us, some immediately make their superiority apparent. I

once heard a great game fancier say, of a specimen most perfect in form, "He is grand in shape, and what is more, he knows how to show himself off to the best advantage." Now, he was a man capable to judge, he knew the bird had good shape, but—there was still something required, that little, undefinable something—that peculiar knack of letting one see he was "just immense," if the usual definitions were correct, a specimen perfect in symmetry, would always remain so (barring accident). Now, Mr. Editor, I fancy most men have seen birds that were faultless in shape, when in their lordly pride they "bossed" the roost in their own familiar quarters of the poultry house, that on being removed and put on exhibition would fail several degrees in shape, until they again felt at ease, and regained once more their almost departed faith in mankind; and then his owner will say of such an one, Oh! he is getting himself into shape again." Now the "perfect parts" and "harmonious whole" were there just the same, but that little spirit, that in-dwelling fairy had fled, that something that we all recognize as the finishing touch in the make up of the specimen. Of course there remains the objection that the bird is cut twice, but I think as far as I have been able to take notes, that most judges will bear in mind the symmetry clause when they come to the sections. Then there are the varieties, of which no two that I can call to mind are exactly alike, so that, if we take out symmetry, we must substitute something to define P. Rock, Cochin or Langshan shape. I have read with great interest, and desire to be informed, the discussion on this subject by our American friends, and I find able and intelligent men on both sides. I have formed my opinion without prejudice, or if any existed it was on the F. side, to let it go. It is a humble opinion, and sometimes when I think of the long life work and experience of the many writers, it seem

preposterous for a "young un" to say a word either way, but "Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread," is still true as in the long ago.

Friend SPILLETT's article is contrary to my experience all through, for before I had a suitable place for keeping a large flock, I could dispose of the few birds I had to spare to neighbors and others that knew me, since I have gone a little deeper and advertised I can do more in this way. And here I may say that after a little experimenting in different methods, I found an "ad," in a poultry paper is the place to have it, if you want to make it pay, even if it is a very small one. This is the truth and "nothing but it." It is also true, friend "GROWLER," that I have sold all my stock except a few Wyandotte cockerels this year, and must make some importations; and though I have been guilty of the crime of putting an "ad." in your exchange column, Mr. Editor, that is nothing to be ashamed of I believe. And only that I wished to reduce stock quickly on account of MRS. PETER's ill health, I might not have done it even once, for I have since been obliged to refuse many sales. However, I may be exceptionally fortunate, but I must say I have never yet regretted the day that saw my first "ad." But there is no occasion for a man to pin his faith to fancy poultry and all that it implies, for there is money always to be made in market poultry and eggs. And if I should not be able to raise another exhibition bird, or sell a bird, I would fall back on a poultry farm as a sure source of income. I cannot but express regret that an old and ardent fancier sees the gloomy side, I feel sure there will be the usual reaction. Not a little of our success depends on the room at our command, of that I have plenty, my birds could (if they would) have the run of hundreds of acres, they, however, confine their walks to an inclosure of about thirty acres. This is true also. — RE,