

duced to save the fowls from being "improved off from the face of the earth." The wise breeder will look with the closest scrutiny for the first appearance of weakness in his stock and the moment a latent defect becomes patent in-breeding will cease. The careless breeder cannot safely in-breed at all, to do so is dangerous for him. He will not note the first faint danger signals, and before he is really aroused to the peril, ruin will have overwhelmed his stock.

JUDGING FOWLS.

BY J. H. DAVIS, CALEDONIA, OHIO.

THE articles on judging fowls in late numbers of the REVIEW interest me. Mr. J. H. Paton, in the May issue says, "there have been mistakes in judging all breeds," but he does not say how or why those mistakes are made. He does not believe, he says, "that judging will ever be done entirely satisfactory to all."

There never was a show, never will be a show, where all are satisfied. It is human nature to kick, and to kick vigorously, when a breeder takes fowls to a show, which are just as good as any fowls in the show-room, and have them score second or third, if they are not disqualified for a trifle which the judge could well pass by, and often does pass by when favoritism is indulged in as it sometimes is.

The trouble in judging arises chiefly from allowing judges to pass upon birds they have never bred, and of which they know nothing outside of an arbitrary Standard, which, if followed to the letter, would disqualify a large majority of our fowls, because it demands perfection in points and feathering only arrived at approximately.

Class judging should be the rule altogether. All judges breed fowls, or ought to. If they do not, they are not competent to judge, and are imposing on breeders when they pretend to judge. Suppose Judge X, breeds Leghorns, Minorcas and dark Brahmas. He has made these birds specialties for years. He knows all about them; knows their characteristics, form, feather, etc., etc. He has studied these birds thoroughly, he breeds them, and ought to be competent to judge them. They are *his* peculiar strains, perhaps, and in judging he will try to make other birds of same breeds conform to *his* ideas of a standard fowl. And this sometimes causes trouble and dissatisfaction.

But is such a judge competent to pass on birds he does not breed, never has bred? I would like to have this ques-

tion answered. Certainly any judge who has been in the business a long time becomes more or less familiar with all the breeds, through handling them occasionally. But is the breeder of one or half a dozen breeds thoroughly competent to give just and proper decisions on fowls bred outside of his own yards—fowls he never has bred, and whose characteristics he is ignorant of experimentally?

I believe the whole trouble of dissatisfaction in judging lies in the absence of a rigid system of class-judging. And even this system may be open to abuses, because there is nothing perfect in any system. At the same time I believe that the breeders of the country ought to rule, and have some say in the matter of judging, and not allow the judges to have everything their own way.

I grant that class-judging would be more expensive than promiscuous judging. It might cost more to have a competent judge for each breed and its varieties, but it would be more satisfactory. To have a judge score fowls he never bred always did seem out of place to me. And to have a judge hurry through a show room of one or two thousand fowls, more or less, and mark his guess work on a card, or by comparison, is not calculated to please, because it is not the correct way of judging and always does more or less injustice to breeders.

There are good, honest, judges, who aim to do the fair thing, and who do it so far as they are able. These judges are not at fault, but the *system* is, which allows them to judge all breeds with an arbitrary decision from which there is no appeal.

Poultry Association can, and should regulate this matter of judging. And when a man takes fowls to a show he knows is to be judged by one man—all varieties and breeds judged by one man—he ought not to kick if his birds are disqualified or score lower than he thinks they ought to.

I never exhibit birds, for private reasons, yet I like to visit shows and esteem them of great benefit in encouraging the "hen fever."

BLACK SPANISH FOWLS.

BY J. C. BOWES, THORNTON DALE, YORKSHIRE.

(Continued.)

III.—THE HEN.

MAKING due allowance for difference in sex and functions, the shape and general characteristics of the Spanish hen do not differ widely from those of the cock. It is chiefly in the comb where