

adopting such a course as this; the watchful eye of a careful breeder will, from time to time, detect any imperfection in the chickens of such crosses, and at the same time observe the good points obtained. He will not fail to take advantage of such, and, by judicious mating, produce birds as well nigh perfection as possible. We do not say all such will be perfect birds; but this we are free to admit, and which we have seen asserted by writers in some of our American exchanges, although in it there is nothing new, that a poor-looking bird, and one wholly unfit for exhibition, yet if of absolute purity of blood, will, when mated with other pure birds, produce excellent chickens, and true to the standard markings of their breed. But that there will be occasionally a bird bearing about it unmistakable marks of atavism, or reversion to the original type, we are equally certain. Perfection in all the offspring of any of the recognized varieties or breeds of fowls which we possess has not yet been arrived at in poultry breeding. Of this we had a notable instance at the late Birmingham show, in the case of a La-Flèche hen, which was awarded a second prize. Although the owner asserts that for several generations he had bred these fowls himself, and they had never been crossed with any other breed, yet the appearance of the hen showed such unmistakable signs of a recent cross with the Spanish or Minorca, that poultry critics pronounced the award a mistake on the part of the judges. The denial of this by the owner—a gentleman of position and standing—the truthfulness of which is not questioned, leads to the conclusion that this case “must be regarded as another of the by no means rare, but very remarkable cases of atavism, or reversion to one of the races from which, there is no doubt, the La-Flèche originally sprang.”

In further proof of the necessity for careful selection of breeding stock, espe-

cially when procured from strange yards, we will quote an instance recited by Mr. Wright, in his book on Brahmas. In this case it was a cross with a Dorking and Dark Brahma, with the view of improving the pencilling on the breast—always a difficult point with Brahma breeders. “On one occasion,” says the author, “at the Birmingham show, when we pointed out a prize pen as certainly containing Dorking blood, we were met with an amount of ridicule we did not wish to encounter again. But the facts quite justified our assertion, for in April of the following year we had a letter from a friend who had purchased a nest of eggs from the exhibitor of that very pen, stating that one of the chicks had the well-known *five claws*!”

It will be seen, therefore, how important this point is to the production of pure fowls, and how carefully it should be attended to by breeders; and shows decisively what a difference exists between breeding for exhibition purposes, and that for the production of thoroughbred stock.

EARLY CHICKENS.

To obtain early hatched chickens is always very desirable, as exhibitors well know; they have many advantages in their favor; at the early fall shows they are more likely to take prizes, being by reason of their age larger in size and more perfect in plumage, two things which greatly increase their chance of success as prize takers. To the exhibitor therefore it is a matter of considerable importance to raise early chickens. It is also of importance to the breeder—large pullets and cockerels are always of greater value, and find a readier market than smaller ones, but especially so with the larger breeds of fowls, and this can only be obtained by breeding early chickens.

Compared with European countries we may in this respect be said to be