

by the skill of fanciers. In the direct work of improving the quality of the feathered stock of a nation, we need, therefore, fanciers and a fancy.

But in aquatic fowls we have almost lost sight of these fundamental facts. We have left their breeding largely to men who are interested only in the production of meat, for these fowls are seldom kept for the production of eggs. And what has been the result? Outside of the Pekin duck water fowls have been largely neglected. The exhibits at our poultry shows are strangely lacking in water fowls. Where ten men should be breeding ducks or geese there is hardly one man. And the perfection of these fowls has lingered. Mr. George M. Austin, of Mansfield, Mass., the veteran dealer in fattened geese, who markets from 10,000 to 25,000 geese annually, recently told me that, while he could purchase a few thousand of very good green geese in Nova Scotia, the product of Canada was so inferior in quality that it did not pay him to attempt to handle it. If the breeders of geese in Canada would imbibe something of the fancier spirit and improve the quality of their geese, there would be a large demand at highly profitable prices for them. Better geese and more of them are demanded, and the breeders of Canada have here an unworked field capable of yielding them rich returns.

It is true that, owing to the lack of plasticity—the quality which renders them easily moulded to the will of the fancier—there is not likely to be a highly cultivated fancy in geese. The fancy, too, will be more or less limited by the requirements of these large fowls, for one who has not abundant pasturage can not hope to make geese raising a profitable industry. Yet plasticity is not wholly lacking in the goose, and there are thousands who have the necessary pasturage, and the goose fancy is capable of considerable expansion.

To ducks these objections do not apply. The duck possesses a plastic nature, as is proven by the breeds we now possess. The beautiful white Aylesbury, the large white Pekin, the black Cayuga, the lovely Rouen with its parti-colored plumage—one of the most beautiful of domestic fowls—the crested white, the prolific Indian Runner, the gray and white Calls, and the iridescent black East Indian, are all certainly descendants of a common ancestor, and the great variation shown in these breeds, in size and color, proves

the possession of great plasticity. The recent production of a buff duck and the probability of the production of a blue duck in the near future, give further proof of this quality. Ducks, too, can be reared successfully in narrow quarters and without access to ponds or streams. The writer kept a trio of East Indians in a run about 20 x 4 feet, and raised thirty-three young from them in a single season, the young having a yard only about twenty-five feet square. And what one can do, another can do also.

Ducks are such rapid growers that they prove highly profitable to raise for their flesh. They enable one to possess the nimble six pence which always and everywhere beats the slow shilling. And more than that, they are much easier to rear than the young of the ordinary domestic fowl. In 1897 out of thirty-six ducklings hatched, the writer reared thirty-three. The other three were killed by a hen when a day or two old. In 1898 the writer reared every duckling hatched. With chickens there is always more or less loss, and then there is the "irrepressible conflict" with lice. A duck hatched is almost a duck raised, and there is no fighting with lice to be undergone.

The food for ducklings may be coarser in quality than is used for chickens. The writer, however, has found the following method of feeding satisfactory for his purposes: equal parts by measure of corn meal and wheat bran, and from one-half to two-thirds as much ground beef scraps as there is of meal. That is, if one mixed two quarts of corn meal, and two quarts of wheat bran together, he should add one quart or three pints of beef scraps to the mixture. To this is added about a half pint of fine grit, and the whole mixed with cold water and fed rather moist. With plenty of water to drink and the above mixture fed thrice daily, his ducklings have thriven remarkably.

When one considers the beauty of aquatic fowls, the ease with which they can be reared, and their value as profitable poultry, he sees the need of a fancy in them, that they may become more generally cultivated and that they may improve as rapidly as other feathered stock. No branch of poultry keeping is more neglected, none is capable of more improvement, and none offers for the fancier more generous or more certain rewards for intelligent skill directed to the improvement of either beauty or utility, or rather, let it be said, to both beauty and utility.