

bition standards, except there be the strong inclination for it which is likely to command success, and this is not a case I am now considering. Hence the introduction of a fresh cock need not entail the care and anxiety which, in the case of a fancier, it always does, and must, if he would preserve his strain from ruin. Provided the new bird be of fairly pure breed, not related, and of good health and size, it will be sufficient; and in this way, with no trouble and very little expense, all the economical advantages of the best breeds may be secured and maintained for years.

To one point, however, care should be devoted. In every lot of hens some will be better layers than others. Let us suppose we start with six Houdans—a cock and five hens. Probably out of this five two may lay thirty eggs per annum more than either of the others; their eggs should be noticed, and only these eggs set. By following this plan for a very few years a very great increase in egg-production may be obtained. My attention was drawn to this subject by a friend having a Brahma pullet, which laid nearly three hundred eggs in one twelvemonth, though valueless as a fancy bird, and the quality descended to several of her progeny; and I have since found other instances which prove conclusively that a vast improvement might easily be effected in nearly all our breeds were that careful selection of brood stocks made for this purpose which the fancier bestows on other objects. It is to be regretted more is not done in this way, and having more room than I had, I hope myself to make some experiment in this direction shortly. I will only say now that I am perfectly certain the number of two hundred eggs per annum might be attained in a few years with perfect ease were the object systematically sought; and I trust these few remarks may arouse a general attention to it amongst those who keep poultry for eggs only, and who can easily do all that is necessary without any knowledge whatever of fancy points, or any attempt to breed exhibition birds.

The consideration of the breeds suitable for special circumstances I will endeavour to enter upon in my next paper.—L. WRIGHT, in *Journal of Horticulture*.

## Our Letter Box.

**WEIGHT OF WHITE COCHIN CHINA COCK AND HEN.**—(F. C. T.)—The cock should weigh from 8 to 10 lbs., and the hen from 6 to 8 lbs.

**POULTRY IN A GARDEN.**—(Beginner.)—Young chickens in a garden are a real benefit, and pick up many insects which destroy vegetables; the best plan to adopt is this:—Put the hen under a rip on the walk and let the chicks have their run. It is surprising how they wander about picking up a living, besides which they thrive remarkably well. As soon as they begin to scratch and injure the beds or plots, remove them to other quarters.

**FOWLS FOR CONFINED SPACE.**—(Rusticus.)—Brahmas and Houdans bear confinement well; the latter do not sit, and as a rule such produce more eggs than others that incubate. Laying in the winter is a question of age and the amount of care bestowed upon them. There is no breed that will lay in winter by reason of any inherited property—and adult fowls never do, no matter of what breed. There would be no reason why you should not keep some of each breed, Brahmas and Houdans. They are equally hardy. As non-setters Houdans are perhaps the best to keep; they have one drawback however, when kept in confined space they take to eating each other's feathers. Where the space is a confined one we know of no fowl that gives so much satisfaction as the Brahma, he has most of the virtues and few of the vices of fowls in general.

**UNITING BROODS.**—(J. A. Early.)—We have frequently done so. It is always best to put both broods under the hen at night, and if of nearly an age and size the hen will not know the difference.

**CREVE-CŒUR POINTS.**—(J. Johnson.)—The chief points of a good creve-cœur are square bodies, blue legs, black plumage, good beards, and top-knots. Some show spangles of white in their plumage. This is to be regretted, and such a bird cannot be shown with any hope of success, but it does not of necessity prove there is any impurity in the breed. All birds of black plumage are subject to these spots. Spanish would afford a good illustration. The white feathers in the top-knot are indicative of age, inasmuch as they seldom show in a pullet. The word age must be taken in a qualified sense; it does not mean that the bird is old, but that it has passed from the stage as a pullet—just as girls of sixteen call women of twenty-six old. As a rule, it must be admitted that, where per-