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MOTTLED FOWLS.

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THE combination of black and white in fowls is extremely interesting, except when one gets white on fowls which should be wholly black, or black on fowls which should be wholly white. The Java, the Houdan, the Ancona and the mottled Aztec are instances of what I mean, where the two colors are interspersed and each heightens the effect of the other. But the possibilities of these colors have never been exhausted. They have been produced only in one pattern—what we generally know as mottling.

Poultry breeders should take a leaf from the experience of pigeon breeders. The latter have artistically arranged these colors into definite patterns and have thus greatly increased the effects which can be produced in black and white. Can poultry breeders do the same?

I think one breed can be so manipulated. Before I sold my mottled Aztecs to Mr. B. S. Smith, of Closter, N.J., I observed a tendency to such an arrangement of colors, and I trust the purchaser will work it out. The pullets showed almost white heads, with well defined mottling on the shoulders, and less perfect on the back. I think it will be possible with this fowl to produce a bird with the following definite markings: bald head, rose wing, hankerchief mark on back and mottled breast, all the rest of the plumage black. Such a fowl would be handsome, much hand-

somer than the general intermixture of the two colors. To produce it and keep it true to its pattern would require skill, but what is a fancier for if he does not desire to exercise skill. Whether similar possibilities exist in other breeds I do not know, but certainly they appear to exist in this one. Had I not been compelled to part with this interesting and valuable fowl, I should have tested its capabilities in this direction. To succeed would have been a decided triumph and would have given to the world an absolutely unique fowl. Failure would have still left one in possession of a neatly mottled fowl. There was everything to gain and absolutely nothing to lose from the attempt.

By the way, the mottled Aztec is an interesting fowl. It has medium size, is as plump as a pigeon, has a coat of black and white, is almost combless, and is a very good layer. It is hardy, a good sitter and an excellent mother. I can speak thus confidently of its qualities, because I do not own a single specimen, and I doubt if the present owner would part with one at present. At any rate, no one can accuse me of having a financial bias in favor of the fowl.

If breeders of mottled fowls would produce definite patterns in the plumage, as pigeon breeders have done, I believe it would add greatly to the popularity of the fowls. Such patterns would show that more thought had gone into the production of the varieties, and that they could not have been produced in a haphazard way. The definite character of the markings would be indisputable evidence of the thorough breeding of the fowls, and without further evidence would proclaim them as thoroughbreds. It would pay to make the attempt.