

this difference is most strongly visible. While a perfectly upright comb is an essential in the male bird, in the hen it is equally imperative that comb shall fall over one side of the face—Nature or fashion not having decreed which side it should be. A good comb must be large, deeply serrated, broad at the base, and tapering away to a thin edge.

The "fall" should not, as is necessarily the case with narrow based and flappy combs, commence at the very base, thus forming an angle with the top of the head; but the comb should rise erect and firm for a short distance above the skull, and then fall over with a fine arch, the outer curve presenting a smooth, unwrinkled surface. During the moult, a faultless comb may wither up in an extraordinary degree, and assume an upright position. This however, need not alarm the Tyro, for when the bird regains its good condition the comb will resume its normal character. A hen with an upright comb, though condemned as an exhibition bird, is sometimes recommended for breeding cockerels with fine combs. This is one of the fallacies into which those who trust to "the light of Nature," rather than to scientific habits of observation, easily fall.

That such hens are useless for breeding pullets and worse than useless for breeding cockerels, repeated experiments made by myself, and independently by others, have amply demonstrated.

Of faces in Spanish hens there are two distinct varieties one long and relatively narrow, the other shorter, but wider and flatter. I am inclined to prefer the latter, for they certainly show to better advantage in the show-pen. In any case, however, the larger the face is the better, always provided it is without coarseness. The ear-lobe should lie within the area of the face. In order to enlarge the face it has been customary with some to cut it underneath the bottom of the lobes and stitch it back to the neck. This somewhat cruel, and certainly dishonest practice, is to be condemned; and, to reiterate an opinion expressed before, it would be well if judges carefully examined birds with a view of detecting all such attempts at deception. Unlike the cock, the hen should have small and thin wattles.

After the moult, it sometimes happens that Spanish fowls, especially the hens, even young ones, exhibit patches of white in their plumage, giving them quite a piebald appearance. Such hens are, as far as my experience goes, not a whit the worse for breeding purposes. This phenomenon may possibly be explained as being the result of same causes which produce greyness in the hair of man or woman—causes which are most active during old age and periods of debility. It is evidently in the moulting season that these causes have the most activity in Spanish fowls;

and for this reason, as well as for other obvious reasons, it is of great importance that they should be well prepared for the ordeal by judicious feeding.

To starve a fowl as a preparation for the moult is, in my opinion, as great a mistake as to allow it too put on too much fat. The object should be to lay up a store of stamina; and this object is best attained by feeding with flesh forming foods, carefully eschewing those which have a tendency to form fat. In other words, while avoiding maize, potato, and sparingly using soft food as a morning meal, feed mainly on wheat, oats, and barley, with the occasional addition of a little hempseed at the evening meal.

Spanish pullets will, as a rule, begin to lay when they are about six months old, and will continue to do so during the winter. The hens about February, or sooner if the season be favorable, and continue until they begin to moult in the autumn.

#### IV.—MATING.

He who aspires to become a Spanish fancier in more than name will not long remain satisfied with doubtful laurels won for him by birds purchased from some successful breeder; but he will naturally be ambitious to create a strain of his own, and ultimately, by perseverance and increasing knowledge, to be able to produce his own prize-winners.

In the attempt to realize this praiseworthy intention, he may, and probably will, if left to his own resources, unaided except by what is called "common sense," be doomed to undergo a bitter and disheartening experience, involving much loss of time, loss of money, and, worst perhaps of all, loss of enthusiasm.

As a preliminary step he will, doubtless, seek to procure, probably from widely different sources, the most perfect birds his pecuniary resources will allow.

By good fortune his first effort may be tolerably successful. Or, at least equal probability, his first brood may not contain a single fine specimen, and, moreover, may be tainted throughout with the fatal pink in the face.

In his consequent despair he will most likely ask—"If comparatively faultless birds such as mine fail to produce anything but trash, how can I ever hope to breed a prize-winner?" The answer to this question may, if the beginner is fortunate in his adviser, bring him at the outset face to face with a fundamental law of breeding, which was, I believe, clearly enunciated for the first time by the great naturalist, Charles Darwin.

Mr. Darwin has incontestably established the fact that *the act of crossing two distinct strains gives an impulse towards reversion to long lost characters*, even when all traces of such characters are conspicuously absent in the birds mated.