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BENTON, BOSSIER PARISH, LA., THURSDAY, MAY 2, 1912.

NUMBER 18.

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Making Money On the Farm

XIV.—Poultry—The Question of Breed

By C. V. GREGORY,
Author of "Home Course in Modern Agriculture"

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THESE are breeds, varieties and strains of poultry almost without end. To the beginner in poultry culture the question of which one to select is a puzzling one, and the older poultrymen often wonder if they would not do better to change breeds. The purpose for which chickens are kept will determine which class of fowls is best. As to the varieties within that class, it is largely a matter of individual preference. A brief description of some of the leading varieties may be of help in making a selection.

The General Purpose Breeds.
Chickens may be grouped into four general classes: (1) general purpose breeds; (2) meat breeds; (3) laying breeds; (4) ornamental breeds. The aim of the breeder of general purpose fowls is to combine laying and meat producing ability to the greatest extent possible. The general purpose birds will not average as prolific layers as some of the more strictly egg fowls. For producing meat, however, they are fully as efficient as the strictly meat breeds. For the general farmer who is keeping poultry as a side issue the returns from the general purpose breeds will usually be greater than from any of the more specialized breeds.

The most popular and most widely distributed of the general purpose breeds is the Plymouth Rock. It is a medium sized breed, deep breasted and well proportioned. Plymouth Rocks are very good layers, especially the first year. After the hens are a year old they tend to become fat and sluggish and lay fewer eggs. The meat is of excellent quality. The chickens make good broilers at from three to four weeks of age or can be profitably fed for later markets. They are early maturing and as rapid growers excel all other breeds. Chicken feeders who crate-fatten extensively put the Plymouth Rock in first place for this purpose.

There are three varieties of Plymouth Rocks—Barred, White and Buff. The great trouble with the Barred Plymouth Rock is the difficulty in keeping the color markings up to standard. They tend to become unevenly barred, the bars become too wide or too narrow or the general color too dark or too light. From a utility standpoint this factor is of little importance, but where birds or eggs are sold for breeding purposes it is important that the color markings be up to standard. The Buff Rocks have a tendency to vary somewhat from the desired shade to produce black feathers in wings or tail. They average a little smaller than the Barred or White varieties. The White Rocks breed true to color the easiest. The hens of this variety show even more of a tendency to be come overfat than do those of the Barred variety.

Plymouth Rock eggs are brown, which is something of an objection in



FIG. XXVII—GOOD TYPE PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

some markets and an advantage with others. The standard weight for the breed is nine and a half pounds for cocks and seven and a half for hens. Plymouth Rocks are criticised somewhat for lack of hardiness as compared with the other general purpose breeds, and there is doubtless some ground for this criticism. They may be greatly improved in this point by the use of birds of exceptionally strong vitality in the breeding pen.

Next to the Plymouth Rocks in popularity as a general purpose breed are the Wyandottes. They average about a pound lighter than the Plymouth Rocks. The chickens are nearly as rapid growers and produce meat of as good or even better quality.

The Wyandottes are generally considered to stand heavy feeding for rapid growth a little better than most of the other breeds. The hens are active and do not become overfat as easily as Plymouth Rocks.

There are several varieties of Wyandottes, all the same type and having the same general characteristics. The only distinguishing point is the color. With this breed, as with the Plymouth Rocks, the mixed colors are difficult to breed true to standard. For the man who does not wish to devote a

great deal of time to breeding for fancy points a solid color is preferable. One of the newest of the general purpose breeds is the Rhode Island Red. These fowls are very hardy and for that reason well adapted to farm conditions. They rank up well with the Plymouth Rocks and Wyandottes in laying ability and as meat producers. They are about the same size as the Wyandottes, the standard weight being eight and one-half pounds for the cock and six and one-half pounds for the hen. The color is a brilliant red, with portions of the tall and wings shading off to black. The exact shade of color varies considerably.

There are a number of other general purpose breeds, such as the Dominiques, Buckeyes and Javas. The latter are about the same size as the Plymouth Rocks, though of a little different shape. They lay well, are fairly good for meat and are good sitters. There are two varieties, black and mottled. The objection applies to this breed that is made to all birds with black plumage—that the black plumes detract considerably from the appearance of the dressed fowl. Such birds are seriously discriminated against in the markets. The foregoing breeds have been developed in this country and are known as American breeds. There is also an English breed, the Orpingtons, that gives very good satisfaction as a general purpose fowl.

The Meat Breeds.
The meat breeds, most of which are Asiatics, are the oldest breeds in this country. The Brahmas, one of the



FIG. XXVIII—WHITE PLYMOUTH ROCK CHICKENS

most common of these, are large, the male weighing eleven to twelve pounds and the hen eight and a half to nine and a half. This large size is one of the chief points in favor of the Brahmas. They are slow maturing, and it takes considerable feeding to get their large frames thickly enough covered with meat to be in good market condition. Like all feathered legged breeds, the Brahma is clumsy and for this reason does not make a first class mother. The pullets are too slow in maturing to lay many eggs the first winter. Even when matured they are not heavy layers, though they do most of their laying in the winter, when eggs are high. This is largely because their large size and heavy feathering make them less susceptible to cold. As meat producers the Brahmas are about equal to the general purpose breeds, though for high class capons they are perhaps a little superior. There are two varieties of Brahmas, light and dark. The light Brahmas are the more popular. The black variety is more difficult to breed for color, and much attention to fancy points has caused utility to be largely lost sight of.

Cochins are the second of the meat breeds in size, the males weighing eleven pounds and the hens eight and a half. They are of the same massive, full feathered type as the Brahmas, averaging a trifle shorter legged and wider across the back. Like the Brahmas, they are hardy. They are not as good layers, however, and are just as slow in maturing. There are four varieties, of which the buff is the most common.

Both these breeds have served a good purpose in grading up the mongrel strains of the country and providing foundation stock for the American breeds. At present, however, they have few points of superiority over the American breeds as meat producers and are inferior to most of the utility birds. As show fowls they are prized because of their size and beauty.

The smallest and quickest maturing of the Asiatic breeds is the Langshans. They are objectionable because of their black color, white skin and feathered legs and do not excel the American breeds in any practical qualities. An English breed, the Dorkings, are good meat producers, but poor layers. For the man who is in the poultry business from a utility standpoint one of the general purpose or laying breeds will be more satisfactory than any of the meat breeds.

The Laying Breeds.
The laying breeds originally came from the region around the Mediterranean sea, and hence are often referred to as the Mediterranean breeds. The most popular of these is the Leghorn. Leghorns are small birds, not very active and good foragers. They outrank any of the other breeds in laying qualities, laying both summer and winter if properly cared for. They are not adapted to the poultryman who pays no attention to his chickens, as they will not lay unless they are given good care. They lay white eggs weighing ten to the pound. The eggs of the American breeds weigh eight to the pound.

The small size of the Leghorn hens makes them cheaply kept. They are early maturing, often beginning to lay when they are four and a half months old. Their flesh is of good quality, but their size is against them from a market standpoint. The only way the cockerels can be disposed of at a profit is to sell them as broilers at two pounds weight or smaller. Of the several varieties of Leghorn the white and brown are the most popular from a utility standpoint.

PROOF OF THE PUDDING.

Being Another Case of Truth Stranger Than Fiction.

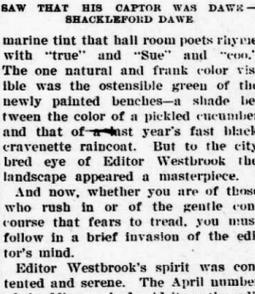
By O. HENRY.

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Spring winked a vitreous optic at Editor Westbrook of the *Minnerva* Magazine and deflected him from his course. He had lunched in his favorite corner of a Broadway hotel and was returning to his office when his feet became entangled in the lure of the vernal coquette. Which is by way of saying that he turned eastward in Twenty-sixth street, safely forlorn the spring freshest of vehicles in Fifth avenue and meandered along the walks of budding Madison square.

The lenient air and the settings of the little park almost formed a pastoral; the color motif was green—the presiding shade at the creation of man and vegetation.

The callow grass between the walks was the color of verdigris, a poisonous green, reminiscent of the horde of derelict humans that had breathed upon the soil during the summer and autumn. The bursting tree buds looked strangely familiar to those who had botanized among the garishings of the fish course of a forty cent dinner. The sky above was of that pale aqua-



SAW THAT HIS CAPTOR WAS DAWK—SHACKLEFORD DAVE

marine tint that hall room poets rhyme with "true" and "Sue" and "you." The one natural and frank color visible was the ostensible green of the newly painted benches—a shade between the color of a pickled cucumber and that of a last year's fast black cravenette raincoat. But to the city bred eye of Editor Westbrook the landscape appeared a masterpiece.

And now, whether you are of those who rush in or of the gentle course that fears to tread, you must follow in a brief invasion of the editor's mind.

Editor Westbrook's spirit was contented and serene. The April number of the *Minnerva* had sold its entire edition before the tenth day of the month. A newsdealer in Keokuk had written that he could have sold fifty copies more if he had had 'em. The owners of the magazine had raised his (the editor's) salary, he had just installed in his home a jewel of a recently imported cook who was afraid of policemen, and the morning papers had published in full a speech he had made at a publishers' banquet. Also there were echoing in his mind the jubilant notes of a splendid song that his charming young wife had sung to him before he left his uptown apartment that morning. She was taking enthusiastic interest in her music of late, practicing early and diligently. When he had complimented her on the improvement in her voice she had fairly hugged him for joy at his praise. He felt, too, the benign tonic medication of the trained nurse, Spring, tripping softly down the wards of the convalescent center.

While Editor Westbrook was sauntering between the rows of park benches (already filling with vagrants and the guardians of lawless childhood) he felt his sleeve grasped and held. Suspecting that he was about to be panhandled, he turned a cold and unprofitable face and saw that his captor was Dave—Shackleford—Dave—dingy, almost ragged, the genteeled scarcely visible in him through the deeper lines of the shabby.

Two of them; the rest were returned. Westbrook sent a careful and conscientious personal letter with each rejected manuscript, pointing out in detail his reasons for considering it unavailable. Editor Westbrook had his own clear conception of what constituted good fiction; so had Dave. Mrs. Dawe was mainly concerned about the constituents of the scanty dishes of food that she managed to scrape together. One day Dawe had been spouting to her about the excellencies of certain French writers. At dinner they sat down to a dish that a hungry schoolboy could have encompassed at a gulp, Dawe commented.

"It's Maupassant hash," said Mrs. Dawe. "It may not be art, but I do wish you would do a five course Marion Crawford serial with an Ella Wheeler Wilcox sonnet for dessert. I'm hungry."

As far as this from success was Shackleford Dave when he plucked Editor Westbrook's sleeve in Madison square. That was the first time the editor had seen Dave in several months.

"Why, Shack, is this you?" said Westbrook, somewhat awkwardly, for the form of his phrase seemed to touch upon the other's changed appearance.

"Sit down for a minute," said Dave, tugging at his sleeve. "This is my office. I can't come to yours looking as I do. Oh, sit down! You won't be disgraced. Those half plucked birds on the other benches will take you for a swell porch climber. They won't know you are only an editor."

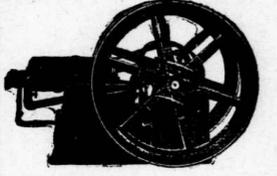
"Smoke, Shack?" said Editor Westbrook, sinking cautiously upon the virulent green bench. He always yielded gracefully when he did yield.

Dawe snatched at the cigar as a king-fisher darts at a sun perch or a girl pecks at a chocolate cream.

"How goes the writing?" asked the editor.

"Look at me," said Dave. "For your answer. Now, don't put on that embarrassed, friendly, but honest look and ask me why I don't get a job as a wine agent or a cab driver. I'm in the fight to a finish. I know I can write good fiction, and I'll force you fellows to admit it yet. I'll make you change the spelling of 'regrets' to 'h-e-e-c-k' before I'm done with you."

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