

Poultry.

Exhibiting Fowls.

BY R. A. BROWN, CHERRY GROVE, ONT.

The time is now fast approaching when breeders, farmers and amateurs will be visiting and showing poultry at our agricultural fairs, and a word or two on the subject may not be out of place.

I have no doubt that our old and successful breeders will be out in full force; but this should not deter the farmer or amateur from bringing out their stock at the County Fairs at least. We know many who breed poultry purely for the pleasure, and who take great pains and are to considerable expense, and the fruit of their hard work in size, seem to be the *ne plus ultra* of their skill and patience, and yet those same parties will not show for fear of having their birds criticised and themselves as breeders; and why is it so? Well, this is why: at our County and Township Fairs where poultry are exhibited for prizes, there are such poor judges selected to give the awards.

Aylesbury ducks very much resemble the Pekin; the English grey goose, the Toulouse, the light Brahma to the white Cochins, and several others have a sameness of appearance to the uninitiated, yet an adept can tell at a glance the one from the other, and also the poor judge is as apt to give the red ticket to the worst bird in the lot as to the best. Directors very often select men to judge at their shows from the jurisdiction in which the show is to occur on purpose to avoid expense. This is one of the greatest mistakes a board can make, for after a good breeder showing birds where such judges have awarded premiums, they are loth ever to show again, whether they have had a share of premiums or not. This is not only so at small fairs, but in large ones as well. For at the Western Fair, last fall, I heard a breeder say that the worst pair he had (of that class) got first prize, and the best ones were passed over. The breeder called the attention of the judges to the fact, yet the red ticket remained where it had been placed, and in all probability that pair would be sold at a high figure because they were "first prize birds at the Western Fair"; and still the owner could retain the culls at home and come out first the next year. Then if the purchaser of the last fall's birds exhibit this year, the ones that got first prize last year and gets beat this year, he will denounce the present judges as being ignorant, and the seller as a humbug and a fraud and the whole exhibition as a huge swindle.

It is quite customary to select two, three or more judges, and limit them to a small portion of time to make the awards; the judges will arrive on the ground and start discussing the pro's and con's of the birds, and every one must have his say before arriving at a conclusion, and when they are about half through the time is nearly up; then a large portion of awards are posted on the first pairs presenting themselves, whether right or wrong, the judges cannot help it for their time is up and the work must be done at the appointed time. A better way is to choose but one judge, and send along a man to carry and place on the tickets; be sure and get one that knows good stock, no matter from where he comes, whether it be near or far distant, it will pay the society every time to procure competent men to act as judges, whether it is poultry, sheep or cattle; the next thing is do not limit the time to so few hours where there is a number to judge. Also where there is a very large show like the Western, Industrial, or Provincial, the proper way is to choose about five judges and let each man judge by himself.

No man becomes perfect in all classes, and but very few become even good in one. Our best breeders only study up the classes which they are breeding and those belonging to other classes which they do not rear, they do not know but very little about, sometimes not anything.

Therefore, it is better to allot each man a class which he knows the most about.

The Benefits of Poultry Shows.

The money gain to the fortunate exhibitor at our poultry shows is mere naught in comparison to the many other benefits gained by the less fortunate as well as the visitor. All go in hope of winning; those who are only defeated by a point or two can understand the cause and hope to do better at the next, but those whose birds are either disqualified or score so low that no award could be bestowed on them, are the ones most benefited by the show, providing they are of an improving nature and not disposed to find fault with just judgment and proper awards. No one can know what a fine specimen of any bird is like until he has seen them enough to be familiar with them. Learning to judge by theory is like learning to swim in the grass. The breeder uses his best judgment in selecting his birds for the show room; without doubt his very best are put forth in hopes of being successful; if disappointed his benefit should be gained in first finding out wherein his birds are defective, has his judgment as a breeder been at fault or is his stock bad; if so what must he do to remedy the evil. Often the premium birds are bought; this will do if some experience is purchased at the same time, if not, poor management will soon produce poor condition and the birds that scored 93 or 94 to-day will not score over 80 in a month from now. Why is this often the cry? The only answer is carelessness; poor accommodations, bad attention, filthy drinking pans, and dirty houses and yards will soon disqualify the best specimens ever produced. First adopt the good old rule, "Be sure you are right, then go ahead." Don't buy fine stock unless you understand how to care for it; first look all the stock over, then study the good and bad points, ask questions, talk with the successful breeders, gain information any way possible, for by so doing you will go home with more reward than he who wins first prize. Too many of us are too proud to acknowledge our ignorance as breeders, and are unwilling to let any one know what we are about. How often is heard in our show room, "I know my birds could not win, just put them in to help along, but if I had thought such judgments as these would be made I would have stayed at home." This won't do; don't try to hide your own faults, your stock has told on you. Come forward and take lessons from those who do know how to breed good stock and gain your benefit from the show.

Red cards attract the visitor; all love to stand around the magic pens and pour out their admiration in great volumes of praise to these grand specimens of the fowl kind, while the many around them that only lost by one or two points are not worthy their notice. This is for the best, as he who wins should have the honor, as well as the profit, but of what benefit is this to the visitor; change the cards to poorer specimens and it will be just the same. A trick was played at one of our leading shows; a very fine bird was offered for sale; some one rubbed out the mark of \$20 and made it \$2. Many said as they passed by, "Who would have so poor a bird?" Let all who go study the points of the birds before them and so inform themselves that no trick can bias their judgment; by so doing their benefit is gained. Many of our best breeders spend days at our shows studying the birds of their opponents and comparing their birds with his point by point, to see in what way his can be improved. Hours are spent in talking together comparing ideas and making notes for future use, in this way our most successful breeders gain much benefit at our shows. The great secret of prize winning is *condition*, with it goes good plumage, healthy looking comb, wattle and ear lobe, clean smooth legs, and without it all these are lost, which will destroy the chance of any bird winning in even fair company. Good stock well conditioned will show up well in any company, but the very best can soon be wrecked if allowed to get into poor condition. Don't let this winter go by without gaining your share of benefit from all the shows you can possibly attend for by so doing the information gained may place you in the first ranks another year. —National Poultry Monitor.

The same remarks come with equal force when applied to any variety of stock. More attention should be given by the general public, when attending to fairs. Our poultry shows are at hand; make the best of them.

How to Keep Eggs.

There are several methods by which eggs may be perfectly well preserved for six months, and this is the season for putting these in practice. To relieve the market of its surplus now, and also relieve it of its scarcity in the winter, would tend to equalize prices, to raise them now and to moderate them then. But, as the preserving requires both care and regular attention in the summer time and some little neatness and skill, and the majority of persons are averse to take the requisite trouble, there will never be a sufficient quantity of eggs kept over to have an effect upon prices in the direction referred to.

The common methods of preservation all depend for their effect upon closing the pores of the shell and excluding air from the perishable interior. It is also especially requisite that the eggs be treated while they are perfectly fresh, for if decay has begun it cannot be arrested by any known process. The most popular preservative is lime, used in the following manner: A tight barrel is half filled with water, into which are stirred slack lime and salt at the rate of half a pound of each for each pailful of water. Some dealers add four ounces of saltpetre to the half-barrel of pickle. The eggs, perfectly fresh, and gathered twice a day, are placed in a shallow dish and carefully let down into the pickle, in which they settle to the bottom, always with the small end downward. The barrel will be filled when it is half full of eggs, the equal proportion of pickle making up the difference. A cool place for storage is required to keep the eggs. The pickle has a certain corrosive action upon the shells after two or three months, but to avoid this the eggs may be smeared with lard before they are put in the pickle.

Another method used for domestic purposes is as follows: The eggs are placed in a convenient willow basket or net, and are immersed in a boiling solution of five pounds of common sugar to a gallon of water. The heat sets the albumen in a film on the inside of the shell and the sugar closes the pores. The eggs are then packed small end down, in a mixture of two parts of dry bran and one part of finely powdered charcoal.

The French, who produced and kept enormous quantities of poultry, have several methods of keeping the eggs. All of them, however, are alike in respect of the materials employed. These are oil and wax. One of their best processes is as follows: Four ounces of beeswax is melted with eight ounces of olive oil. When the mixture has cooled to a safe temperature each egg is dipped into it and wiped with a soft cloth to remove the excess. The eggs are then packed in boxes in powdered charcoal, freshly burned, and have been thus kept perfectly fresh for two years. Fresh charcoal is desirable because of its excessive affinity for oxygen, which it absorbs and occludes within its pores, thus keeping the eggs free from contact with the only agent of decay that is to be feared.

Paraffine is odorless, tasteless, colorless, harmless and cheap; it is a mineral wax or fat, and may be used instead of beeswax or oil, with equally good effect. As it melts and becomes liquid at a little over 100°, it is easily applied and easily removed when the eggs are boiled for use. Fresh charcoal finely powdered is at least four times as effective a preservative as the lime pickle. Dry salt has been recommended for keeping eggs, but it is totally useless where the air is at all damp as it is in a cold cellar.

Water glass, soluble silicate of soda, has been used by the Germans for keeping eggs. This is a clear liquid, of the consistence of syrup, and when smeared over the shell entirely impermeable to the air.

Eggs are to be packed with the small end downward, because in that position the yolk is suspended exactly in the centre and does not touch the shell. When it touches the shell and air reaches it, decay instantly begins.

One stale or broken egg will spoil a whole barrelful.

The packing should be so placed between the eggs that no two shells come into contact.

An even and cool temperature is necessary. A changing temperature causes disturbance of the air among the packing, and starts a molecular action in the egg, which is favorable to, if not productive of, decomposition. —H. Stewart in *New York Times*.

It is now stated that Russia has 50 per cent. more wheat this season than she has raised for many years. Our advice is as it has been—Sell!