

well feathered on the middle toe, and is well feathered at the difficult place—namely, on the shank just under the hock. Increased feather is easy to breed on the hen's side, and is from a breeder's point of view such child's play, that it is simply a question, as a rule, how much you put together in the parents as to how much you are going to get in the offspring. I suppose there is no breeder living of six months' experience who cannot easily produce any reasonable amount of feather in his first year's effort. Purity of color, type, head and comb, and shank-feathering are matters for patience, the greatest care, and frequent disappointment, and these are the true difficulties of breeding Dark Brahma cocks. I should, however, take care that my stock cock has not too much hock in proportion to his toe, foot, and shank feather. In fact, if I could find a bird with a good foot and shank and a look about his hock as if his feathers had forgotten to grow there, that is the bird I should prefer, though in the show pen some might put him below other birds with more hock and even less feather in foot and shank. The ideal feathered Brahma is a bird with a perfectly soft hock and an immensely feathered foot and shank, the feathers standing well out of course. Therefore, I would get as much feather below the hock and as little at the hock as may be.

I should as a rule avoid a bird that runs narrow across the saddle. You can't get too much width nor too much rise in the saddle provided the bird is not squirrel-tailed.

So much as to the style of cock I should select to breed from if I had the opportunity. One reason I like the cock not to be too heavily feathered is, that in such birds one can see in what proportion the feather is disposed over the various parts of the leg, while in a heavily hocked bird the abundant feather somewhat conceals any deficiency (which may nevertheless be there) of shank-feathering in proportion to the hock feather.

Having now stated my views as to the selection of a cock or cockerel for breeding purposes, there comes the selection of the hens to suit him. This cannot be safely made without a knowledge of the back breeding of the hens, as a hen may look most desirable in all points for breeding cocks, yet she may bring to one's yard an unlimited number of faults, and those intensely hereditary, of which externally she gives little or no trace, but which, if her offspring be bred from, may prove a long-continued source of annoyance. Such fault, besides such matters as comb and leg-feather, are yellow tinge in hackle and saddle, brown or grizzle on wing or shoulder, twisted or slipped wings, and other faults. Now, no man can detect some of these dangers in those hens which are really a perfect mine of them, to be sprung on the unlucky

purchaser as his chickens develop; but a strain which has bred free from them for several generations is quite reliable, and the hens of such a strain, though worthless for show, are really nearly as valuable as show hens.

Having well-bred hens to choose from, I should select those with best and most massive bodies, as wide between the hocks as may be, with fine heads and combs, and should be careful that the edge of the hackle is of a clearly defined and of a very pure white color.

I should not attempt to breed black-breasted cockerels from sharply pencilled hens, as most cockerels thus bred would be too much mottled on breast and fluff for the show pen. Some of the very best cock-breeding hens have a brownish tinge, and such should never be rejected for their poor color. Very light-colored hens will breed good cocks if of a good cock strain, provided that the under-fluff be sufficiently dark. I am also inclined to think that black-tailed hens have a tendency to breed cockerels without white in tail, and that white in tail is the masculine correlative to a well-pencilled tail in the hen. Depth of chest and good feathering on foot, especially on middle toe, and also just under the hock, should be looked for, and a good broad rising cushion. I think I may say that if such a cock as I have before described be mated with hens of the above description every cockerel bred from that pen will be fit to show.

I should mate the light-colored hens spoken of above with cockerels almost too dark for perfect color. I ought also to warn breeders against rejecting either cockerel or hen for want of size only, if good otherwise. I remember some years ago having pointed out to me a rather mean-looking hen, good in quality when handled, but looking rather "a weed" in a run with others, and the most successful breeder of Dark Brahma cocks of his day said to me, "There, that's the mother of my best cockerels; you would not think it, would you?" Since then in my own yards I have had immense stock from small hens and from small cocks, of course in each case mated with birds of good average size.

As to the question of hocks, avoid a long-pointed narrow hock. A bigger hock, if broader in proportion, is far better both from a breeding and exhibition point of view in my opinion. I consider myself that heavily hocked birds are in the same position as under-feathered birds—one has too much, the other has too little, of a desirable point. Both in the breeding pen require correction, the birds mated with them being at any rate free from the same fault.

The hens for cock-breeding should not only be without much sharpness of pencilling on breast,