

common experience where a direct out-cross has been introduced, and even where the birds are pure on both sides. Especially, however, would this apply in the case of some of the strains of so-called purebred Black Orpingtons to be seen at the present time. The appearance of many of these birds clearly denotes that one of the lighter breeds has been recently introduced in order to find a short-cut to heavy egg-production. In other words, many of them are nothing short of mongrels. True, the first crosses may have proved heavy-producing stock, but the subsequent generations distributed throughout the country have not only had the effect of spoiling many a purebred-strain, but they have also been a source of vexation and loss to the unfortunate people who introduced them to their flocks.

After all, there is no definite way of mating birds of different strains that will develop all the desired characters usually looked for in the progeny. Probably the best course for a breeder who has a flock of undoubted layers which is thought to be sufficiently inbred, and fresh blood is required to maintain the necessary constitutional vigour, is to select a small number of the best hens and put them to the male of the strain to be introduced. In this way, in the event of the union not being a successful one, the result of the mating can be proved without seriously lowering the productive capacity of the laying-flock, for if the progeny proved to be unsatisfactory they need not be bred from. On the other hand, if the progeny were of desirable quality from appearance they could be tested and carefully selected before being introduced to the main flock. When a half-blood is introduced in this way it will probably have the effect of imparting to its progeny the good family qualities of the parents. On the other hand, if the fresh blood is introduced in a haphazard way to the whole of the breeding-pens the union will most likely beget throw-backs and latent undesirable characters, which would be a serious loss to the breeder.

A most common mistake made in breeding poultry is to imagine that fresh blood should be brought in each year for the maintenance of constitutional vigour. Far too many follow this practice without realizing its bad effects. The man who possesses and desires to maintain a heavy laying-strain takes no such risks. He would never dream of introducing a male into his main flock unless the bird first proved his value as a sire in a small way. Then he would mate the males of that cross with the hens of the flock, or *vice versa*, which, of course, would be inbreeding. The aim of the poultryman should be to breed a flock of birds of uniform type, and which possess the desired points indicative of a strong constitution and laying-power. It is no easy matter to attain this ideal, and it is even more difficult to perpetuate the type when once it has been secured.

It would therefore appear that careful selection of purebred stock, and inbreeding to a certain degree, is the keynote of building up the characters it is desired to develop, and the only way of maintaining them. Nature is probably the best guide we have. Inbreeding apparently does not trouble rabbits and sparrows. Nature provides for elimination of the unfit. Constitution is maintained without the necessity of importing fresh blood, and with no assistance from man these pests multiply with amazing rapidity. It is therefore imperative that where inbreeding is resorted to none but the strongest specimens should be bred from. Inbreeding has the effect of intensifying desirable