

POULTRY

INBREEDING.

II.

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IF inbreeding is dangerous, what is an unskillful breeder to do? He, of all men, needs to avoid the promiscuous mingling of strains, for he cannot select, so well as a skillful breeder can, a bird from a different strain that will introduce the fewest antagonistic tendencies. Where is the help for him? He cannot inbreed and he cannot outbreed with safety, and yet he wishes to breed good fowls.

The simplest method for him is to adopt the following plan: First let him purchase a pair of fowls from a reliable strain of birds, possessing the qualities which he wishes to see reproduced in his stock. They will come properly mated and are good for two years breeding at least. When the young birds are ready to mate up, let him dispose of his male birds and such of the pullets as he does not care to keep and buy a male bird of the same strain as his first birds, mating him to the pullets. And this he can repeat from year to year and have blood that is sufficiently different from that of his fowls to keep up vigor without introducing tendencies and characteristics he wishes to avoid.

And it is better for him if the birds he purchases come from a distance. Birds, as well as other animals, are affected in a greater or less degree by their environments, they are to some extent creatures of their surroundings. If they come from a distance, climate, soil and other surroundings will be different and to some extent this will make a difference in their blood, so that two fowls of the same parents will, so far as the effect on the progeny is concerned, be less nearly related in blood if they are reared in different parts of the country, than if they were reared in the same place and subject to exactly the same conditions. So that, in purchasing a cockerel of the same strain, one will get fresher blood by getting him from a distance than he will by obtaining him near at hand. One may have to pay a little tribute to the Express Company, but it is tribute that will pay the breeder in the end.

He may also be able to learn of a sub-strain, so to speak, bred on the same lines as his own, the breeders being animated by the same purpose, having the same points in

view, and using the same methods to secure these points. Their birds would be more distantly related in blood than those of exactly the same strain and yet would introduce no antagonistic tendencies. Fortunate, indeed, is the breeder who can make such a discovery, but such sub-strains are exceedingly rare. One can, however, frequently find two related strains of birds where the differences are small and where they can be overlooked with comparative safety. When such a sub-strain can be found, it will not matter even if the birds be near at hand; indeed, this will be a positive advantage as the male bird can be personally selected and express charges can be saved.

After a few years the beginner will gain the needed experience and be able to introduce such fresh blood as he desires in the way that many of the best of the oldest breeders do.

THE CITY FANCIER.

BY BLACK WYANDOTTE.

LOVERS of poultry who are compelled by circumstances to keep their fowls in cramped quarters, may and often do accomplish wonders. The secret is given in two words—extra care. Under such circumstances a scratching pen is a great adjunct. Even in unfavorable weather the fowls may there be kept busy turning over the loose litter to obtain the tempting grain scattered underneath. Little spots of ground fenced in and sown with green stuff, are also advantageous. Moveable fences may be contrived so that one of these spots may be opened at a time, and then the fence replaced to allow the crop to take another growth after the ravenous attack it will receive from the flock. Change of feed is also wonderfully beneficial to a confined flock. All unmixed diet of corn and wheat is death to the closely yarded birds. With a good dry and roomy house, a constant supply of grit and lime and the other precautions above mentioned there is success for the city man, who can afford only a cramped back yard for his pets. Under such circumstances a specialty is the thing. He may make a specialty of a certain breed,—selecting a breed likely to do well under confinement. The Asiatics will succeed as well as any, being naturally inclined towards indolence,—the Cochins especially so. A pretty breed of Bantams also makes an interesting specialty under such conditions, and well-bred Bantams are in demand. My experience with Game Bantams led me to the belief that for practical purposes they equal large birds,