

Poultry Yard.

Buff Cochins.

The introduction of the Cochin China fowl into our yards was a memorable event in the history of poultry, it undoubtedly awakened that startling "mania" which nothing has since been able to destroy, and which was calmly considered, one of the most curious phenomena of the nineteenth century. At the time of their appearance few people kept poultry, and there were no poultry shows; but the Cochins came like giants on the scene, and they conquered. Well therefore does he deserve the name universally bestowed upon him, "Father of the poultry fancy;" he is indeed a noble bird, and merits from us the best tribute of our respect.

Under the name of Buff Cochins we have several shades of color known as the Buff, Lemon-Buff, Yellow-Buff, and Silver-Buff. The LEMON-BUFF, is the most attractive in an exhibition pen; the neck, hackle, saddle, and wing and tail-coverts should be as near as possible the color of a new lemon; the breast-feathers and fluff, a pale buff or light cane color, flight-feathers of the wing also a pale buff or cane color, and perfectly free from any streaks or mealiness, the tail feathers should be light bronze or buff, rather darker in color than the breast feathers, the foot and leg feathering same color as breast, and free from any white or discolored feathers. The Lemon-Buff hen, should be a light cane color, uniform shade throughout; feet and leg feathers and tail should be same color; the hackle a light lemon, which is perhaps the most fashionable color. BUFF.—The next most important color of cocks is the buff. The neck, saddle, hackle, and wing and tail coverts should be a bright dark orange; the breast and fluff rich yellow buff; the tail buff or dark bronze, free from any discolored feathers; the foot and leg feathering same color as breast, and free from any discolored feathers. The hen should be of a rich buff throughout, with hackle rich orange. THE SILVER BUFF COCK. — A color not generally in much favor with competent judges at poultry shows, and therefore seldom seen, yet when true in color a very handsome bird. The neck, saddle, hackle, and wing and tail coverts should be a light lemon, the breast and fluff a French white, the tail feathers light, tipped with orange or light bronze; foot and leg feathering same color as breast; flight-feathers of wing a pale buff or light cane color. The hen of this variety is a very beautiful bird when perfect in color. The neck and hackle should be a light golden lemon, the body French white, the tail and wing-flights a light buff or very pale cane color, leg and foot feathers same color as body.

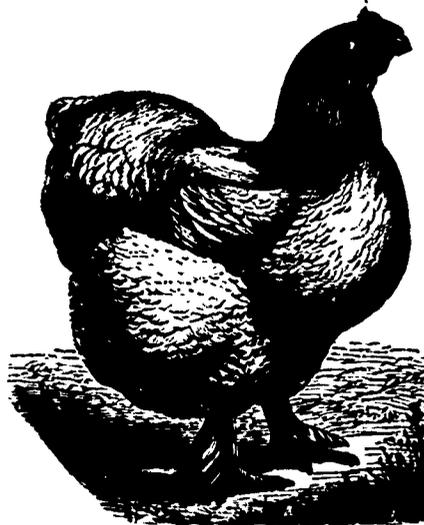
Having thus briefly described the different colors in both cocks and hens, we will now give the different points required in a high-class bird in each sex.

In a cock bird, size is a most important point to breed for. A full grown cock bird, say twelve months old, should not be less than from ten to twelve pounds. A Cochin increases in weight till three or four years old, and old cocks from two to three years old will increase to the weight of fourteen or fifteen pounds each, but good breeders maintain that a cock bird weighing twelve or thirteen pounds, when two years old is quite heavy enough, and shows in a pen to much greater advantage than a heavier bird. A very high class bird, with great depth of feather (a great feature in a Cochin), is very deceptive in weight, and we have very frequently seen cocks thick, heavy looking birds, full of feather, weigh much lighter than a close-feathered bird, that in a pen does not look so heavy by pounds. Close-feathered birds are objectionable. The head should be long, not too thick or coarse, the beak rich yellow, the comb perfectly upright, not too large, and evenly serrated, the ear lobes prominent and red, the wattles deep, the neck

well arched, not too short, and not carried too much back, the shoulders broad and square, and well carried up; the breast full, and broad as possible; the legs set well apart, the more bone and thickness the better, not too long, nor either too short; feet large;



toes thick, long and straight; legs and feet well feathered, and free from any long hock-feathers; the wing small, carried well up, and close, the ends of the flight-feathers closely clipping the sides, so as to be almost invisible. Twisted flight-feathers in the wing, or any of the long flight-feathers not carried well under, are very objectionable. The tail should be as small as possible, free from any long sickle-feathers, and resembling much the style of a plume of feathers. In the Cochin hen, also, size is a most important point, for, however good in quality and color, if undersized they are of little use. Hens live to a greater age than cocks, and Cochins increase in weight every year, their weight is much heavier in proportion to the cocks. Hens at one year old should not be less than from eight to nine pounds each; at two years



old they will increase in weight to ten or eleven pounds each, and at three or four years old they will weigh nearly twelve pounds each; but hens ten pounds each at two years old are a good average weight, and quite heavy enough. The head should be long, not too thick or coarse; the comb fine, upright, and not too large; breast broad, prominent and full; shoulders broad and square; the wing small, the

under flight-feathers carried well under, and the outer-flight-feathers closely clipping the sides; the legs thick as possible, and a good bright yellow, well feathered, and quite free from any long hock-feathers. The most important point in a Cochin hen is the cushion; in a very high class hen the cushion should be very large and prominent, forming quite a ball on the rump, and hiding the whole of the tail with the exception of the ends of the longest feathers.

In mating Buff-Cochins for breeding, the stock birds should be as free from faults as possible, little faults in parent birds develop themselves on a much larger scale in the young stock. Cocks as a general thing most resemble their sire and pullets the hen. Amateurs who wish to breed Cochins should not be guided in their purchase by the awards of judges at the different poultry shows, and purchase the prize birds for stock purposes. It is well known that some of our judges have but little real knowledge of the birds they judge, and it not unfrequently happens that some of the best birds are passed over unnoticed. And we have excellent authority for stating that some of the first prize exhibition birds at Birmingham, the hens had no laid an egg for years, and the cock-birds were useless for breeding purposes. Hens for the stock pen should be from one year old and not over two years; large, square, heavily feathered birds, rich buff in color, and not too light, and quite free from any mixture of shades in the color of feathers, but a decided color throughout; plenty of width between the legs is a very important point; legs as thick as possible, and a good yellow. The larger the hen is in cushion behind, and more prominent her good points, the better; a flat packed hen, with no rump, however beautiful in color and good in other points should not be placed in a breeding pen. The ear lobes should be free from white streaks, comb as small, fine, and upright as possible; feet, large, and well feathered; toes thick, long and straight. The cock bird to run with these hens should also be a rich buff, a good sound color throughout; great care should be taken in not having the under flight-feathers of wing white or mealy, black is not objectionable, but a good rich buff is to be preferred; but if white or mealy it is sure to produce mealy-lighted cocks. The wing should be as small as possible, well carried up, and closely tucked into the side; a large, long, loose winged bird scarcely ever carries his wing close and is very objectionable for stock purposes. The cock should not be too large, if possessed of all the good points mentioned, a bird ten or eleven pounds at twelve months old is large enough, and a two-year-old bird not over eleven pounds is preferred by good breeders. The strongest chickens are produced from hens two years old and cocks one year old. In the early days of Cochins most of the hens had pencilled hackles, but now-a-days such birds would be passed over by good judges without recognition. Hens should resemble the cock in shape and carriage as much as possible.

DO NOT SCALD POULTRY.—The practice of scalding poultry before plucking it, has very properly been vetoed by market dealers. Fowls may be plucked with equal facility and with better effect in preserving the flesh, immediately after death, and before they have had time to cool.

FOWLS EATING FEATHERS.—Some fowls acquire the habit of picking and eating their feathers from being deprived of animal food. Fowls are omnivorous feeders and require such food. In the summer when they have their liberty, they can usually supply themselves; but in winter this is more difficult. Give them fresh meat, or offal chopped fine, or livers; this last is particularly grateful to fowls. They often acquire the habit from picking each other, during the moulting season; and in this way may learn it from each other. If a fresh meat diet does not break them of the habit, fatten and kill those addicted to it.

CARE OF YOUNG DUCKS.—I take three board; about a foot wide, and make a yard either square or triangular shaped, and put the hen and coop in one corner of it. I keep the hen coop until the ducklings are about two weeks old, when I give her her liberty. She will stay with the ducklings some time longer. No more than twelve or fourteen ducklings should be kept in one yard, as they are apt to pile upon one another at night, and smother each other. The ducklings should be confined in a yard until they are well feathered, for if they go through wet grass they almost invariably die. The yard should be moved every two weeks and care should be taken to have a good shelter in one corner.—*Poultry World.*