

To assist those who have had less experience than myself, I will be very glad if they will accompany me in *imagination* through the duck runs while I select the breeding birds for the season, and we will discuss the merits and failings of the *invisible* ducks.

We will select the drakes first, and if time will admit we will then select the ducks afterwards. Let us know what the drake is like we are going to use, then appropriate mates will soon be chosen. To educate your imagination to begin with, let us enter this pretty run and see the combination of size and quality in its one occupant—our 10 lb. three year old Champion drake. We do not require him as a breeder this season, he has now another most important office to fulfil in the successful management of the duck yard. He has fought and won and must live in retirement, and on the fat of the land, until the next challenge is scheduled for another battle royal, when he must again represent us in the field, we trust, to gain another victory. We are proud of his noble stature, his grand look-out, his large and solid claret breast-plate, his deep straight keel, and his gay standard colours, which have caused his opponents to tremble as much as ever the Union Jack did a foreign foe. Yes, we must keep him ready for the silver bugle-call, whether it pierces the soft summer air, or the stormy blasts of winter. Surely such a noble father has given us a promising son: let us leave his shaded bower, and seek the favored haunts of the rising generation.

The first drake to meet us is a lengthy bird with a good head and a grand clear bill, he will measure 34 in., but he has no indication of keel, and he is too high cut in claret below, and too low cut in neck, which leaves his ring too wide, he is much too light in color throughout, but he looks very gay, and may please someone at 10s.; for our purpose he is of no use. Here

is another, quite a contrast in color, very dark, he has plenty of width and depth of claret too, but it is difficult to see where the claret leaves off below and where the undercolor begins, his back is almost self-colored black, his tail and stern are also quite black, his ring is passable, although slightly pinched in front; but we will not dwell longer over him, for although he is good in keel he is rather short made, and his bill is not only slightly dished, but it has an objectionable strip of black between the nostrils. We will let the next pass too, for although he has a good frame, shape, and size, he is very dark in bill and foxy in colour below, and brown on hack.

The next drake may follow with as little comment; he has certainly a long, straight, clear good bill, as such drakes generally have, which are wide in ring, small and pale in claret, light in body-color, white in stern and tail, and white on flight coverts; he is lengthy in frame, but narrow, and as shallow as an Indian runner.

We will describe another which strikes us as perfection at first sight, but on closer examination we find very faulty in color, his ring is much wider at the sides of his neck than in front, his claret breast is wide and deep, but right across the lower part each feather is laced with white, and this extends up the centre almost to the ring—we must not encourage chain armour—he is also laced with white in rump, so we will certainly pass him, although he is up to 9 lbs. in weight and has noble outlines.

We will mention two others which we hatched from imported eggs, and we call special attention to the details of these, as there are many in the country like them, and amateurs are apt to secure them for breeders. They are upstanding, wide-breasted drakes with good clarets and clear bills, but slightly dished; they are keeled, too, but it begins too low down, and not at the point of the breast; judging from

their general shape, their bills, and wide rings, we certainly think they are not very far removed from Pekins.

There are a few others in this run, but they are all smaller, and, besides possessing many of the faults of the birds described above, there are some with slipped wings and wry tails, and others are high in hack. Our friends may observe what an indifferent lot to be allowed to live so long. Green peas must have been a failure last summer. Well, they are right as regards the drakes and in apologizing for introducing you to this run we wish to say that the whole of this lot are the discarded drakes of last year's hatch; and it was to point out the common failings which predominate in color and symmetry among Rouen drakes that has led us to discuss them, so that in selecting a stock drake our friends may be better qualified to guard against such.

We will now introduce you to a few of our selected drakes, out of which we intend to secure one or two fairly perfect and reliable stock drakes. There are ten of them in a pretty run by themselves, which is well shaded by laurels and evergreens, and watered by a shallow stream. When we first entered this run and the drakes came up to meet us, with upstretched necks, in expectation of a feed, we are induced to exclaim, for size and quality we have never seen their equal. Many fanciers will have experienced this on seeing a good lot running together; but love at first sight has often a shallow foundation, which is proved here. When we come to examine the birds individually we find some of them wanting in many points. There are four overyear drakes among these which we will describe first. They were grand youngsters last year, and prize-winners, but two of them have developed peculiarities since their last moult which condemns them as show birds or breeders, one for the present, and the other for altogether. The first is grand in head, bill, shape