

Perhaps in no breed is the operation of this law more visibly manifested than in Spanish.

The lost character of the original progenitors of the present white-face Spanish was, as I have already hinted in my first paper, a *red face*; and the simple act of mating two birds, however individually perfect, will, if they belong to widely unrelated strains, give their progeny a powerful impulse to revert to the objectionable red face, and also to other characteristics which are condemned by the existing standard of perfection.

Here, then, we probably have an explanation of our tyro's perplexing failure; while carefully choosing the best birds he could buy, he made the fatal mistake of selecting them from entirely alien strains. He may, it is true, in time eradicate the mischief by crossing back to one of the original strains.

Of course, it is occasionally necessary to introduce new blood, even after a breeder has established a strain; but by good management this need only happen at very rare intervals. If four or five pens are made up each year, the resulting pullets and cockerels may the next year be so distributed that the *individual* relationship need not be too intimate, and so on for succeeding years.

Also, *for once*, I do not hesitate to mate a hen with her own chicken, or a cock with his immediate offspring; brothers and sisters, I do not consider it so wise to pair.

Again, I have sometimes lent a promising cockerel to a brother fancier for one or two years, and then, after his relationship had grown more personally remote, re-introduced him into my own yard.

When, however, new blood is absolutely necessary, it is advisable, if possible, to procure a cockerel or hens from a person to whom you have in years past sold some of your birds, so that the blood is not entirely alien. In any case, the introduction of pullets is preferable to that of cocks; and this for two reasons—the hen has the least influence on fancy points, and if her influence is for evil it ceases with herself.

To sum up. The beginner will wisely select his first breeding pen from birds of the same strains; the more experienced breeder will not capriciously import flesh blood, but only on rare occasions, when absolutely necessary.

Coming now to the proper time for mating, I am of opinion that if early chickens are required, the breeding pens should be made up as early in the year as possible, or, better still, at the beginning of December in the preceding year. But unless Spanish chickens are specially desired for exhibition in the summer shows, it is better to delay hatching until the beginning or middle of April, when, unchecked in their growth by untoward conditions of

weather, they speedily outstrip those hatched earlier, and ultimately develop into much finer birds.

Seven or eight hens is a good number to put with a cockerel; while four, or at most five, will, as a rule, be enough for a cock of two or three years.

A Spanish cock in his third or fourth year, especially if he has been much shown, is very rarely of use except in fine and warm weather, and is therefore not to be relied on for early chickens. In fact, I do not recommend the keeping of such birds, unless, of course, they can still hold their own in the show-pen.

The combination of cockerels and pullets is decidedly productive of the least satisfactory offspring, which are liable to weakness in the legs. A much better combination is made up of cocks and hens in their second year. But for the breeding of large and healthy chickens, I prefer to mate a cockerel with hens the age of which is less a consideration than their power of laying. Pullets mated with a cock will also breed well together.

It is worthy of note that if a cockerel be mated with two or three adult hens the result will almost certainly be a prepondering number of male birds. Also in the majority of instances, the cockerels are most influenced by the dominating characteristics of the father; and in the same manner the pullets by the mother.

Another important and interesting consideration for the breeder is that of the relative influences of the cock and hen upon their progeny. As a general rule, I am strongly inclined to think, the hen exerts a dominating influence in the matters of size and general constitutional qualities; while the cock possesses most influence over the "fancy" points—such as the quality, etc. But it must not be too rashly assumed that the hen has little or nothing to do with the latter points.

Acting in accordance with my belief in the general truth contained in the above statements, I have made it a practice, mostly with the best results, of putting a cockerel of very fine quality, even though he has been somewhat small in face and size generally, with large and coarse hens. With an exactly reverse plan I have been less successful.

That because a hen has an upright comb, like that of a cock, she must necessarily breed cockerels with extraordinary fine combs, is a mistaken notion which should be dispelled. To assume any such thing is analogous to the absurd assumption that an intensely masculine woman must needs be the mother of manly men. An upright comb in a hen is almost a *sexual* defect; and to suppose that because the female encroaches upon the attributes of the male, those attributes will be intensified in her male offspring, is hardly consistent with a belief in the harmonious working of Nature.