

legs and beak has been one of the greatest difficulties breeders of Plymouth Rocks have found. It will take at least another five years to breed out the dark color inherited from the early birds, and to establish the required color as firmly as it is in the Leghorn family.

### Our Lefroy Letter.

Editor Review.

It seems to be the opinion of many fanciers that the task of judging a show of fancy poultry is an easy one, and one that can be performed with the same exactness which characterizes the work of a carpenter or watchmaker; and if any mistakes are made it must necessarily be the result of dishonesty or the want of knowledge.

In trying to apply the standard to my own birds, not a few difficulties have been encountered which the Standard failed to elucidate to me. I do not pretend to convey the idea that this is the fault of the Standard, but I do say that it is impossible to so accurately define shape and color, but especially the former, which are only comparative terms, that every one shall have the same conception of those terms.

In order to make my meaning plain I shall mention some of the *sticking points* which have confronted me in my attempts to very critically apply the Standard to my own flock. I may say just here that I had read that it was just as easy to apply these measures to a bird as to a board, and I have seen shows judged by men who had no other qualification than the Standard which they held in their hand, and though these men could have measured anything, the length and breadth of which was exactly given, yet they failed to distinguish the difference between the different varieties by the standard. Now, we have in the Standard for the L. B., "head broad." Now the question arises in my mind when trying to apply this, How broad is that? No doubt the idea is broad as compared with the other varieties. Therefore the head in this variety is to be broader than those of some other variety or varieties, but where do we find the positive degree here or the standard by which the others are compared. Again, we have the term "medium," or midway between. But midway between what? is the question. Of course it is between the first degree and the third, or the superlative, but what are they. Again, "beak short," but what is the length of exactness here. How short? is the question again. Again "lack to be broad, and as long as is consistent with the size," etc. Surely no one will say that the length in this case can be uniformly applied; what will be perfection to one man may be disqualification in the eyes of another. Again, "shanks

standing well apart," but this like the rest is only a comparative term, and might be settled by allowing the highest marks to the widest.

Color is more easily disposed of, and hence we find color one of the chief things in a show bird. We have, for example, "fluff white," and if a bird having dark under-color happens to be unfortunate enough to have the blue running into the web of the feather in back, or fluff, or shoulders, though this may only extend to one or two feathers, it is deemed sufficient by many judges to disqualify the bird. This, I think, is not in harmony with the other points named in the Standard; in this case pure white is perfection, and I cannot understand how a little spot or two lowers perfection to uselessness. We have comb, etc., defined, or the perfection of it, and why not disqualify for any falling away here as well as in color? Indeed, as far as I can learn, blue under-color is not in the standard of many judges, and hence because it cannot be lawfully cut yet it is watched with great carefulness, and the bird that has it must have it exactly in the tolerated locality or woe be unto it. And at some shows we find that where two birds of equal merits are competing, the prize has gone to the one with light under-color. And why? Lewis Wright says because the light bird has White Cochin in her composition! In vain are we told by men of great experience, such as Felch, Williams, Wright, and others, that the black in the Light Brahmas cannot be maintained without the blue under-color. Still the demand is for the light. But how is this? Simply because our shows teach this by their awards. Therefore, if experience is worth anything, the L. B. must be suffering great wrong at the hands of its friends.

I am pleased to know that the Industrial is holding out stronger inducements than ever before to the poultry men to patronize that show, and I have no doubt that much of the credit is due to the exertions made by our worthy President and his colleagues at Toronto. Though this cannot be made a first-class poultry show, especially for old stock, yet it can be made the best show in Canada at that season, and I believe the Toronto brethren are on the right track to make it such. Of course many of the best specimens will necessarily be absent from this show, as not many old birds can be got into condition at that season; while with young birds those who are fortunate enough to get out a few January or February chicks will be almost sure to win. This is a necessity that cannot be got over by any judge, as we cannot fairly bring into comparison what may be with what exists. Every one knows how many a promising young chick never comes up to expectations.