

to be a claret or cherry red, with, perhaps, the back a dark maroon, and the tail black. Black in the flights, not appearing on the surface, does not injure the beauty of his appearance. In the hens, if a single mating will produce it, as near an approximation to cherry red as possible should be secured. It is doubtful, however, that this can be done. In lieu of that a reddish buff should be secured. This is quite distinct from some of the dull brownish shades which are sometimes seen upon the hens. These shades are far from beautiful and do not add anything to the utility of the fowl. It ought to be the aim of the farmer no less than the fancier to secure as much beauty as possible in his fowls without sacrificing any of their utility. Utility first, beauty afterwards, but both as far as they can be united.

The Rhode Island Red, having been produced by the union of different breeds, and never having been subjected to long continued and close inbreeding, and having,

also, been bred under the most advantageous circumstances, is a remarkably healthy and hardy fowl. Hardiness is a very valuable quality, for hardy fowls are capable of being productive, and there is little time lost from the regular periods of laying. Weak, sickly fowls are not profitable. They neither do well, nor do they rear many chickens. The farmer will do well, therefore, without resorting to promiscuous crossing, which would destroy this excellent breed, to provide for a systematic infusion of fresh blood at regular intervals and as frequently as it may be needed, and to secure for his stock an environment similar to that under which it has come into being. Fresh blood, free range, and abundant food, without pampering, will give him the best results.

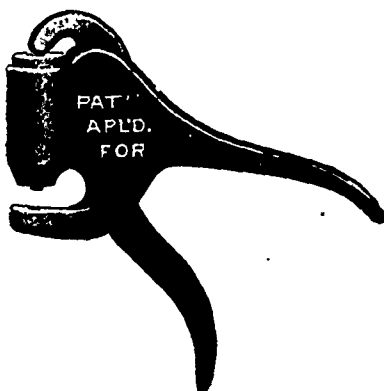
The excellence of this fowl consists in the fact of its uniting in a high degree of effectiveness qualities usually considered antagonistic. It is an admirable layer of large, brown eggs. I have seen cases of Rhode Island Red eggs which, for size, depth of color, and evenness of shape, could not be surpassed. And, while, like all other fowls, it produces the larger part of the eggs during the warmer months of the year, yet it is also a good winter layer. It is warmly clad and has the stamina that enables it to resist successfully the cold of winter. And united with this valuable quality is its excellent table properties. It has the desired yellow shanks and skin which the American market demands. The keel bone is long, giving it an abundance of white meat. The body, at least in the best type of the fowl, has a fullness, roundness, and compactness which make it both meaty in fact and attractive in appearance. So that, when properly dressed, it finds ready sale at the best prices.

Its plumage, irrespective of the question of beauty, is of a desirable color. The pin-feathers are

not dark enough to disfigure the dressed carcass, and the color is one which adapts it to all situations. A red or a buff fowl always looks clean where a white one would look dirty.

Again, its size is desirable. Medium sized fowls are the most profitable. As a rule they lay better than the very large ones, and they invariably sell better in the markets. The very large fowls are the last ones to be sold. The very small ones come to so little when sold that they are not profitable for market purposes. Poultry breeders tend to run to extremes. Brahmias and Bantams, the excessively large and the excessively small, catch their eye. But the demands of the market will correct this tendency. While the standard adopted by the Rhode Island Red Club is open to serious criticism, in the matter of weights it has struck a golden mean where the most profit lies. Farmers ought to remember this, and strive, not to see how large fowls they can produce, but how profitable ones they can rear. Not long ago a practical poultryman called upon me and in the course of his conversation told me about a buff Plymouth Rock cock which he had bought of a prominent breeder. The bird was of the correct type, beautiful color and great size, just such a bird as many fanciers delight in, and such an one as would readily win in the show-room where fancy rather than utility was considered. "But he is worthless," said this gentleman. "His chickens are so large that it takes them eight or nine months to come to maturity, and I have to keep them so long that the profit in rearing is lost or seriously impaired." This fowl was much above the standard weight. I have seen many Rhode Island Reds which would weigh as cocks not seven and one-half pounds but ten, eleven, or more pounds. They looked well, and among fanciers sold well, but for

The Reliable Spring Lever Poultry Punch.



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