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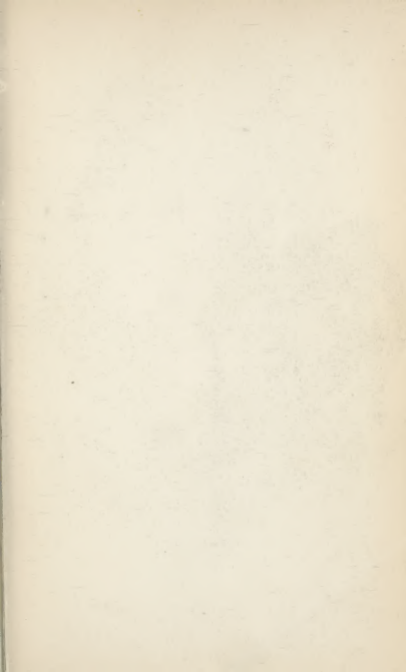
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THE HENWIFE.

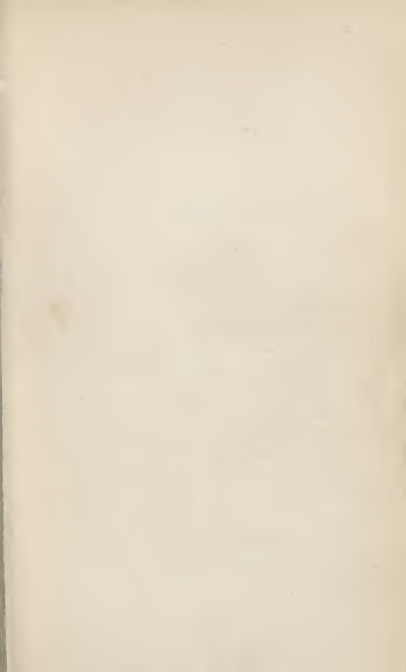
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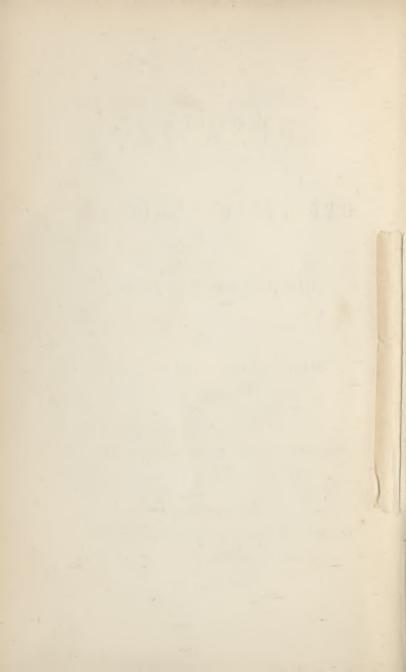




DORKING.

Edinburgh Thomas C Jack





THE
HENWIFE
HER OWN EXPERIENCE
IN
HER OWN POULTRY-YARD

BY
MRS FERGUSSON BLAIR
OF BALTHAYOCK

COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS BY HARRISON WEIR

EDINBURGH
THOMAS C. JACK, 92, PRINCES STREET
LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO

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TO

MISS BURDETT COUTTS.

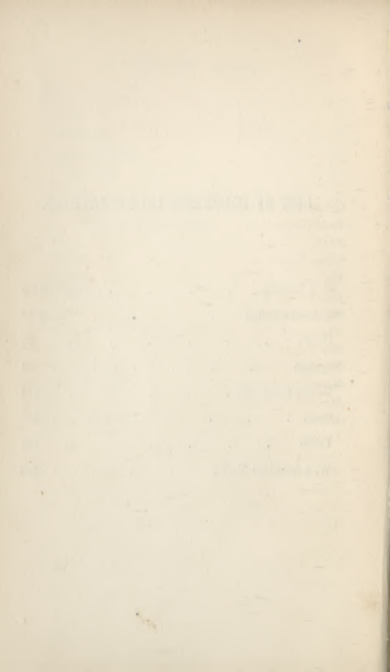
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THE HENWIFE.

Introduction.



“How now, Dame Partlet, the hen?”

SHAKESPEARE.

I HAVE been often asked to publish a work on Poultry, and have complied, because I think I have no right to withhold any mite I may possess, from the sum of human knowledge. I also, naturally, desire to afford satisfaction to my friends; while any who are the reverse (if such there be) must admit that I fulfil for them the wish of the Patriarch of Uz: “O that mine enemy had written a book.”

I think I am entitled, without egregious vanity, to deem my experience worthy of some claim to attention, as, during the last four years, I have gained upwards of 460 prizes, in Scotland and England, and personally superintended the management of forty separate yards, in which have annually been hatched more than 1000 chickens.

I began to breed poultry for amusement only, then for exhibition, and lastly, was glad to take the trouble to make it pay, and do not like my poultry yard less, because it is not a loss.

All honour to the numerous writers on the subject. I pretend not to rival them. The field (like the world) is wide enough for all. A few portions of this work must necessarily treat of the same subjects as theirs, although a good deal that is new, I trust, will be found. I am not a plagiarist. I desire to copy no one. I make no pretence to be scientific, but only very prac-

tical, and to *tell* what my experience has been ; and this is just what this little book is : viz., What I did, and how I did it.

I think it is impossible to imagine any occupation more suited to a lady, living in the country, than that of poultry rearing. If she has any superfluous affection to bestow, let it be on her chicken-kind, and it will be returned cent. per cent.

The poultry yard supplies one of the most delicate descriptions of food with which man has provided himself. He accepts it from Nature's munificent hand as a great boon ; but he is not contented to keep it as he gets it : he improves upon the gift. Whoever desires to realize the measure of success he has attained to, has simply to walk into next Birmingham show-room, and compare what he sees there, with what he remembers in the old barn yards.

Indeed, a modern prize-bird almost merits the character which a Parisian waiter gave of a melon, when asked to pronounce whether it was a fruit or a vegetable. "Gentlemen," said he, "a melon is neither; it is a work of art."

The cost of poultry keeping is much overrated. To rear for the market *only*, would even give a profit. Exhibition is, doubtless, expensive; but in some measure it pays itself, and the necessary outlay is much reduced by sales of eggs and fowls at high prices, when a reputation has been once established; and any intending exhibitor may take my word for it, that she (though perhaps of moderate means) may, without extravagance, snatch her harmless victories, invest herself with the blue riband of the poultry yard, and win her bloodless Solferinos.

In these pages will be found figures as to the "Balance Sheet." I am aware that these can be made to prove anything. I can say, how-

ever, with a clear conscience, that mine are *intended* to be honest.

I have not shrunk from giving them, any more than I have done from expressing my own opinions on all points. I take this opportunity, however, to thank those eminent breeders who have kindly furnished me with their experience, and whose letters, in my opinion, so much enhance the value of this book.

I have striven not to be dogmatical, and in a matter in which "much may be said on both sides," I have wished to give all arguments fair play. To have done otherwise, would have been to forfeit the confidence of the reader, as well as to make a very *daring* infringement on the prerogative of the "Editor of *The Times*."

All success, then, to the poultry yard!

Are you a lover of nature? Come with me, and view with delighted gaze her chosen dyes.

Are you a utilitarian? Rejoice in such an increase of the people's food.

Are you a philanthropist? Be grateful that yours has been the privilege to afford a *possible* pleasure to the poor man, to whom so many are *impossible*. Such we often find fond of poultry—no mean judges of it, and frequently successful in exhibition. A poor man's pleasure in victory is at least as great as that of his richer brother. Let him, then, have the field whereon to fight for it. Encourage village poultry shows, not only by your patronage, but also by your presence. A taste for such may save many from dissipation, and much evil; no man can win poultry honours and haunt the tap-room too.

For myself, I can truly say that, during the time I have reared poultry, I have ever found the pursuit to be a "labour of love," and (like virtue) "its own reward." I feel that, though

more tangible benefits had not fallen to my lot, I could still look back on the hours spent among my feathered pets with affectionate gratitude.





Houses and Yards.

It is impossible to give special rules for poultry houses and yards, to suit all tastes and requirements, without knowing the facility the ground possesses for such.

My endeavour is to lay before the reader a few simple plans which may guide the intending poultry keeper, and be the means of insuring the comfort and well-being of the flock.

I do not consider any one soil necessary for success in rearing poultry. Some think a chalk or gravel soil essential for Dorkings; but I have proved the fallacy of this opinion, by bringing up, during three years, many hundreds of these *soi-disant* delicate birds on the strong blue clay of the Carse of Gowrie — doubtless,

thoroughly drained, that system being well understood and universally practised by the farmers of the district.

A coating of gravel and sand once a-year is all that is requisite to secure the necessary dryness in the runs.

The houses and yards should have a south or south-west exposure, and (if possible) open into a grass park, to which the fowls can have daily access.

The houses may be built of stone and lime or brick ; but I prefer wooden erections, as being less close, and affording a freer circulation of air. The roof, however, in every case must be perfectly waterproof, a pane of glass inserted in each door to admit light, and a few holes pierced to promote ventilation. Light, air, and sunshine are indispensable to the health of fowls—the floor of clay or gravel, well-beaten down, so as to be perfectly hard and dry. For a cock and six hens, the house should not be less than from twelve to sixteen feet in height, and eight feet square ; the yards the width of the house, and fifteen feet long, enclosed by posts and wire fencing (two-

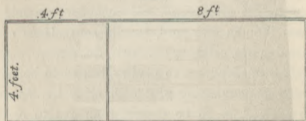
inch mesh), eight feet high, boarded up two feet from the ground between the yards, to prevent the cocks fighting through the wire. This is the most dangerous of all warfare, as the birds injure themselves in the meshes, and (Dorkings especially) are apt to tear their combs and toes in them.

In each yard there should be a water-vessel, and a small, low lean-to shed, under which is the dust-bath—viz., a box, filled with dry ashes, or sand and lime rubbish. This shed also serves for shelter from rain and sun. A trap, a foot and a half square, must be cut in the fencing round each yard, to admit of the fowls being let out to the grass park, and each house should open into its own yard, for the convenience of cleaning out, catching the fowls, &c., &c.

It is of advantage to poultry houses to be *en suite*, communicating with each other by doors, to allow them to be cleaned from end to end without the necessity of passing through the yards; and there must be a trap from the house into the yard for the egress and ingress of the fowls at pleasure. I would recommend that all

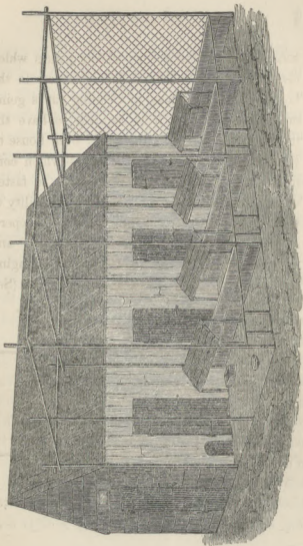
these traps be made with sliding panels which close, to prevent the fowls having access to the houses while the process of cleaning out is going on, and at all times it is requisite to have the means of shutting out the fowls from house or yard, as may be wished. The doors which connect house with house should be made to fasten on either side, to guard against the possibility of the different varieties meeting, when the keeper's attention may be engaged in performing any necessary duties in the house, such as arranging straw in the nests, collecting eggs, &c. (See Fig. 2.)

Fig. 1.



Ground Plan of Poultry Houses.

Fig. 2.



Poultry Houses.

To secure the safety of eggs, (which, in establishments of mark, are apt to excite the cupidity of the covetous), each external door should be provided with a lock and key. Inferior *ménages* are, of course, not so liable to this drawback; but I would say to all poultry keepers, Guard your fowls during night; they are, perhaps, more easily "conveyed" than any other species of domestic animals. "Experto crede."

During the winter months close all the traps from sunset to sunrise. My *Scotch* experience, at least, has shown me the advantage of this precaution; and past seasons have proved the climate of England to be quite as severe as that north of the Tweed.

For this daily routine you must have confidence in your poultry attendants, and feel assured that the birds are admitted to their yards at an early hour in the morning. The only admissible furniture in a poultry house is a moveable perch, not higher than two feet from the ground, made in the form of trestles, of split larch, the bark left on, and uppermost. (See Fig. 3.) If the perch is high, heavy birds are

Fig. 3.



Perch.

very apt to be lamed in descending. The house being small, they drop perpendicularly from the roost, and so injure their feet; hence the bumble foot of the Dorking. A small or smooth cylindrical perch is not desirable. The fowls cannot take a firm hold of it; and, besides, it is certain to cause crooked breast-bones, a most grave defect. For the use of the hens, a few nests on the ground, divided from each other by strips of wood, are necessary; but these are understood to be merely for the benefit of *laying fowls*, a sitting-house being indispensable in even a moderate establishment. Where only one variety of fowl is kept, a very simple style of arrangement is required. A span-roofed house, covered with felt, or tarpauling coated with tar, a door to *lock*, moveable perch, a few nests, and trap, will

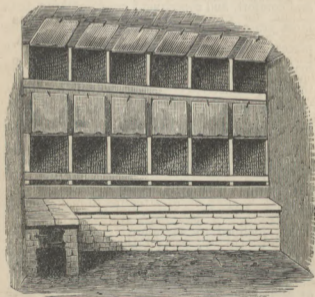
answer all needful purposes; this is supposing the fowls to have complete liberty; if shut up during any part of the day, they must have a yard such as I have already described. Where many kinds of poultry are desiderated, a much more extended system becomes imperative. Houses to suit their different peculiarities must be erected, in order to do justice to them all, and guarantee success in each.

Take, for example, the classes of Brahma Pootra and Cochins. These require no perch, preferring the floor of the house to any more elevated position; but this must be well littered down with straw, as in a stable, and as regularly removed. A broad board covered with straw is sometimes substituted for a perch; this must be a little elevated from the ground. I find, however, that if there are nests, *there* the Cochins *will* roost, in spite of all attempts to make them do otherwise. A wire fence three feet high is quite sufficient to restrain these birds within bounds; they never attempt to fly over the divisions, or poach on their neighbour's grounds. If a tree can be enclosed in a poultry run, it forms

a very agreeable object, and affords shelter to the fowls. On a warm sunny day they will always be found under the protecting shade of its branches, and half-buried in the holes they have scraped out, in which to roll and dust themselves.

I will now describe a sitting-house, which may be made on a greater or lesser scale. (See Fig. 4.)

Fig. 4.



Sitting-House.

Indeed, where a great number of fowls is kept, more than one will be necessary. The interior should be fitted up with a row of nests; in fact, a broad wooden shelf, divided into compartments a foot and a half square, covered over with a roof sloping to the front. The additional height at the back gives better ventilation to the sitting hens; and this has more to do with their health and comfort, and consequent *good hatching*, than most are aware of. Generally speaking, sitting places are too close and confined, showing a marked difference, indeed, to those selected by the hens themselves if allowed freedom of choice.

A sitting-house being a necessary evil in a poultry establishment, let us make it as comfortable as possible to the poor hen during her *retraite*. Each nest must have a folding flap in front, to secure the hen from any intrusion on the part of her neighbours, and to confine her if at all inclined to vagrancy. A few air-holes should be pierced in the flaps, and the lower panels of the nests be made to slide out and in, as after each occupancy it is advisable to have them washed. The sitting-house yard differs in

no respect from that described for non-incubating fowls; it must have a similar dust-bath and water-vessel. During cold weather, a flue (as seen in the woodcut) is desirable where chickens are wished during the winter months.

Having now described the *House* of the hen, I shall proceed to its *Food*.



Food.

NEVER stint poultry in the variety or quality of their food. Good food is a positive economy. The best and heaviest corn is the cheapest, if we except the small or tail-wheat, which, fortunately, is richer in flesh-forming properties than the full-grown and more marketable grain.

I do not propose to write a lecture on chemistry: for this read Liebig; but we ought to make ourselves intimately acquainted with the different substances required for the formation and reparation of the system. The best food is that which gives the most of what Nature demands for the formation of muscle, bone, and fat.

Fine bran, or middlings, (also termed sharps), is richer in two of these important ingredients

than any other one kind of food, but being deficient in gluten, is not warmth-giving, and is better when combined with the whole grain, which, when bruised, or *hashed*, (as it is sometimes provincially called), forms the most wholesome and nutritious food.

Barley is more used than any other grain. It is cheaper, but unless in the form of meal, should not be the only grain in the poultry yard. Fowls do not fatten upon it.

Oats, also, are inferior in nutriment, unless in the form of meal.

Indian corn is a good and economical food, too fattening, however, to be given without judgment. It can be bought at most sea-ports at a reasonable price, and fowls are very fond of it. I find light wheat, or tailings, the best grain for daily use, and next to that, barley.

The subjoined table may interest my readers. I take it from a very useful publication, "The Poultry Diary, by an Essex Amateur:"—

EVERY 100 lbs. OF	Fat or Oil.	Flesh-forming Food.	Warmth-giving Food.	Mineral Substances.	Husk or Fibre.	Water.
Oats contain	6	15	47	2	20	10
Oatmeal.....	6	18	63	2	2	9
Wheat	3	12	70	2	1	12
Middlings (<i>fine bran</i>)	6	18	53	5	4	14
Barley.....	2	11	60	2	14	11
Indian Corn.....	8	11	65	1	5	10
Rice	A trace	7	80	A trace	...	13
Beans and Peas	2	25	48	2	8	15
Milk.....	3	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	5	$\frac{3}{4}$...	86 $\frac{3}{4}$

Rice forms a very agreeable change of diet. It can be procured, a little damaged, for a small price. It is cooling and alterative, when properly prepared. The following is the method: Boil it for half-an-hour, and then let it stand in the water till cold, when it will be found to have swelled amazingly, and the mass so firm as to admit of being taken out in lumps, and easily broken up.

Buck-wheat and hemp-seed are greedily devoured by poultry, and no grains are more

likely to produce eggs early, and in abundance. During moult, give hemp-seed freely. It strengthens greatly.

Groats also form an item in the food of these omnivorous creatures, but are not to be considered ordinary feeding. They should be reserved for the basket of the lady manager.

Linseed steeped is occasionally given (chiefly to birds destined for exhibition), to increase the secretion of oil, and give lustre to their plumage.

The best sort of soft food is composed as follows:—Mix equal quantities of thirds (sharps) with Indian, oat, or barley-meal, into a paste with water. This should be worked up into balls, which, if of proper consistency, break when thrown on the ground, and are thus equally divided among the fowls. The size of the balls secures accuracy as regards quantity.

Another advantage also is, that, if a lady personally distributes the food, these balls are more agreeable to manipulate than the *porridgy* mass generally seen, and which fowls by no means relish. Soft food should always be *friable*.

The potato is the only cooked vegetable admissible. It is very conducive to the health and growth of poultry. When mashed and sprinkled with meal, it is a pleasant variety in the poultry bill of fare. Time was when we were wont to indulge our pets freely in its use, but, alas! that is matter of history now. Forty pounds an acre is a prohibitory price for *them* at least, and I fear for many, too, who once depended mainly upon this fickle root for their support.

I do not approve of any feeding dish. Poultry prefer to pick their food off the ground, and the gravel and sand swallowed along with it are necessary for digestion. Chopped cabbage, lettuce, spinage, or other green vegetables, should be given daily. Calcined oyster-shells are also to be used. Fowls are very fond of them, and they tend to produce perfect eggs. They are prepared by burning them in the fire until quite brittle. They can then be easily broken by the hand.

The first meal, consisting of grain, should be given at six A.M., in summer, and at daylight in winter. That at mid-day should be the soft

food balls already mentioned; and the last, grain again, that the fowls may have, during the night, the benefit of the warmth it imparts.

In cold weather, feed liberally on toast soaked in ale. Fowls are by no means abstainers, but heartily enjoy their beer, nay, even wine. Cooked animal food is to be given daily during winter, taking the place of the insect life, which is absent.

When the genial softness of spring again reigns over the scene, and the sleeping earth wakes once more, we may trust a good deal to the supply afforded by the hand of nature. The fowls, during their daily grass run, will pick up much for themselves, which we endeavour to replace to them in winter, from our own superfluities.

We ought to consider ourselves deeply indebted to poultry for this saving from waste of such broken victuals, scraps of fish, &c., crumbs and larger fragments of bread, which last are too frequently collected, and appear again at table in the very objectionable form of puddings, and other unprincipled disguises, where a stern eco-

mony reigns, at the expense of all "reason, faith, and conscience."

Had I the honour of being a correspondent of a sporting periodical, I would, of course, here quote, "*Revenons a nos moutons.*" These gentry, to a man, would say so. Being, however, only a simple "Hen-wife," I may, perhaps, be allowed the more humble expression of "Let me revert to my subject." And this brings me to drinking-vessels for poultry.

Those I approve of, are the common tile flower-pot saucers. They do not hold much, so that the water is ever fresh, if frequently replenished, as they ought to be. This is a great desideratum, especially in summer. Fowls greatly relish fresh cool water, as may be seen by the eagerness with which they fly to the vessels when refilled. They must always be kept clean, and occasionally scrubbed with sand, to remove the green slime which collects, and is so productive of roup, gapes, and other diseases. In winter, care must be taken to empty them at nightfall, otherwise ice would form and cause breakage. In moulting time a little citrate of

iron mixed in the water is beneficial; about a teaspoonful to a common-sized water-can is sufficient.

I am happy, in concluding my own experiences, in poultry feeding, to be able to mention very favourably the prize poultry food manufactured by Penn and Co., Manchester. Having now used it for some time, I can vouch for its excellence. My fowls are very fond of it, and thrive admirably upon it. I give it, mixed with minced boiled liver, and pounded pimento sprinkled over all. This, however, is to be considered quite a "bon bon," and used in limited quantities. Sometimes, I give the food plain, following their own directions for use, and have found the result very satisfactory.

General Treatment.

THE best guide is Nature, and we should always follow her as closely as possible in the treatment of our stock. Fowls are almost grazing animals, and pick up grass, or any green food, in quantities. If, therefore, you cannot give them complete liberty, (and this is impossible where large numbers and several varieties are kept), you should, at all events, allow them a daily run in a grass park. One hour's liberty is sufficient to keep them in health, and their enjoyment of this boon is so great, that, even were there no other reason, *that* should be sufficient inducement for you to give them their little bit of happiness, even at the expense of trouble to yourself.

It is astonishing how soon fowls accommodate

themselves to the regulations of the establishment. A day or two suffice to make them acquiesce in all our wishes, and enable them to recognise, without apparent difficulty, their respective yards. Fowls seem to understand the value of their hour's play, and lose no time, the trap once opened, in availing themselves of it; they rush to the grass, and never cease picking it, until driven home. Great care must be taken that one set is put in before another is let out. This demands hourly attention, as, by one moment's carelessness in allowing breeds to mix, hopes, for a whole season, may be destroyed. If there are several yards of the same breed, these, to save time, may be allowed to enjoy each other's society during their run, as a *faux-pas* in their case, though not advisable, need not be fatal—but *never* let out different varieties together. One single *mésalliance* will ruin the purity of the breed. *At no season* of the year should hens be allowed to associate with the male bird of a different variety, and if *super-eminent* excellence is desired, not even with an inferior one of the same.

While the fowls are enjoying their grass run, their yards may be dug over. Twice a-week is not too often for this operation. Occasionally a little of the soil may be pared off, and fresh sand strewed in its place. At all times, perfect cleanliness, in yards and houses, should greet the eye of the lady visitor—it is *the* grand requisite. At the risk of appearing didactic, I must insist upon this *sine qua non* in a poultry establishment, great or small, be it that of the “laird” or that of his “tenant.” I do not say with some writers, “*If* the floor of the fowl house can be cleansed every morning, so much the better;” but I say, “It *must* be done,” and scrupulously so, too. If the floor is as hard as it ought to be, a birch broom is the best implement that can be used for this purpose.

The supply of water must be copious and of the purest description, and the dust-bath always provided with ashes for the use of the fowls. They love to roll themselves in this, scattering the contents over their feathers, to the effectual discomfort and dislodgement of all parasites. A heap of lime rubbish, or old mortar, should be

placed in a corner of each yard—poultry are fond of it, and it is conducive to their health. Once a-year, the interior of the houses and nests should be limewashed, and the floor saturated with the same mixture. This keeps all perfectly pure and free from taint.

It is good, during warm weather, occasionally to sprinkle water from a watering-can over the perch and in its vicinity, scattering a little sulphur over the wetted parts. This ought to, and in a great measure does, prevent the appearance of any obnoxious animalculæ, which, too often, in even well-regulated establishments, make their way good, to the torment of the occupants and their attendants. Depend upon it, the more we attend to the comfort of our domestic animals, the more they will repay our care.

To realise excellence, demands the most unflagging zeal and energy on the part of the mistress and her servants. Every day must have its apportioned work, carried out systematically, with honest vigour, in cold or heat, in rain or sunshine. Poultry must not be capriciously

dealt with—a feast one day, a famine the next. Superiority cannot thus be obtained. Where a hearty goodwill is shown by those appointed to tend your flock, and a kind interest is taken by them in its welfare, you have the surest foundation for success. There may sometimes be a little difficulty in effecting reforms in management. Old prejudices and opinions, too well rooted to be easily eradicated, may be encountered; but, if the lady fancier devotes some part of her leisure time to general supervision and direction, she will soon find that her presence acts like a charm upon even the most obdurate and old-fashioned bigot, who must, perforce, acknowledge the superiority of the new, over the *ancien regime*, as proved by the higher condition, greater weight, and increased beauty of the birds.

In cold or damp weather give nourishing food and plenty of it, and, while in moult, the birds can scarcely be too highly fed. Amateurs, who themselves look after the wants of their stock, can best judge of their requirements, and will

prefer making their own arrangements regarding a dietary table.

Never feed in haste, but watch the peculiarities of taste in your flock, and minister to them. One fowl may starve, while the others revel in luxury. As with children, their likes and dislikes must be studied, and no one kind of food forced upon them, to their disgust, and consequent loss of condition and beauty.

Where young stock, for early market or summer exhibition, is desired, the breeding yards should be made up not later than November.

If fowls are properly fed, and attended to, eggs for setting will be plentiful in December.

Well-formed, healthy, spirited birds should alone be selected to breed from, and a certain vivacity of temperament, and proud mien, are essential characteristics of the Lord of the Harem. His sultanas, of whatever variety, should be good types of their respective classes. Polygamy is allowable, but only to the extent of six wives, and this number may, with advantage, be reduced to four. The male bird, if of the

previous season, should be mated with hens two years old, and *vice versa*.

The *strongest* chickens are to be obtained from old hens, with a cockerel. Broods, however, from these will be deficient in pullets; such, at least, has been my experience.

Avoid breeding from fowls related to each other. It is a baneful system, and results in small, delicate offspring, which easily falls a prey to roup, leg weakness, and all the ills that chickenhood is heir to.

The cost of poultry keep may be considerably lessened by the proceeds of an annual sale by auction, early in the year, before the breeding season.

If the owner is known as a prize-winner, the fowls will probably average L.1 a-piece, and are, consequently, too valuable for the stock-can, which, otherwise, must be the destination of all that have passed chickenhood, and yet are unlikely to prove prize-takers, or desirable to breed from.

Aspic de volaille, and even cock's combs, when judiciously combined with oysters, truffles, &c.,

are charming additions to the *cuisine*, but it is not every hen-wife, who, like Cleopatra, can afford to dissolve her jewels.

Large sums have probably been required for the purchase of the parent birds, and we value their descendants accordingly. A good foundation was laid, regardless of expense, and the progeny must not be sacrificed.

You may also reduce your expenses by selling eggs for setting, at a remunerative price. No one should be ashamed to own what he is not ashamed to do; therefore, boldly announce your superfluous eggs for sale, at such a price as you think the public will pay for them.

Beware of sending such eggs to market. Every one would be set, and you might find yourself beaten by your own stock, very likely in your own local show, and at small cost to the exhibitor.

Early chickens may also be hatched and sold to Edinburgh and London dealers, who will gladly give L.2 per dozen, ay, and more, for well-grown, straight-breasted, white-legged chickens, moderately fat. Poultry rearers must

not suppose such sums are given for any *but* early, well-grown, fat chickens.

Leadenhall prices are said to be exaggerated, but residents in the Metropolis, during the season, know to their cost what they are, and I can verify them by my own books.

It must not be supposed, however, that *all* birds sold as spring chickens are so in reality. Many are the produce of the previous autumn, stunted in growth by the hardships of winter. These the verdant housekeeper buys, and her master's guests eat them, asking no questions.

The *chickens* which realise such high prices are hatched early in January, and reared with the greatest care, and attention to feeding.

Poultry keeping (though essentially a home pleasure) need not be limited to home. Indeed, it becomes a *necessity* to dispose, in one way or other, of your superfluous stock. If you breed for exhibition, you must not too strictly limit your numbers. Out of 100 chickens, you may not be able to match more than two pens for Birmingham, and must therefore leave yourself ample room for choice. This will give an abun-

dance to your establishment and for the poulterer. Chickens and eggs should be plentiful all the year round; where poultry are kept on a large scale, the purchase of either should be unknown. By keeping those breeds that lay early, you can command a supply of eggs for daily use, all winter, and often have an overplus for market at its dearest season. I shall elsewhere detail the method I have found most effectual, for preserving eggs for kitchen use, during the scarce season. In summer, they are plentiful and cheap, and, as I said before, *too good* for market.

I think I have now given all necessary instructions for the treatment of poultry kept on a somewhat extended scale. Amateurs, who have limited accommodation, should keep only a few first-rate fowls, say, a Dorking cock and two hens, two Cochin and two Brahma Pootra hens. These latter lay all winter, sit soon, and bring out Dorking chickens much earlier than the Dorking hens themselves, which are tardy sitters.

The Cochin and Brahma eggs, being dark in colour, are easily distinguished from those of the

Dorkings. I would advise the Cochin eggs to be used in the household, and a few of the Brahmas to be set. A cross between it and the Dorking makes an excellent bird for the table.

The pure Dorking chickens can be sold, at good prices, to other fanciers. To the *breeder* they are useless, and are, perhaps, too valuable to be killed. The original stock will last two years, at the end of which I would recommend that the male bird be replaced by a younger one, of a different strain, and then your own pullets will come into use. A few choice birds can be kept, in this way, at very small cost. Only one house is required, and that of moderate dimensions. If the fowls are to be confined during any part of the day, they must have a yard similar to that already described. If they have absolute freedom, they find many means of sustenance for themselves in the open fields or surrounding shrubberies, and will be, in a great measure, independent of the provision commissariat. It is impossible to lay down exact rules as to feeding. Experience is the safest guide.

Poultry, if penned up, with only an occasional run, live in complete dependance on the food given, which must always be regulated by circumstances. It must be borne in mind that high feeding is conducive to laying, and the eggs will always pay for the grain consumed, if the *yearly* average price is considered.

I have thus attempted to show that it is possible to keep poultry, even as an amusement, without loss. It pays best either on a very large or very small scale. In the latter case it must be viewed only as a "fancy." If the expense can be covered by the sale of extra stock, it is all that can be expected or desired. On a larger scale, the pursuit resolves itself into a system. The market must be studied for the purchase of grain, and for the sale of your produce. To show a good balance-sheet, your household must be supplied during the dearest as well as the cheapest seasons of the year. Your spring chickens must come from your own yards; your eggs, at two shillings a-dozen, from your own laying-houses. Thus you live in plenty—nay,

in extravagance, had you to purchase all you supply yourself with—and you enjoy the blessing of independence.

To the farmer (and I hope to number many among my readers), I would give the following advice. In spring, purchase a Brahma Pootra cock and four hens; set every egg. From these, keep all the pullets, and kill off the cockerels. In autumn, sell or exchange the adult Brahma cock for a large grey Dorking, and your yard will then be stocked for the season. If you can board out the Brahma cock, he will again be of use the following spring, with your adult Brahma hens; but, on no account, must he be allowed to remain in your own yard with the pullets. A cottager, for a remuneration, will gladly take charge of the pen, and rear as many chickens as is desired for carrying on the system. In this way, your original stock will supply your yard for several seasons. From thirty Brahma pullets, you will have above ten dozen eggs per week all winter; and the cross with the Dorking produces the finest possible chickens for market, but not to breed from. Pure Brahmas alone must be kept

for that purpose; I have always found the second cross *worthless*. As Brahmas do not so constantly show a desire to incubate, their period of laying being much more extended than that of Cochins, a few of these hens, (not the leggy, tucked-up looking things, so often called such, but short-legged, compact, well-feathered birds), may with advantage be kept, to act as mothers; they sit early, and are capital nurses. Farm yards are seldom stocked with profitable poultry; in them, too often, is the pernicious adherence to the system of breeding in and in seen, in its worst aspect; the result is *certain* degeneracy. Farmers look upon poultry as a trifling and unimportant item in the farm stock, only to be kept as layers of eggs during summer, and are quite satisfied if their chickens bring a fair market price. But why not rear fowls that will weigh eight instead of four pounds? and at the same cost of feeding. Surely, such weights will command higher prices than merely those of the market, which is often supplied with birds, scarcely worthy of the name of fowls. Creatures of every conceivable form and colour, with long

black legs, narrow breasts, and twisted breast-bones, certainly possessing a superabundance of tail, but that adornment goes for little in the cook's eye. These miserable results are by no means the consequence of want of food; a farm yard is the paradise of poultry, and nowhere can they live in greater comfort or plenty. It is just because the birds want frame, on which to put flesh and fat; bone is deficient; and all the lap's full of oats, barley, and wheat, which the farmer's wife may filch for them from the gudeman's barn, are wasted on a worthless crew. Let the farmer test the merits of my advice by his own practical experience, and I am not afraid of an adverse opinion. Poultry ought to pay him, if anybody; they have the advantage of the gleanings of the stack-yard, and at times are almost independent of any extra feeding. Should the farmer be an exhibitor, he must, of course, submit to some expense in carrying out his hobby. High feeding must then be *the rule*. Exhibition fowls require more than ordinary care and trouble. Money may have been invested in the purchase of prize pens, at enhanced prices, but

he may look for his return in the constant pleasure they afford him, and in being the envied winner of a "silver cup."

Hatching.

As "hatching" is often attended with great disappointments, my readers may like to know some of their causes, and the best means of guarding against them.

The weather is often unjustly blamed. It ought not to have the influence so many henwives ascribe to it. You can, and should, always defend your poor sitters from its attacks. If my plan of "sitting-house" is adopted, you can expell John Frost by means of the flue, and, by damping the eggs regularly, set at nought the sharp drying wind, however penetrating.

The mischances in hatching should really be few. If you set a hen under unnatural circumstances, you must make it up to her by extra kindness, and endeavour to render the cloister-

like life, she necessarily leads, as little irksome as possible.

The house and yard must be tenanted by *sitters* alone, and kept scrupulously clean, the dust-bath full, and a daily supply of garden produce, fresh water, and as much grain, and soft food, as the hen can eat, supplied during the half-hour allowed her for exercise.

The birds should be taken off their nests simultaneously, and put into the yard, the attendant, (meanwhile), examining the eggs to see if any are broken. If any such there be, they must be removed, and the remaining eggs, when soiled, wiped with a damp cloth. The eggs in each nest should then be sprinkled with water, either by the hand or with a small flat brush, which answers the purpose admirably, as it does not distribute the water too freely. The floor of the house must be swept every day, and, in warm weather, have a little flour of sulphur scattered over it.

Hens usually return, quietly, and of their own accord, to their nests. If refractory, however, they must be lifted on, the panels closed, and

the inmates left in peace, till the return of another day, calls for a similar routine of duty and pleasure. So on, until the 21st day, when the hen is released from her prison-house, and walks forth the proud and devoted mother of a brood of chickens.

The necessity of damping eggs was not at all understood by the old school, and yet it must be done, if success in hatching is desired. Many complaints are made of eggs not hatching though there have been birds in each. This is *entirely* caused by the neglect of this precaution. Unless moistened, the inner membrane of the egg becomes so hard and dry, that the poor little chick cannot break through, and so perishes miserably. Before dying, its cry, like that of Sterne's starling, probably has been "I can't get out, I can't get out." Has slavery a more bitter draught than this?

When a hen steals her nest in a hedge or clump of evergreens, she sits on the damp ground. She goes in search of food early in the day before the dew is off the grass, and returns to her nest with saturated feathers. To this fact

is to be attributed the comparatively successful hatching of the eggs of this wild bird. To follow this as closely as possible, put a thick fresh-cut turf in the nest you are about to prepare for the reception of the sitting hen. Sprinkle a little sulphur over this, and spread over it straw in summer, hay in winter. I shall suppose that you have eggs ready for setting. They should be thirteen in number, or at most fifteen, if set during warm weather. In winter nine eggs are sufficient for the very largest hen.

Before hazarding your (it may be) valuable eggs, be certain that the hen is *really broody*. You may give her one or two worthless eggs as a trial, or, if you are anxious not to lose time, divide your setting between two or more hens, and if one proves truant at the end of a few days, give all to another.

By setting several hens at the same time, you have the great advantage of being able to put *all* the chickens, as soon as they are hatched, under one, and of adding new comers to her flock. Eggs sometimes hatch irregularly, and unless some such system were established,



SILVER HAMBURGH.

Edinburgh: Thomas C. Jack.

the earliest hatched chickens would die of starvation before the whole were brought out.

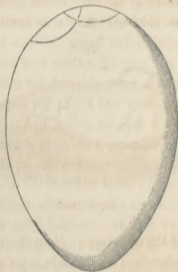
I strongly deprecate the custom of removing chickens from the nest, and keeping them in baskets, before the fire. There is no warmth so suited for them as that of the hen's body.

After removing the empty shells from the nest, leave the little creatures with their mother, undisturbed for twelve hours. When that time has elapsed, you may offer them food and water.

If the egg has been chipped for some hours, and the chick does not make its appearance, a slight assistance may be given, by enlarging the fracture with scissors, cutting up towards the large end of the egg, never down, or the loss of blood may prove fatal. When the chicken, at last, makes its way out, do not interfere with it, or attempt to feed it. Animal heat alone can restore it. If it survives the night, it may be considered safe. Weakness has caused the delay, and this has probably arisen from insufficient warmth. The hen may have had too many eggs to sit upon, or they may have been stale when set. If the chickens come out in the morning,

they may be taken from the nest in the evening, put on the ground, offered water, and a few crumbs of stale bread. Feed the hen well at the same time, and then restore them to their nest for the night. Next morning, remove them

Fig. 5.



Egg.

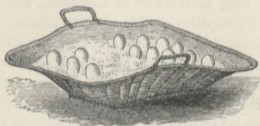
carefully to a coop which, in summer, is best placed on grass, in winter, on dry dusty soil.

In selecting eggs for setting, choose the fresh-

est, of moderate size, well-shaped, and having the air-vessel distinctly marked either in the centre of the top of the egg, or slightly to the side, as shown in the woodcut, (fig. 5.)

By holding the egg between the eye and a lighted taper, in a darkened room, this air-vessel will be distinctly visible. Some assert that the *sex* of the chickens can be ascertained by the

Fig. 6.



Eggs in Basket.

position of the air-vessel. If on the top, you will have a cockerel; if on the side, a pullet; but this is a mere fable, and I have proved it to be so.

Eggs intended to be set, should be carefully collected and handled, and, (to prevent them rolling about), placed, pointed end downwards,

in bran; the date and description having been marked in pencil on each. (See Fig. 6.)

One glance then suffices for selection, and the eggs are in nowise shaken. See that your hen be well fed, and has water, before putting her on the nest; if hungry, she will be restless.

If you get sitting hens from a distance, they should be carried in a basket, covered over with a cloth, never with the head downwards, as is too often seen, at the risk of suffocation, and the certain dissipation of their maternal dreams.

Brahmas and Cochins are excellent sitters, and have no objection to enter into your views of a fitting domicile for them, during their *retrâite*; but Dorkings occasionally rebel, and refuse to sit, unless in their own way. You must be very gentle with them, and try, by kindness, to induce them to take to the nest selected. You cannot allow one hen to sit where others can have access to her nest. If you really have no room for her elsewhere, put a wire coop over her in her usual house, with something hung round it, to keep her secluded from every eye. Want of accommodation may compel you to do this; but, if

possible, avoid it; a great objection being, that what is out of sight, is often out of mind, and the poor sitter may not be taken off her nest with the same regularity as the hens in the sitting-house.

If you have a large bevy of brooding hens, it is advisable to number each nest, and register it in your diary, along with the date of setting, and description of eggs. When hatched, the number of chickens should also be entered. Some hens are reluctant to give up sitting, and will hatch a second brood, with manifest pleasure, but it is cruel to overtax their strength and patience. More or less, they are sure to suffer. If *altogether* restrained from sitting, however, a hen suffers much in moulting, and is restless and excited for the rest of the season. Pullets are less to be trusted, as sitters, than more mature hens, and (being rather erratic in their dispositions) are not very careful mothers. But as artificial incubators are confined to Leicester Square, we are often glad to make use of the more *natural* ones, hoping that, should some prove faithless, others will be found to take their place.

The necessity of quiet, gentle handling, both of the hens and broods, must be urged upon the person in charge of the sitting-house. Be watchful, and ready to assist the well-meant efforts of the mother, whose instincts are not always sufficient for the performance of her duties in a civilized and highly artificial condition.

Chickens.

ON the day following that on which the chicken is emancipated from the shell, the proper food for the little stranger becomes a matter for consideration.

The most approved regimen, and the one I adopt, is grated bread, yolk of hard-boiled eggs, and oatmeal, made into a crumbly mass with water, for the first week; and afterwards, in addition, groats, hemp-seed, and any small grain.

Wheat-tailings are excellent food, more nutritious than any other. Feed often, giving little at a time, the first meal at daybreak, and every hour from that, till they are safely housed for the night. The water-vessels should be replenished at the same time. These should be shallow. A good plan is to invert a small flower-pot saucer

in a larger; this leaves a narrow circle of water, in which the chicken cannot become immersed. Onion tops and leeks chopped small, are much relished by all young stock, as also cress, lettuce, and cabbage.

If the weather is damp and cold, add a little pounded pimento to the food, give meat occasionally, fresh curd and hard-boiled eggs, yolk and white, mashed with shell, in the proportion of one egg to four chickens every day.

Spare not your food; the young chicken has everything to make, and the mother being necessarily much confined to her coop, it is entirely dependent on extraneous aid.

At times the hens may be allowed free range, but never in the early morning, or until the ground is thoroughly dry.

The coops should be changed to fresh ground every day, and from sunshine to shade, and from shade to sunshine, as required.

The young broods become objects of intense interest, and a great deal of time may be spent among them; they are creatures to love, and that love us.

How eager we are that they should all thrive! We examine their points anxiously, and can almost, in their early infancy, pronounce upon the future prize-winners. From that moment they are marked birds, and receive special attention. All the tidbits fall to their share, and if there is a better coop, or a choicer spot of ground than another, it is theirs.

I often wish poor children were fed, and their comforts as well attended to, as those of our embryo Birmingham and Crystal Palace competitors.

May should find us surrounded with well-grown chickens. It is the halcyon time of poultry. The weather is, or ought to be, warm, but whether or no, the chickens are growing apace, and for winter exhibition there is no doubt March and April birds are preferable to their earlier-hatched companions, which, however, you *must* have, for August showing, and early market.

Chickens suffer much from bad feathering, which may be caused by the coldness of the season, or delicacy of constitution. In either case, high feeding is the cure. Bread soaked in ale should

be daily given, with crushed bones and oyster shells.

Many writers add vermin as another chicken disease, but I cannot allow it in *my* category. It should be unknown in a well-appointed poultry yard.

A little sulphur dusted into the feathers of the hen mother occasionally, and daily access afforded to ashes and dry soil, will banish effectually all such intruders. Let the hen out, and she will perform her toilet scrupulously.

The chicken's progress (like that of the Pilgrim) is beset with many dangers and difficulties. Roup, gapes, leg weakness—all are Sloughs of Despond. It is *not* an easy matter to rear *many* chickens. Every poultry breeder can probably remember when he, or she, fancied it must be quite an A B C matter, because every cottager had one brood at least. Happy ignorance! The *one* brood was the secret: ours being legion, the ground has become tainted, the chickens overcrowded, and disease established.

The remedy for all this I touch upon elsewhere,

but must here impress the necessity of the flock being scattered.

Young stock cannot thrive if crowded. Think over the room you have for it, when the chickens approach adolescence. A good plan is to have a number of small houses erected in the woods and shrubberies, and in each of these establish a sufficient number of chickens, of one sex, old enough to forage for themselves.

These establishments being drafted off, your coops will be ready for a fresh supply of young broods, and so on all the year round; but in winter the coops must be under shelter, and covered up with matting at night-fall, the chickens getting their last meal by candle-light, about eight o'clock.

Pullets continue to grow until they begin to lay. I therefore advise their being kept by themselves, (if a great size is desired), till they are required to be matched in pens for exhibition.

Cockerels will not fight, if the female sex is absent, and unable to incite and witness their gallantry;—

“ Love of ladies, splintering of lances ;
Bright eyes behold your deeds.”

But as adolescence ceases with the year, (so the poultry parliament has enacted), they must then be separated from their brother knights, and disposed of as may be thought advisable.

As soon as the chickens are taken from their mothers, and established in their own colonies, their feeding should be the same as that of adult fowls, the plumage of which they ought to assume, at the age of six months.

Exhibition.

To obtain a correct estimate of the real value of your poultry, you must exhibit them from time to time, at good shows, where the leading breeders compete, and by prizes, (if you get any), and comparison, determine their true merit.

Comparisons may be odious, but they are quite indispensable. In no other way can this knowledge be attained. No one, who has not tried it, can imagine how poor may be the appearance of a home prodigy, when brought side by side with the produce of other yards. Alas! what we fondly thought a "swan," dwindles down to a very commonplace, under-sized "goose," by the fiat of the judge, while we, unwillingly, admit its justice.

The spirit of emulation, implanted for wise purposes in our nature, is afforded, in these exhi-

bitions, a field for action, and public advantage is the result.

If successful, you contribute fresh recruits to the army of poultry champions; if the reverse, you probably purchase a better strain of blood, and retire, for a time, into obscurity, with the somewhat equivocal consolation that

“ All partial evil ” is “ universal good,”

determining, that, on a future occasion, you will not play the philanthropist on such unsatisfactory terms.

Philanthropy is, doubtless, a good thing, but it is more self-pleasing, when practised through success, than defeat.

Yes, the cold shade of the show-room has dispelled many a bright aspiration.

“ So, when the beams of sober reason play,
Lo, fancy’s fairy frost-work melts away ! ”

Still, there is nothing like perseverance and patience.

For attaining victory, I venture to give the novice a few hints, the results of my own perils and struggles in the troubled waters of exhibi-

tion. The pilot who has "weathered the storm" can best conduct a stranger bark into its destined haven.

I will presume that the chickens have been selected from infancy for exhibition, fed accordingly, and marked. This is best done by sewing small stripes of different-coloured silks loosely round their legs, which you can verify by your poultry diary, in which *everything* of importance should be entered. I recommend the cockerels and pullets to be kept apart until a month before the show, during which time, they must receive extra feeding and care.

As I have already said, nothing is too good for exhibition birds. Give them daily exercise and a munificence of food.

Linseed is calculated to give lustre to the plumage, and toast, soaked in ale, sprightliness, courage, and strength.

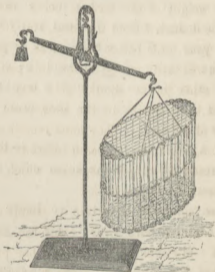
High feeding is unquestionably the grand secret of bringing chickens up to the great weights now required in first-prize poultry.

There should always be a few spare birds in reserve to fill up a pen in case of accidents, and

such often beat their selected companions, under high feeding, and eventually, take their places at the exhibition.

Feather and points being equal, *weight* must be the criterion. It is astonishing what the

Fig. 7.



Weighing Apparatus.

steelyard discloses. Birds, to all appearance the heaviest, are "found wanting when weighed in the balance."

No eye can be trusted to judge of weight. *Seeming* size is nothing—it may be all feather,—so the birds must go to scale, and the breeder will often be very much surprised at the result.

The fairest weighing apparatus is the one I commonly use, and delineate on page 56 (fig. 7.)

The weight of the basket, being ascertained, must be deducted from the total, and, if possible, weigh your birds before their meal, as geese and turkeys will easily put on $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., in a pen of three.

All other birds should give way to those selected to do battle, in the show-room, for the honour of the yard. They must receive exclusive attention, and their *supposed* inferiors bide their time, ready to supply vacancies, which they are too often called upon to do.

There is nothing so certain as disappointment; I, in common with every exhibitor, have met with it. My experience, however, has proved to me, that full confidence may be placed in the *general* justice of judges' decisions. They have an arduous and most invidious duty to perform,—arduous, because so extended—invidious, because suspicions are often alleged by the losing

parties. Such are, frequently, very virulent, and entertain a life-long grudge; and may even say to him in his last moments, (with Richard's ghostly visitors), "Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow;" you passed me by at Birmingham!

I believe poultry judges act honourably and scientifically. I unhesitatingly leave my poultry to their verdict, and do not complain (if I think they have fulfilled their duty in accordance with such principles), though not awarded first or second honours. Theirs is a position I do not envy: all thanks to those who, so kindly, fill it. There being, however, no rule without an exception, I must confess to more than one altercation with some who, I thought, had not studied the points of exhibition fowls, as distinctly laid down. I particularly allude to the decision of the ruling judge, English, at a recent show in the west of Scotland, (where there were separate classes for Grey and Silver-grey Dorkings, as at Birmingham, Liverpool, and other leading shows), founded on the notion that the classes were *synonymous*, or (as he expressed it), "a distinction without a difference." I can imagine one diffident in *ex-*

pressing an opinion, though competent to form one; but no such scruple troubled this worthy—

“Thus fools rush in where angels fear to tread.”

Let not the novice think his, or her, pen a *certain* “*first*.” There is much to be encountered; size, colour, comb, tail, feet, hackles, *all* must be perfect; and, in addition, a good constitution be apparent.

Be careful *how* you enter your stock for exhibition. Describe the ages and varieties exactly, and see, yourself, that the labels are securely fastened to their respective hampers. Mistakes constantly occur in this: be equally watchful that the right birds are put in their right places. I have seen grey geese placed in the hamper intended for white, which most provoking occurrence cast the pen. Many such incidents take place at every show.

On the day previous to exhibition, remove all private marks, and wash the feet and bodies of white fowls. This is best done with tepid water, and white soap, rubbed on flannel, care being taken to wash the feathers downwards, so as not to break or ruffle them. The fowls should be gently

dried with soft towels, shut up in their houses with an abundance of clean straw, and there fed on soft food alone. Hard grain is apt to cause fever and inflammation while travelling, and in the exhibition pen; its use is now discontinued at all well-conducted shows.

When the birds return home, they should be fed sparingly on bread, soaked in warm ale,—liquid is most hurtful, if given in quantity; administer also a teaspoonful of castor-oil to each. On the following day, allow soft food only and water,—after this they may resume their usual feeding.

Hampers should always be circular in form, as fowls invariably creep into corners and destroy their plumage. They must be sufficiently high to admit of the birds standing upright, and supplied with a good bed of hay to keep them warm. I consider a lining imperative: coarse pink calico, stitched round the inside of the basket-work, is what I use as the most useful and ornamental material.

After each trip these linings are taken out, washed, and laid aside for future occasions.

Sometimes padlocks are made available to fasten the lids of the hampers, but two pairs of

strings, one on each side (of rope), answer the purpose as well; they are easily untied, and, being fixtures on the hamper, are always ready for use.

Some prefer canvass tops, to wicker ones, thinking they save the fowls injuring their combs. I use the latter, as being more secure, and admitting of one hamper being placed over the other.

Geese and ducks require no lining to their hampers, unless in severe weather, during which their comfort is much increased by layers of pulled straw, stitched round the inside of their baskets. Guard against geese having a chance of reaching the direction label; they invariably eat it, and are so mischievously inclined, that they will even nibble off the rope fastenings, if they can get at them.

Turkeys suffer in *appearance* from cold or wet; therefore, though hardy birds, they, for our own sake, demand a lined hamper.

Never put strange birds together; they fight with, and disfigure each other. They should be on friendly terms for some time previous to exhibition.

Unless this is attended to, your hamper will be the arena of a savage combat; even *hens* evince such jealous feelings towards a new-comer, that,

if the cock does not interfere and keep down the *emeute*, his seraglio suffers.

When the exhibition season closes, choose a fine day to have your hampers washed, dried, and put away. They should never be used but for exhibition birds; disease is often spread by sick birds being put for a few days into comfortable quarters (such as they afford), and the result is, the *certain* illness of the next occupants.

Dear reader, the day, the eventful day, arrives when your chosen champions must depart for the battle-field, and quit their comfortable home.

Poor things! most of you have known no other, and all may not return to it. Farewell, my gallant cockerels! Farewell, my dainty pullets! "Farewell," — perchance—"a long farewell, to all my"—beauties.

Should your experience prove like mine, the scene will be something in this wise.

Through the morning mist the active henwives may be discerned flitting too and fro like mad women. But there is "method in their madness." They are giving the last meal to their charges, and placing each carefully labelled hamper in its appointed place.

As noon approaches, all hands muster, for all dearly love the poultry.

The cart arrives; the horse stands quietly, with nose in bag, eating his corn. Anticipated triumph, or timid doubt, is in every face: not one is listless. How busy they are! No castle of indolence here. Hamper after hamper is brought, with its living freight, and carefully secured. The pile rises like a pyramid: at length the last crowns the tier, magnificent in its gay lining, and graceful in its limber wicker work. The cordial glass goes round, to drink them luck, and they move slowly away to the station, where a covered van awaits them.

As the cart recedes through the apple-trees in the orchard, one and all follow it with wistful gaze; when it finally disappears behind the intervening hedge-row, each gives an anxious look on his neighbour, and they disperse to their suspended occupations.

Great anxiety prevails to hear the sentence of the judge. This is known before the fowls return, when *all* are kindly cared for, but the prize-winners are handled with an almost pious reverence.



To serve as a guide to the uninitiated in the mysteries of poultry points, and their technical terms, I give a diagram of a fowl, with a lettered reference.

A.....	Neck hackle.
B.....	Saddle hackle.
C.....	Tail.
D.....	Breast.
E.....	Upper wing coverts.
F.....	Lower wing coverts.
G.....	Primary quills.
H.....	Thighs.
I.....	Legs.
K.....	Comb.
L.....	Wattles.
M.....	Ear-lobe.



Diseases.

WHATEVER tends to alleviate the sufferings of domestic animals, kept for our own gratification, it is our duty to study, for we must not allow them to pine and die unaided.

We ought to know all that is worth knowing, and make ourselves eligible for the degree of M.D. (Poultry), equal to all emergencies of hen sickness.

Take their diseases in time ; your own prompt attention to their wants may ward off a serious malady, too often resulting in death ; procrastination is as pernicious in poultry keeping as in anything else.

There should be attached to every poultry establishment, a hospital, viz., a warm, well-lighted house, littered down with straw, to which

the fowl can be removed, on the first symptom of illness.

Sickly fowls are generally ill-used by their companions, pecked at, and evidently objects of dislike; therefore a sanatorium is indispensable.

Poultry are subject to many diseases; the old (alderman-like) suffer from gout, and moulting, with them, is often so severe and protracted that it carries them off.

The young are victims of roup, gapes, leg weakness, and bad feathering. Roup is highly infectious, and a very deadly disease, but if taken in time, can be cured. The premonitory symptoms are a slight hoarseness and catching in the breath, as if from cold. Do not neglect this, but at once remove the sufferer to the hospital, and give a tablespoonful of castor oil.

A few hours after, administer one of Baily's "roup and condition pills," and take the scale off the tongue, which can easily be done by holding the bill open with the left hand, and removing the excrescence with the thumb-nail of the right.

Repeat the dose of physic every morning for a

week, and give soft food only, mixed with ale and chopped green vegetables.

If the disease has made much progress before discovery, and rattling in the throat (with discharge from the eyes and nostrils) has commenced, you must use stronger remedies.

In addition to the castor oil, which should always be given before other medicine, and is perfectly safe, the following recipe by an amateur will be found beneficial:—

“Take of dried sulphate of iron, in powder, half a drachm; capsicum, in powder, one drachm; extract of liquorice, a sufficient quantity, to make a mass which is to be divided into 30 pills. One to be given three times a-day, continued to the end of the third, and then followed by the second prescription:” which is “Half an ounce of sulphate of iron, and one ounce of cayenne pepper in fine powder. Mix carefully a teaspoonful of these powders with butter, and divide into ten equal parts, one to be given twice a-day.”

Each morning and evening, until the complete restoration of the patient to health, wash the eyes, and inside of the mouth and nostrils with vinegar.

This is very cleansing, and a few drops internally are useful in removing the mucus which collects in the throat.

The disease runs its course rapidly. If your bird is not better in a week, it will be dead. Whole yards are often *depopulated* by the ravages of this scourge; single cases occur which are overlooked, and then the disease becomes universal.

Some think roup merely a neglected cold; but my opinion is, that it attacks the birds at once, and is *contagious*.

The bill of the first sufferer has perhaps contaminated the water dish, and such is the virulence of the malady, that it quickly spreads through the whole stock, and is indeed the Poultry plague.

Even when the fowl appears to have recovered, it must undergo a long and strict quarantine before it is restored to the bosom of its family.

I do not advise all this care to be bestowed on any but valuable fowls; if the more worthless are attacked, the sooner they are put out of pain, and hidden from sight, the better, so wretched an appearance does a sickly fowl present.

Gapes, or inflammation of the trachea, is a dis-

ease peculiar to chickenhood, and is occasioned by small worms imbedded in the throat.

They can be removed by introducing a feather, stripped to within an inch of the point, into the windpipe; if turned round quickly, the parasites will be drawn up with it.

I must say, however, that I have *never* had occasion to use this remedy; my chickens seldom gape. Once or twice I have noticed them do so, and immediately gave them a little castor oil; if the poor little atoms seemed weak, a drop or two of spirit of camphor on bread, and fed them by hand until they recovered their usual appetite.

A constant supply of fresh water, and perfect cleanliness, ensure good health: prevention is better than cure.

Sometimes fowls become crop-bound, when (to save the bird) you must make a small incision, remove the mass of undigested food, and sew up the wound with fine silk thread. Give a tablespoonful of castor oil, separate the invalid from its companions until the wound is perfectly healed, and during this time feed entirely with soft food.

Hens occasionally drop their eggs on the ground, repudiating nests altogether, without the slightest regard to *les convenances*. This must be treated medically, and the hen shown the impropriety of deviating from the usages of society; it may happen that they lay soft eggs, and this also demands treatment. A dose of oil, in both cases, should be administered, and a change of diet enforced; the hen is too fat, and must be brought down in condition. Moulting, though a natural process, at times assumes the form of disease. The birds look out of health, and suffer, even to death, unless nourishing food is freely given; if the weather is severe, many old fowls die. It is advisable to keep them warm, and feed well on hemp-seed, bread and ale, buck-wheat *à discretion*, and animal food.

Loss of feather (or mange) must not be confounded with moulting; it is a sign of debility and pining. Fresh air, good feeding, and free range are the best cures; in *country* poultry establishments mange should be almost unknown.

Fowls, if too closely housed or restricted in

green food and lime, sometimes attack each other's feathers under the influence of a morbid appetite and effectually destroy the plumage till next moult. The remedy I have found best, is a reformation in the economy of their diet, removal of the pecked bird to private lodgings, and the wounded parts rubbed over with sulphur ointment.

Diarrhoea is caused by the too abundant use of relaxing food: boiled rice, with a little chalk and cayenne pepper mixed, will check the complaint.

To all my fowls and chickens I give, from time to time, jalap in their food, in the proportion of a teaspoonful to 20 birds. It sets them up wonderfully, and keeps them in health. I also give a restorative, recommended by Mr Douglas. He is a well-known and successful breeder, and I consider his advice very valuable indeed. He has kindly allowed me to publish it:—

“BITTER REMEDY.

“Half a pound of sulphate of iron, one ounce of diluted sulphuric acid, dissolved together; add two gallons of water, allowed to stand fourteen days.

“Dose for chickens:—One teaspoonful to a pint of water, twice or thrice a-week. Good also for old birds in moult.”

"WOLSELEY AVIARIES.

"RESTORATIVE TO PREVENT ROUP AND GAPES
IN CHICKENS AND OLD FOWLS.

"One pound of sulphate of iron, one ounce of sulphuric acid, dissolved in a jug with hot water, then let it stand twenty-four hours, and add one gallon of spring water; when fit for use, one teaspoonful of the restorative to a pint of water, given every other day to chickens, and once a-week to old fowls, will make roup and gapes entirely a stranger to your yards."

"PILLS TO CURE ROUP IN POULTRY AND PHEASANTS.

"One grain of calomel, one grain of antimony, made into a pill; one to be given every evening; fowls kept dry, and fed on soft food; when getting better, add a teaspoonful of the restorative to the water every day until they have quite recovered, which will be in about a week."

I hope none of my readers will be so unlucky as to have a fowl poisoned, but if so, I give Mr Douglas's method of cure:—

"HOW TO TREAT A POISONED FOWL.

"There must be no delay. Give two or three spoonfuls of castor oil, according to the size of the bird.

"In half-an-hour administer a strong infusion of coffee—with a little sugar, but no milk.

"The strength is one ounce of coffee to a wine glass

of water, given warm, but not too hot, and the bird must be sheltered from cold.

“After six hours give one more dose, and the recovery will be found perfect.

“JOHN DOUGLAS.”

“WOLSELEY AVIARIES.”

Leg weakness is generally caused by the size and weight of the body being more than the legs can bear; it is shown by the bird resting on the first joint. Being entirely the result of weakness, the best treatment is that which gives general strength and stamina to the sufferer.

Citrate of iron must be given dissolved in ale, and added to the food, which may be more than usually nourishing, but not in greater quantity, as over-feeding has occasioned the disease.

Frequent bathing in cold water is very beneficial. This is best effected by tying a towel round the fowl, and suspending it over a pail of water, with the legs only immersed, so as not to injure the plumage.

Absence of lime in the poultry yard sometimes causes leg weakness, and old age invariably shows

itself in the "trembling limb." Warmth and generous diet are the sole remedies for this.

Fowls are apt to be afflicted with (dare I mention it?) corns. These are caused by injury to the foot in descending from high perches. Removal to a grass run is the best treatment. The calosity must first be carefully pared.

Apoplexy is the result of high feeding; the comb becomes black, and the bird falls down in a state of stupor. Bleeding from the foot sometimes effects a cure, with the aid of medicine, and a continuation of low diet.

It is well to know that fowls are no homœopaths, and can hardly be overdosed by simple physic. However, a smaller quantity has the same effect as a larger.

Fattening.

I HOLD all artificial fattening and cramming of fowls to be an *utter abomination*, unless at the hands of the regular poultry salesman, who buys up country birds, and treats them on a system; it is only supposed necessary by persons *grossly ignorant*.

In an amateur establishment, poultry should always be fat, and fit for table, the difficulty being to prevent them becoming too much so.

The Brahma, crossed with the Dorking, makes certainly the earliest and finest spring chickens: the white leg and full straight breast will generally appear.

The Sussex breed is large, and a cross between it and the Dorking will give increased bone to the progeny; but the chickens are not so early as

those of the above-named cross, and I do not think the shape or flesh improved by it.

Summer and autumn chickens are plentiful enough, and in these seasons the pure Dorking is to be preferred; but January Dorkings are scarce, and generally destined for early exhibition, so we gladly put up with a less delicate, but larger, style of chicken for table use.

The Crêve Cœur attains a remarkable weight, and is the Châpon and Poularde of the Continent, but is late. The Scotch Grey or Chick Merlin (the old name of this breed), also supplies a really good and desirable table fowl.

Turkeys, geese, and ducks should always be in good flesh and condition. My own *are so*, invariably, and I should be very sorry to condemn any of my stock to the miserable confinement of a fattening coop, with its too common discomforts—want of air and cleanliness.

Aquatic birds fatten better when limited to a trough, in lieu of a running stream, and this seems no deprivation to them; they take their bath daily, and it seems all they require, if we may judge by their plumpness and good spirits.

The little black East Indian duck is a most delicious bird, when fed upon barley meal and celery, indeed almost equal to the famed Canvasback of America; this mode of treatment first suggested itself to me from a knowledge of the habits and food of that bird, which latter consist of the sea-celery (*valisneria*), found in the mouth of the Delaware; they obtain it by diving to a great depth, beyond the powers of any other species of duck.

I have always found that fowls can be induced to feed as you wish them. Science and observation should guide that; Nature, their habits.

I conclude this short chapter with some remarks kindly afforded me by Mr Muirhead, Queen Street, Edinburgh, Poulterer to Her Majesty in Scotland:—

“Capons are of very ancient origin, and are mentioned by authors of the middle ages as having been in use among the Greeks and Romans, and only seen among nations in the highest state of civilization.

“The flesh of these birds is very delicate, they attain great weights, and command high prices,

and a great advantage is, that they never quarrel with each other, nor interfere with the breeding hens.

“They can mix with these with impunity, and are available in winter and spring of the following year, when cockerels have become too old and coarse for the epicure’s table.

“Practical instructions as to the process of caponizing can always be obtained from our establishment, but cannot be given in this work.

“With regard to *cramming*, I may say that it is *wholly* unnecessary, provided the fowls have abundance of the best food at regular intervals, fresh air, and a free run; in confinement fowls may gain fat, but they lose flesh.

“None but those who have had experience can form any idea how *both* qualities can be obtained in a natural way.

“I have seen fowls reared at Inchmartine (which had never been shut up, or had food forced upon them), equal if not superior, to the finest Surrey fowl, or those fattened by myself for the Royal table.

“C. MUIRHEAD.”

Breeds.

THERE is so much beauty in all the different breeds of fowls, each possessing so many good qualities, that it is quite impossible to state a preference for any one in particular.

Perhaps *my* individual favourites may be surmised from a perusal of these pages, though *intended* to be impartial.

Every breeder has his, or her, own fancy, doubtless much influenced by the climate of the locality, and facilities for rearing different varieties.

I pretend not to *universal* poultry knowledge. When I had not an intimate acquaintance with any breed, I begged the assistance of those well qualified to give the desired information, and this request has been cordially met.

Dorking.

This breed has now attained a size quite marvellous, and in point of rich colouring, is unrivalled; it is a truly English bird, and follows up its resemblance to the character of a Briton in its love of liberty.

The old coarse breed is now unseen in the exhibition room, and is indeed nearly extinct even in market, being replaced by more refined but equally heavy birds.

Delicate white flesh (that *sine quâ non*), symmetrical shape, and equal distribution of fat, mark the Dorking, as it at present exists, to be the bird, *par excellence*, of our table poultry.

There are several varieties, but only two distinct classes—the white and the coloured.

All Dorkings are delicate until full-feathered, when I consider them as hardy as any other kind of fowl.

The chickens must be kept on hard clay or gravel soil, *never* on wooden, stone, or brick floors; their coops, in winter, may be boarded, but the tenants must have earth to run upon during the day, or they will become cramped.

Over-crowding these chickens is the most prolific source of disease; irregular feeding, and exposure to damp and cold, increase the mortality; there is no such thing as *luck* in rearing broods; too often, want of care and knowledge occasion failures.

Dorkings are, perhaps, more liable to *roup* than other fowls. It attacks them when three-parts grown; they also sometimes suffer from slight attacks of cold, and hoarseness.

Their food should be mixed with ale or beer, and a small quantity of cayenne pepper.

To intending exhibitors, I may now mention a few of the points essential to success in *Grey Dorkings*.

COCK.

Neck hackle—full, light straw colour, or silvery grey.

Saddle hackle—same, and abundant.

Primary quills—black or grizzled.

Secondary quills—light grey.

Upper wing coverts—light grey.

Lower wing coverts—slightly darker.

Breast—black, or speckled with white.

Tail—black, large, and sweeping; a white feather will not cast an otherwise perfect bird. Side tail feathers abundant and long. (This adds much to his beauty).

Thighs—straight, strong, and black, or spotted.

Legs and feet—white, and free from feathers.

Toes—five in number, and quite distinct, the fifth pointing upwards, and not a mere branch of the fourth.

Comb—straight and single, though a rose comb does not disqualify.

Wattles—red, long, and pendulous, but firm.

Ear-lobe—red.

HEN.

Neck hackle—light grey, or darker.

Back—dark ash, or grizzled grey.

Primary quills—black, or a mixture of black and brown.

Secondary quills—dark brown, spotted.

Upper wing coverts—grey.

Lower wing coverts—grey, and as distinct as possible.

Breast—ruddy, or grey, if the cock has a spotted breast.

Tail—dark, inclining to grey.

Thighs—mixture of brown and grey.

Legs and feet—white.

Comb—falling over on either side.

Wattles—red and firm.

Ear-lobes—red.

Silver-Grey Dorking.

The following points are kindly supplied by an eminent English judge:—

“To the best of my recollection the rule laid down for judging Silver-grey Dorkings at Liverpool, where they were first admitted as a class, was as follows—

COCK.

Breast and tail—pure black, not the slightest stain of white allowed.

Hackle and saddle—pure silver, without one spot of straw, red, or black.

HEN.

Breast—bright robin colour.

Body—light grey, the shaft of each feather white.

Hackle—pure silver. Any tendency to red in the plumage of the wing is a *great* defect.

This variety is best known as Lord Hill's breed, and has now obtained a class at most of the principal shows.

In point of weight it cannot compete on equal terms with the Grey Dorking, but for colour and shape stands unrivalled."

White Dorking.

The following opinion, from an extensive and successful breeder, may be relied on as perfectly correct, and affording a true guide to the amateur of these lovely birds:—

“I find the White Dorkings hardy, quite as prolific as the coloured; they lay well, and are excellent sitters and mothers.

“Their qualities as table fowls are too well known to require any notice from me. They are always in request by dealers for that purpose. I consider their exhibition points to be as follows:—

Plumage—pure white in both cock and hen.

Comb—double rose, bright scarlet, set straight on the head, pointed at the back, well serrated, and firm.

Toes—the fifth well defined.

Bill and legs—perfectly white.

Cock—tail, large, with full sweep.

Ear-lobe—white.

Neck and saddle hackles—white, free from all yellow tinge, too frequently seen in these birds, and always a blemish.”—T. D. FINDLAY.

There are other varieties of Dorkings, such as the Blue or Cuckoo, the Speckled, &c., but it is unnecessary to give their points, as they are not in request, and little known.

Cochin.

All persons conversant with poultry matters are aware that this gigantic fowl was originally imported from China, and has added considerably to our stock of valuable birds.

Cochins lay regularly, and if not too highly fed, are productive of very fine chickens, which I consider excellent for the table, if killed *young*; more than that, I cannot say.

The hens are most exemplary in their maternal duties, and, from their abundance of soft and downy feather, are peculiarly adapted for the purpose of hatching. This seems their vocation, which they accept with the most serene patience three or four times a-year. They *enjoy* the honours of maternity; their love of this task seems their idiosyncrasy. For them a mother's life is "blessed with those sweet cares, all other joys so far above," and they are often tempted to leave their chickens at too early an age to resume them, which is a great disadvantage in cold weather.

I have found that, if cooped up, the chickens having egress between the wires, the hens will both lay and tend them; and as they are chiefly dependent on her protection during the night, this is a more natural, and therefore preferable plan, to putting the little things by themselves, (even with the protection of a glass house), until turned out into free ranges.

This variety is very hardy, and may be kept in a smaller space than almost any other; *cockerels*, however, must have ample range, if intended to become superior specimens. It is remarkably free from liability to any disease, if well provided with green food; this is indispensable.

I consider the Cochin a most beautiful bird, and capable of comparison with the most graceful and high-coloured of our poultry; its exquisite feathering, and lovely tints, from the palest buff to deep orange, make this bird peculiarly the lady's own.

All must appreciate its massive build, small head, rich, full hackle, and majestic carriage; true types of the high-caste Cochin.

It, perhaps, has a larger appetite than most fowls, and a good hearty meal must be given; but we are repaid in eggs and early chickens. These are the principal uses for which we should keep it.

The male bird possesses a quiet and easy temper, and is peculiarly gifted with the art of calming any violent spirit his hens may display.

Lords of the creation! what an example do they set you of patience under much provocation!

To be *perfectly truthful*, a cross with the Cochin deteriorates from the beauty of *all* other varieties, and adds nothing to the value of chickens so obtained.

As an example of this, see the gaunt, long-legged, ill-conditioned birds so often the result of a Cochin cock having been introduced into a poultry yard to *improve* the breed!

Since writing the above, I have been gratified by receiving a perfect corroboration of my opinions, both as to this breed and the general treatment of stock, from Mr Stretch, the eminent Cochin fancier.

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BUFF COCHON

Edinburgh Thomas C. Jack

His communication is of much value; I therefore give it verbatim:—

“ I have often been asked what aged birds are the best to breed from. My experience would lead me to say, health is of more consequence than age; but I by no means despise birds of the previous year. The chickens from pullets' eggs are generally smaller than those from the eggs of old hens, when first out of the shell; but after the second month, they grow much faster, and generally show more constitution. Avoid birds with glaring defects, as they are more surely reproduced than good points. Moderate-sized birds, however, of good shape, often produce as fine chickens as the larger-sized birds.

“ This breed has a great disposition to accumulate abdominal fat, and consequently their food should not be of too nourishing a quality. Those who give Indian meal or corn (which contain about 8 per cent. of oily matter), have frequent cases of apoplexy amongst their poultry. Boiled potatoes, mixed with a little barley meal or middlings, should form at least a portion of their daily food. There is another reason why Cochins

should not be kept in too high condition: the eggs of such seldom produce chickens, and in a short time barrenness ensues.

“With respect to setting, the place chosen should be perfectly free from draughts, and if not on the ground, some sifted coal ashes should be placed under the straw. A little flour of sulphur dusted under the hen’s feathers will prevent the accumulation of vermin, thus freeing her from one of the greatest annoyances to which sitting hens are liable.

“Although a Cochin hen can cover a large number of eggs, I believe more strong chickens can be reared from seven eggs than from an increased quantity; and I am sure that this number of chickens is quite as many as the hen can keep sufficiently warm and find food for, to ensure a rapid growth. For the first week, bread crumbs and hard-boiled eggs, chopped small, should form their food; afterwards groats; and, as they increase in size, wheat and slacked oatmeal will be found a valuable addition. Green food and clean water are essential to health.

“At three months old the sexes should be separated. The cockerels, to grow fast, should at *least* have soft food twice, and grain once a-day. The pullets should have a more sparing diet, as, if forced into laying at five or six months old, their growth is stopped; their eggs are small, and they lay only a few at a time. If allowed time to develope their full form, they not only make much larger birds, but frequently lay thirty or forty eggs before showing any disposition to sit. This frequent desire to sit is a great annoyance to some parties, and the cause of their services often being dispensed with altogether. It is, however, easily cured, not by the cruel method of ducking the hen in water, but by placing her in a pen where there is no nest, and feeding her well. The fever will generally leave her in about five days, and she will soon recommence laying.

“The points aimed at by amateurs who desire success at the numerous exhibitions of poultry throughout the country, are as follows, viz., perfectly straight fine combs, the serrations well-defined; the body well let down between the legs,

the shanks of which should be of a yellow colour, short, and well feathered to the end of the toes. Only about an inch of the thighs should be visible above the hocks, and the upper part well surrounded with fluffy feathers. Great breadth of body, and large size, indispensable. The cocks vary in colour, from a dark red to a lemon colour. The clearer they are in colour the better, but a good bird in other respects is not to be despised for a little mealiness in the wing coverts. Neck and saddle hackle should be of a bright golden colour, and copper-coloured tails are preferred to black. The latter should be small and compact, rising gracefully from the body. The hens vary in colour, from a dark yellow to a pale buff. The lighter-coloured hens show to most advantage in an exhibition pen, and are generally preferred. Golden neck hackle, and clear if possible, but a slight necklace is by no means fatal. The carriage should be rather drooping forward, rising from the back to the extremity of the tail, of which only about an inch should be visible beyond the surrounding fluff."

White Cochin.

This delicately-beautiful variety demands the same requisites in size and shape as the coloured, the plumage alone excepted.

This must be of a brilliant white, without the slightest admixture of yellow.

The contrast of the deep scarlet comb, wattles, pale yellow bill, legs, and snowy plumage, make this bird the champion of its class, if seen under a pure sky, and on a clean grass run.

It is *quite a mistake* to suppose the white less robust than the coloured Cochin.

They are vigorous and hardy, good layers, sitters, and mothers.

Partridge, &c.

The Partridge, the Black, and other varieties, are almost identical with the Buffs in general characteristics.

The plumage, of course, differs. In the Par-

tridge the hackles should be reddish-yellow, free from dark stains; tail, and breast, black.

The hens have dark pencillings on the hackles, and are generally richly coloured.

The legs are rather of a deeper tint in the Yellow, than in the Buff variety, especially in the cocks.

A "white feather" in any of these is as fatal to the Cochin, as it is to those that show it, in another school. The *Black* variety is seldom "as black as it is painted."

The cocks too often show the yellow hackle, but *good* Blacks are decidedly scarce, in spite of Mrs Beecher Stowe.

There are Cuckoo and Silky Cochins, but of these the "Hen-wife" knows little, and therefore must be held excused in not entering into their merits, the more, as she thinks them only a particular fancy, and not likely to further the interests of poultry.

Spanish.

The Spanish fowl is much admired, and deservedly so, combining, as it does, so much that is beautiful, dignified, and useful.

The hens, though only of a fair average size, lay immense eggs, and are also more precocious, in this respect, than any other breed except the Brahma.

They seldom condescend to sit, and are not to be desired as mothers, being careless, and flighty.

Their eggs should be set under Dorking hens, because these go with their chicks longer than any others.

Spanish do not feather till almost three-parts grown, and therefore require a steady, domestic mother, who will remain with them till that critical period is safely past.

Though, apparently, spirited, the cock is not

game to the back-bone. He is, fortunately, easily cowed.

“ He that fights and runs away
May live to fight another day.”

He makes the best of unfortunate circumstances, and calmly acquiesces in his fate, saying with his native lord, the majestic and philosophic Don, “ My son, if thou seest thy house on fire, approach, and warm thy hands at it.”

The following remarks will be appreciated by amateurs of this widely spread, and popular variety, kindly given to me by a well-known amateur:—

“ Let the bird have—1st, a *pure white* face, deep in the lobes, and of good space above the eye, and neither too fat above nor below it, yet not so skinny-faced as to lose that angular oblong shape which imparts such reverence to the fowl in question; 2nd, erectness, or all but erectness, in comb; 3rd, length in body, and of leg; 4th, long clean neck; 5th, upright carriage; 6th, plumage metallic green; and, 7th, good size— I have stated the points in the order of their





SPANISH.

Edinburgh: Thomas C. Jack.

value. Nothing can compensate for the want of the first point, and the same may now be said of the second. Of course, if he be a pretty early chicken of 1860, he will show much better at this season than an adult bird.—JOHN RIDPATH.”

“P.S.—Unless a bird answer very nearly to all these marks, he has very little chance of gaining honours in a good show. Few have more than one such young bird.—J. R.”

Mr Muirhead has kindly given the following remarks:—

“As the name implies, this breed has originally been imported from Spain. The best-known variety is called White-faced, from that characteristic feature by which they are distinguished; so to it we will give precedence.

“1st Variety.—*White-Faced Black.*”

COCKS.

Bill—strong, slightly curved and dark-coloured.

Eye—large, dark, and flashing, surrounded with a *naked white skin*,* extending from the base of the comb round the ears and cheeks, meeting like a cravat under the throat, and terminating in the *earlobes*, which are exceedingly long and pendulous. If this white face is very large and well developed, it proves high breeding. The texture of the skin cannot be too fine and smooth, and if it is blushed or spotted with red, it is considered faulty.

Comb—single and large, beginning over the nostril, and extending backwards, should stand very erect, be regularly serrated, fine in the grain, and of a rich vermilion colour.

Wattles—very large, hanging a good way down the neck, which is longer in this than in other breeds.

The *body* should be as deep as possible, the shanks and legs being naturally long, and depth

* It is the practice of exhibitors of Spanish to shave the down of the edges of the white face, thus to enlarge it and make it smooth. It is a disgraceful practice, and not allowed at Birmingham Show.

in body from the back to the breast-bone gives a better proportion to the shape, which would otherwise look scraggy.

The *legs* are clean and of dark blue colour.

Plumage—a brilliant jet black, hackles and saddle feathers long.

Tail—full, rising perpendicularly from the back, and the numerous sickle feathers falling very gracefully.

Carriage—bold and majestic; this is of great importance in rendering these fowls handsome and attractive.

HENS.

“White face not nearly so large as that of the cock. *Comb* large, and hanging over one side; it lessens very much during the moulting or *non-laying* season, and is much affected by cold. Plumage perfectly black. This breed is celebrated for being egg-producers, a property which renders them very valuable. They surpass all other breeds in the size of their eggs, and they lay very constantly, being non-sitters. They are, however, very unfit for table purposes, as they

carry very little flesh, and consume a great deal of food without ever getting fat. The chickens are very delicate to rear, and have a mixed white and black down when hatched; they are long of fledging, and of showing their good points.

“2nd Variety.—White-Faced White.

“This variety is seldom met with. Good specimens would certainly be valued if only for their rarity. Description, same as first variety, except the *white plumage*.

“3rd Variety.—Andalusian.

“Fowls of a bluish-grey colour mixed with black, having white faces; also, white fowls with red faces, have been shown under this name; so called from having been imported from the Spanish province of Andalusia. Unless this variety is found to possess superior properties to the White-faced Black, as it has not such distinctive points, it is doubtful if the fine name will bring it into repute.

“4th Variety.—Minorca.

“So called from having been brought from that island. This variety is also sometimes called Andalusian, as no doubt fowls of this description may be found there also. Comb and wattles similar to the first variety, but instead of a *white*, a *red* skin extends from the throat to the earlobes, which are of *moderate* size, and red, though, from mixture with the White-faced variety, the earlobes are very often found white. Body rounder, shanks and legs shorter than in the first variety. These fowls are hardy, and will thrive in a confined place, whereas the White-faced require a good run on a dry soil. Spanish fowls have been recommended for keeping in towns, as the smoke and dirt do not affect their plumage. The Minorca, or fourth variety, is best adapted for that purpose, and they possess capital laying properties.”



Hamburghs.

This breed is of elegant form, and graceful in its movements. It may be called "everlasting layer," because, until in moult, the hen lays almost every day. They seldom show a desire to sit; it is the exception, and only indulged in (I have found) when the birds had a free woodland range, thereby clearly demonstrating the fact, that domestication has impaired their sitting powers. Originally, of course, they must have hatched their eggs like other fowls. I have found both the Pencilled and Spangled varieties good mothers. If not interfered with, like the pheasant, in a fine season, she will rear all her brood, but, like her, is quite dependent on weather. If confined to a yard, I have never found the Hamburghs sit; and their range, even if free, must be *wild*, to induce a desire to perpetuate her species. They are truly lovely and perfect miniatures; and, if size of egg is not a desideratum, this breed

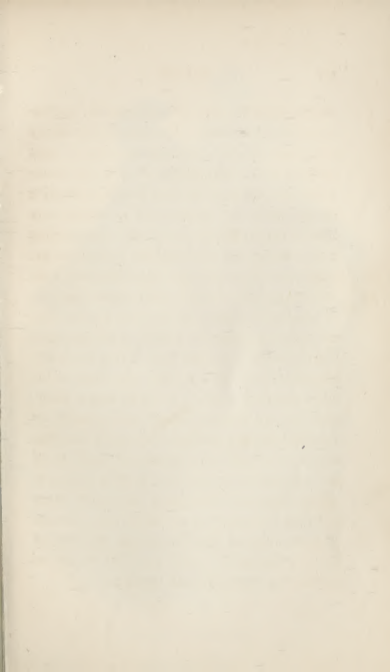
will suit the mere fancier better than any other. It is robust in constitution, and has the knack of keeping itself in good looks eleven months out of the twelve. For the table, what is of it, is good. I have found them safe birds to exhibit; for if the colour and points are good, condition and size are never considered. Mr Brown's description of the necessary points is exactly in accordance with my own experience. He has kindly permitted me to make use of it.

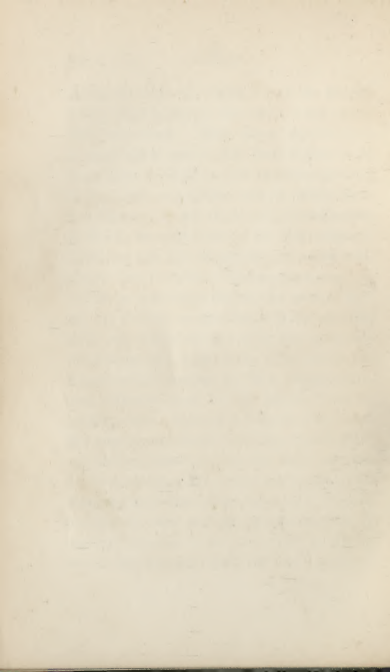
“The points of ‘Silver-spangled Hamburgs’ are a white ground, with clear and distinct spangles (in the hens) all over the body, clear hackles, tail white and spangled, or *traced* on the outer margin of the feathers, blue legs, good double combs, finely serrated and firmly set on the head, curling with an evenly-pointed spike at the back. The spangled cock must possess the same points as the hen; with this exception, that his wings are not spangled in all varieties of the *Hamburgh*. The larger the white ear the more valuable the bird, provided it has all the above points.

“The points of the ‘Golden-spangled’ are

exactly similar to the *Silver*, except the ground-colour, which is golden. The cocks in this variety differ very much. Some judges approve most of those which have a pure *black breast*—some desire them spangled, but this so-called spangling on the breast of a golden cock is seldom more than oblique patches of red, not corresponding at all with the upper parts of the bird's plumage. Seeing the difficulty of getting a pure and well-defined spangled breast, I prefer a pure black.

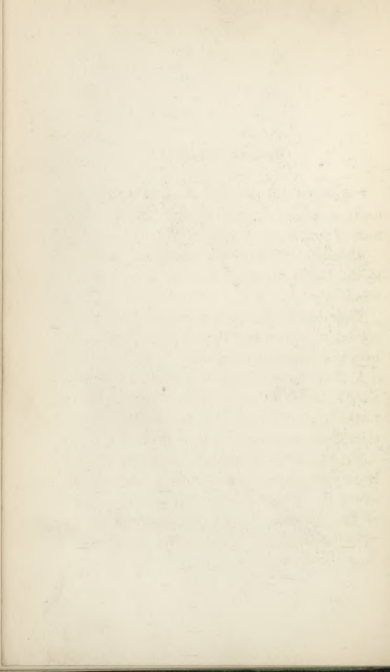
“In the pencilled varieties, the combs, legs, tail, and hackles, are the same as in the spangled birds; but the tail in the hens is very frequently pencilled, as well as the body. The cock, in the *Silver-pencilled* variety, is often nearly white, with yellowish wing coverts, and a brown or chestnut patch on the flight feathers of his wing. The cock, in the *Golden-pencilled*, should be of one uniform colour all over his body—*no pencilling* whatever. Tail, copper colour, but many first-class birds have a pure black tail. It must be borne in mind that the hackles and head of the four varieties I have described should be entirely free from any black markings.”







GOLDEN HAMBURGH.



Brahma Pootra.

I consider this a most valuable variety, so hardy, so beautiful, so excellent, in all the relations of poultry life.

Although it bears a close resemblance in form to the Cochin, I maintain it to be a distinct breed.

Their habits are quite dissimilar, their eggs are larger, they roam farther from home, and have more spirit, and fiery *elan*.

I think their expression indicative of good temper, and yet they are formidable foes when roused, their immense size and weight giving them great advantage over their rivals.

The hens excel as mothers, and layers of fine large eggs during winter. Even when snow covers the ground, they lay regularly an average of five eggs a-week, and, in fact, at all times, when not employed in the nursery, or renewing their plumage.

The pullets attain full size, at an early age, and are in their prime when eight months old.

Some judges seem to have a predetermination to give prizes only to the dark variety, entirely overlooking the beautiful light-coloured, which, I think, was, certainly, the original breed introduced into England. This is mere fancy, and I affirm them to be distinct varieties.

They demand separate classes, as much as the Buff and Partridge Cochins, Grey, and Silver-grey Dorkings.

Purity of race is claimed for both single and pea-combed Brahmas. Precedence is generally given to the latter, and I withhold not my consent, provided it is allied to other good points.

Comb is not an imperative point in this breed.

The single comb resembles that of the Cochin.

The double or pea-comb is not so easy to describe, but I shall try to be as lucid as possible.

It is very singular in appearance, thick at the base, and is like three combs joined in one, the centre one higher than the other; but it must

be, altogether, a low comb, rounded at the top, and the indentations must not be deep.

This (rather negative) description will, I hope, be understood. In the hopes of obtaining separate classes for light, and dark pencilled varieties, I shall describe the form and feathering of each.

Dark Cock—square build, broad chest, dignified carriage, tail small, and as black as possible, breast dark, spangled with white, earlobes and face red, wattles long, neck and saddle hackles streaked black and white, general colour of plumage grey, thighs ditto, feet and legs yellow, and abundantly feathered.

Hen—regularly marked all over the back and breast; wing quill feathers, and tail black, wattles short, legs and feet yellow, and feathered.

Light Cock—broad across back, full chest, hackles full, each feather laced with black, tail black, breast grey, thighs light grey, wing quill feathers black, coverts white, feet and legs yellow, and well-feathered, wattles red and pendulous.

Hen—hackles white, each feather tipped with black; tail, white, edged with black; breast,

white; body, clear white; legs, short and fluffy. The legs of all Brahmas should be short and wide apart. This is a great beauty, and, in both cock and hen, the outer toes should be shorter than the others, and feathered to the point; beaks, yellow.

Miss Watts is too well known in the poultry world to require any introduction from me. I append her polite communication as to this variety:—

“I think all who keep Brahmas will agree with me in giving them a high place among our useful poultry. They are large, and put on flesh readily; they are good layers, good sitters, and good mothers; they are also very hardy, apt at keeping themselves in good condition, and, under the unfavourable circumstances of dirty weather, or of living much among houses, they decidedly keep up a cleanly, tidy appearance better than any other kind I know. The chickens are hardy and easy to rear; I very seldom lose any, and I have noticed that they are more clever in the treatment of themselves when they are ill than other fowls; when they get out of order, they

will generally fast until eating is no longer injurious. I should like to know if you have noticed this peculiarity in the Brahma.* I believe I am prejudiced in their favour, but it is from experience of their merits perhaps; so, not exactly *prejudiced*, but *convinced*. I was among the first to import them, rather largely, and after keeping them just over seven years, I would not give them up for any other variety that I have tried.

“The worst accusation their enemies can advance against them is, that *no one knows their origin*; but this is applicable to them only as it is when applied to Dorkings, Spanish, Polands, and all the other kinds which have been brought to perfection by careful breeding, working on good originals. All we have in England are descended from fowls imported from the United States, and the best account of them is, that a sailor (rather vague certainly) appeared in an American town (Boston or New York, I forget which), with a new kind of fowl for sale,

* Quite correct.—E. F. B.

and that a pair bought from him were the parents of all the Brahmas. Uncertain as this appears, the accounts of those who pretend to trace their origin as *cross-bred* fowls is, at least, *equally so*, and I believe we may just act towards the Brahmas as we do with regard to Dorkings and* other good fowls, and be satisfied to possess a first-rate useful kind, although we may be unable to trace its genealogical tree back to the root.

“Whatever may be their origin, I find them distinct in their characteristics. I have found them true to their points, generation after generation, in all the years that I have kept them. The Pea-comb is very peculiar, and I have never had one chicken untrue in this, among *all* that I have bred. Their habits are very unlike the Cochins. Although docile, they are much less inert; they lay a larger number of eggs, and sit less frequently. Many of my hens only wish to sit once a-year; a few, oftener than that, perhaps twice or even three times in rare instances, but *never* at the end of each small batch of eggs, as I find (my almost equal favourites) the Cochins do.

“The division of light and dark Brahmas is a fancy of the judges, which any one who keeps them can humour with a little care in breeding. My idea of their colour is, that it should be black and grey, (iron grey, with more or less of a blue tinge, and devoid of any *brown*) on a clear, white ground, and I do not care whether the white or the marking predominates. I believe breeders could bear me out, if they would, when I say many fowls which pass muster as Brahmas are the result of a cross, resorted to, to increase size and procure the heavy colour which some of the judges affect.

“It gives me great pleasure to write these few remarks on the good qualities of the Brahma, but it is not needed, for I find they are making their way into very general favour by their useful properties.

“E. WATTS.

“MARYON HOUSE, SOUTH END,
HAMPSTEAD, LONDON.”

Scotch Grey.

In Scotland, this breed is much valued. It is of great antiquity, and still to be found in the most remote districts, where other, and newer varieties are unknown. Our poulterers consider it excellent for the table, and it possesses the great advantage of white legs and skin. The hens lay in due season, and perform their maternal duties creditably. For the points of this breed, I give the remarks of a friendly poultry fancier, and admirer of this fowl:—

“I have no doubt that this is a distinct breed. It throws true chickens, and that is sufficient to prove it, although this may be the result of cross-breeding at a period more or less distant.

“In her foreign relations, Scotland has imported many breeds from Spain, Hamburgh, Holland, and France, and, as a matter of course,

these have impressed the stamp of their features on the Scotch Grey.

“Some assert that it is a mere modification of the Dorking, fine specimens of which occur of similar colour, which I have heard styled the ‘Blue Mottle,’ and it cannot be denied that it is largely imbued with the blood of these.

“Such a cross tends to produce a distinct and valuable species, while an infusion of Spanish, Hamburgh, and Cochin China blood interferes with the essential features of the breed.

“The cock is rather a slim bird, and the more closely he resembles the Game, the better. He should stand erect, with a proud carriage, the thighs slightly exposed, though less so than in the Spanish.

“The thicker and more widely set his limbs are, the more perfect the fowl. They should be white, though black spots are not considered positive blemishes.

“The comb is single, very large, and straight. The head should be small, and the eye bright

and quick. Much importance is attached to the redness of the ear-lobe. Birds, good in other respects, have often a whiteness in it, and this is, no doubt, owing to defective breeding.

“Although I myself have never seen a cock over two years with the lobe perfectly red, still it is a point to be aimed at, and is, (I believe) quite attainable.

“The colour of the plumage must be particularly attended to.

“The bluish grey-mottled appearance of these birds depends upon the pencilling of the feathers (otherwise white), by broad grey marks across them. Their beauty depends on the strength, without blackness, of these markings, especially at the feather tips, and the purity of the intervening white ground. These, together, give a mottled aspect like snow flakes, and this is best observed in the hens and half-grown chickens.

“The greatest defect in colour is the indistinctness and muddling of the grey and the white.

“The whiteness of the flight and sickle feathers

may be a disadvantage, but it is of secondary importance. Birds, otherwise well coloured, have sometimes black feathers scattered over the surface, and this must be regarded as a defect.

“Red and brassy marks across the back are defects that occur in cockerels, and a yellowness of hackle in hens.

“Some very handsome cocks have a rich brownish transparent greyness of the hackle and saddle feathers, which enhances the beauty of their plumage, and is not inconsistent with the requisite style and colour, but I have seen this excessive in some specimens.

“The hen shows the markings better than the cock. Her figure should be long and tapering, without the bulk and breadth of the Dorking's shoulder, and the comb should be small, and nearly erect.

“The ear-lobes should be red, but this appears to be more rare than in the cock.

“The principal points to be avoided in this breed are the bulky body and fifth toe, of the Dorking, the white ear-lobes and small size of the Hamburgh, the drooping comb and whitish

cheek of the Spanish, and the raised hind-quarters and feathered legs of the Cochin China.

“The great advantage I have observed in the Scotch Grey is, that they are very hardy fowls and easily fed. The chickens require less care and attention than those of other kinds. These are of presentable size at the age of six months, and may weigh six pounds.

“The hens are average layers. Their only advantage over the Dorking and Spanish is their superior constitutional strength. I have seen them thrive, where these, under the same management, became affected with roup, and their chickens matured well, while the others died.

“I cannot compare, however, the Scottish Grey with Dorking or Spanish, the former for chickens, the latter for eggs.

“But for cottagers and others, whose fowls may not have the advantage of a roomy and well protected yard, they are possessed of valuable qualities.

“There has always existed, in Scotland, a

wide-spread preference for the 'Old Scotch breed' or 'Check Merlins,' the distinctive colour of which has obtained for it many synonyms in different provinces."

Malays.

These singular-looking fowls have their admirers.

They are of great size, and beautiful in plumage, and their very rarity makes them always interesting objects in an exhibition.

The hens lay eggs of average size, of a deep buff colour; they are acknowledged to be very rich in flavour, and for hatching purposes very few will be found unproductive.

As the chickens do not fully get their feathers till three-parts grown, they should be hatched early, so as to be quite fledged before cool weather sets in.

Their native country is the southern point of Asia, and the breed was always had recourse to, in Britain, where size was required, previous to the introduction of the Shanghaes.

The cock is a magnificent bird, standing over two and a-half feet in height, of a proud and

majestic carriage, and will weigh about eleven pounds.

The colour of the pair first imported was a reddish yellow, but there are now many varieties, black, white, &c.

The most esteemed, however, is Black-breasted Red, the exhibition points of which we shall notice. I do not think this fowl so useful as some, but it is interesting to the amateur, as showing individual characteristics.

COCK.

Comb—small, and not extending the whole length of the head.

Wattles—poor.

Neck hackle—red, dark or bright.

Saddle hackle—darker.

Upper wing coverts—rich maroon.

Lower wing coverts—green, or a bluish black.

Breast—black, or spangled with a chestnut brown.

Tail—black, shaded with green.

Thighs—same.

Legs and feet—bright yellow.

Ear-lobe—scarlet.

Eye—red.

Beak—yellow, sometimes tinged with black.

Plumage—short and close, and very glossy.

HEN.

Weight—about eight and a-half pounds.

Comb—hardly any.

Wattles—none.

Ear-lobe and face—red.

Legs and feet—yellow and long.

Breast—brown.

Thighs—same.

Upper wing coverts—brown.

Lower wing coverts—same.

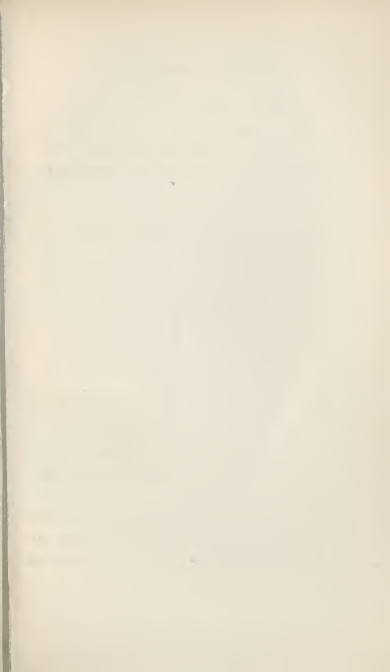
Tail—black.

Saddle—same as body, maroon.

Neck hackle—dark reddish brown.

The general character of these birds is vindictive, cruel, and tyrannical.

If in confined premises, they are in the habit of eating away each other's plumage, and are very quarrelsome, so that they sometimes appear at an exhibition in sorry plight.





G A M E :

Edinburgh. Thomas C. Jack.

Game.

Although this fowl is so well described by Mr Douglas, in the letter which follows, I must append a few remarks:—

The hen is a good layer, sits well, and is careful of her brood.

She forages zealously for the chickens, and remains with them until they are independent of her superintendence. They are easily reared, require little food, and (in constitution) are far more robust than any other variety.

The Game fowl continues to breed for many years, without showing any symptom of decay, and in this, is superior to the Cochin, Brahma, or even Dorking.

If hatched in March, the cockerels must be dubbed in August, to fit them for exhibition.

Why these poor birds are condemned to submit to this cruel operation, is a mystery,

unfathomable, I suspect, even by the judges themselves.

Cock-fighting being forbidden by law, the cocks should, on principle, be left undubbed, as a protest against this brutal amusement.

The comb of the Game male bird is as beautifully formed as that of the Dorking; why then rob it of this great ornament?

It is asserted that it is necessary to remove the comb to prevent the cocks injuring each other fatally in fighting; but this is not true; a Dorking will fight for the championship as ardently as any Game bird, and yet his comb is spared.

Cockerels will not quarrel if kept apart from hens, until the breeding season, when they should be separated, and put on their several walks.

If pugnaciously inclined, I do not believe that the absence of the comb will save the weaker opponent from destruction, therefore, I raise my voice for pity, in favour of the beautiful Game cock.

The rules for colour of legs are very undecided.

In my humble opinion, light legs match light-coloured birds best, but this is not imperative, and every colour, except *black*, is admissible.

The stock of the Hon. W. Vernon is well known, and held in high estimation. Mr Douglas's remarks will, therefore, doubtless, be thought valuable by the Game fancier:—

“The Game fowl has so long been a favourite with the public, and is so well and deservedly known, that I need not detain your readers with a lengthened description of its merits. There are two classes of admirers of this beautiful bird—the one, looking only to those points which are likely to be most telling in the pit, the other, admiring the bird for its great beauty. To the latter class of fanciers I am proud to belong; but I refrain from comment upon those whose tastes, perchance, may differ from my own.

“We admire the Game-Cock for his bold, defiant carriage, his perfect symmetry and beauty of plumage. We cannot look upon him with any other feeling than that of admiration; his fearless eye, firm and stately step, and bold majestic watchfulness over his harem, seem to

convey at once to our mind the idea, 'I'm monarch of all I survey.'

"Although there are many varieties of Game fowls, one description will suffice for the whole, for the exhibition points are identically the same. I will, therefore, begin with the Black-breasted Red, believing, as I do, that it is the purest feathered Game that is bred; for, breed what variety we may, we have never found any come so true to colour as a brood of Black Reds. As more depends upon the Game hen, in the production of first-class chickens, than many are aware of, we will first describe *her* points: Head long; mandible very strong and firmly set in the head; eyes very prominent; neck long and graceful; square shoulders; broad chest; points of wings almost meeting under the tail; the latter adornment must be close and compact, not carried too erect or loose over the back; thighs short and muscular; legs long and free from feather; toes well spread; feathers short and hard. These are the points of a good Game hen. We now come to her mate, the Game cock. Some breeders fancy one weight and some

another, but I prefer *my* stock-bird of about five or six pounds weight. Choose a bird of bold, defiant carriage, of good colour, head long and slender, mandible strong, curved, and well set in the head; very stout at the base, full breast, round body, broad between the shoulders, and tapering to the tail. In fact, he must resemble the hen in all his points, except in colour. Having given the exhibition and breeding points of one class of Game fowl, the same qualifications are necessary in all other varieties, however numerous they may be; names and colours we leave to the taste of the amateur himself. To give a separate description of each of the different coloured varieties would be more than your space will permit, for their name is legion; but I may mention a few of those we are best acquainted with, viz., Duckwings, Brown-breasted Reds, Brassy Wings, White, Black, Piles, Greys, Birchin Greys, Weedon Reds, &c., &c., all of which have their friends and admirers, and must all possess the different points we have enumerated, whether they are intended for the purposes of amusement and exhibition, or the pit.

“To breed fancy, streaky-breasted, brown-red cockerels, mate a streaky-breasted hen to a black red cock; nine times out of ten the cockerels will resemble the hen in colour. To breed pullets to match, the cock must be streaky-breasted, and the hen Black-breasted Red; these will be the exhibition Brown-breasted Reds.

“The principal points in the Duckwing Game cockerel are the clear vivid wing, black breast and tail, and light straw-coloured hackle. To obtain these, breed from a light grey-backed and winged hen, with silver hackle and salmon breast, and a black-breasted red cock; the hen should not have the slightest shade of red on the wing; this is fatal.

“To obtain similar pullets, the cock must be Duckwing, and the hen Black Red.

“Piles (cockerels) are bred from a white cock and black-red hen. They will have the clear white feather, light salmon-breast, and tinge of gold in hackle. The cockerels are the produce of a red-spangled cock and white hen, and should possess the beautiful white tail, clean hackle, and red shoulder. These remarks are the result

of an experience of more than twenty years, in breeding the different varieties of game. I wish (in common with many other exhibitors) there was more uniformity of opinion in judging this breed; only practical breeders should be employed; the mistakes made are truly ludicrous. For exhibition chickens I prefer those hatched the last week in March or first in April. At that season nine eggs are sufficient for the sitting hen; earlier, only seven. The mother with her brood must be cooped under a shed, with a dry bottom, composed of three parts road drift and chalk, and one part lime rubbish; this must be renewed every season; at the end of nine days the coop should be placed on turf, choosing the middle of the day for the shift. Until the grass is thoroughly dry, keep the chickens confined to their coop, feeding them once or twice if necessary. Give plenty of fresh water, adding a little of the 'restorative' (previously mentioned) every morning before the coops are opened. When the hen leaves the chickens, select the cockerels and put them on a walk with an old cock without hens or pullets. At six months we put them to

separate walks, unless a few intended for early exhibition, which are put to a walk at once, on leaving the hen. Pullets must be treated in the same manner. Before sending off birds to exhibition, feed them on boiled milk and bread; *never* on hard food."—JOHN DOUGLAS.

"WOLSELEY AVIARIES."

Go Laighs, or Scotch Dumpies.

This breed is now almost extinct, but as an attempt has been made to revive it, we may expect to see this Dwarf in Poultry exhibited with good chance of favourable notice, and even with hopes of a special class.

They can be bred true to feather, and this should be particularly aimed at, to the exclusion of the Mongrels so often pointed out as fair specimens.

Shortness of leg alone should not constitute their claim to notice. They must have large heavy bodies, bright distinctive colouring, and other points of excellence.

They are not merely fancy birds, but valuable as table poultry, layers of large fine eggs, and cannot be excelled as sitters and mothers.

Gamekeepers have a strong partiality for this breed, for hatching the eggs of partridges and

pheasants, being so quiet in their movements, and attentive to their young.

The exhibition points are as follows :—

Cock—*Tail*, full and black ; *neck* and *saddle hackles*, silvery-white ; *breast*, black or spotted with white ; *thighs*, black or as nearly so as possible ; *form*, squarely built, and broad across the chest ; *legs*, very short, not above one inch and a-half in length, free from feathers, and white in colour ; *comb*, rose, double and pointed at the back, bright scarlet, as are also the *wattles*, which should be long and pendulous, almost touching the ground ; *ear-lobes*, red.

Hen—Ash-backed, salmon-breasted, silver-hackled ; in other points similar to the cock. The general carriage is heavy, and gait waddling. The extreme shortness of leg gives them the appearance of swimming on dry land.

Silkies.

These are very pretty, interesting little creatures, but altogether fancy fowls, utterly useless for table or market.

Their bones and flesh are coal-black, while, strange to say, their plumage is snowy-white, soft and silky, resembling spun glass. Their eggs, though small, are said to be excellent, pinkish-white in colour, something like those of the Bantam, but I confess to a prejudice against the egg of a Darkie, not even overcome by its silvery locks.

The cock is a pattern of fidelity and gentleness; he assists his partner in the care of her family, and even acts as nurse.

The hen is the best of foster-mothers for Hamburgs and Polish, their soft warm feathering tempting these delicate little fastidious beings to *cotton* kindly to them for protection.

The points of a Silkie *Cock* are:—*Plumage*, white; *crest*, small, low, and set far back on the

head; *comb*, dark reddish purple; *ear-lobes*, turquoise blue; *wattles*, purple; *legs*, *eyes*, and *beak*, jet black; *tail*, full, but not with many sickle feathers; *body*, low set, but large, and broad in the breast.

Hen—precisely similar points, except the tail, which, in her, consists of a small bunch of feathers like marabouts. Her comb also is smaller, and crest (or tuft) larger.

Polish.

A very elegant and pretty, though somewhat foppish and conceited-looking bird. It is not of sufficient size to be eligible for market purposes, but for private consumption is excellent, the flesh being white and tender.

They are almost everlasting layers, but the eggs are, certainly, below average size. They rarely sit, and the reputation of good mother, cannot, with fairness, be classed among their virtues.

As a *fancy variety*, the Polish take high rank, and deservedly so, for they thrive under petting, and really require greater care than more robust varieties.

A farm-yard would be the death of them; they like a grass run and aviary accommodation, and their plumage increases in beauty with the increase of comfort.

Their greatest merit is, that, like the Game, they continue to improve in feather for several years, when other varieties of the same age have faded ; they are the Perennials in poultry.

In plumage they are of different colours.

The Black should be *uniformly* of that hue, with a greenish sheen ; *crest*, full and globular, and as white as possible ; *comb*, should hardly be visible ; it is merely two small fleshy points ; *wattles*, small ; *tail*, black, ample, and well sickled ; *legs*, lead-coloured.

The Golden resemble nearly the gold spangled Hamburgs, except in having a top knot, which should be golden brown. The Silver differ only in the colours, which are white and black instead of gold and dark brown. The White Polish is very delicate, and are more often obtained by chance than by special breeding. Buff and Grey Polish have been exhibited, which were very handsome and rare ; a peculiarity in this variety is that the hen is web-footed.

As to the vexed question of *beard*, or *no beard*, I give my vote against it.

Bantams.

These gems of beauty and most treasured and prettiest of pets are, certainly, the most impudent, as well as diminutive, of our domestic poultry.

They are ridiculously consequential, and seem as if they prided themselves on their captivating appearance. There are several varieties, all possessing the same passionate temper, and, though such perfect pigmies, are most pugnacious, which clearly proves their Javanese origin.

They resemble the natives when under the influence of bang, that intoxicating herb which destroys all sense and reason.

The hens are very good layers, and many persons relish their eggs exceedingly; they contain a greater proportion of yolk than those of larger varieties.

As mothers, Bantams are unrivalled, fulfilling

their duties to a wish ; the chickens should not be hatched till August or September, as it is an object to have them of the smallest possible size, a strange deviation from the *utilitarian* principle.

For the first few weeks they are decidedly delicate ; they seem to feather more quickly than most fowls, and in that stage are apt to die off, the drain on the system being too severe.

When fully feathered, they are quite hardy, and may be allowed free range, with the mother, in a garden, where they will do much good by devouring insects, (for they are industrious little labourers), and will not injure flowers or vegetables.

They are a pretty fancy, and being miniatures themselves, are well suited to miniature poultry grounds ; not that they are at all limited to such, for they are prized by fanciers who rear all sorts and breeds of fowls on the most extended scale.

There are many varieties of Bantams, exclusive of the feather-legged, which, like moustache in the pulpit, is a matter (shall I say fortunately?)

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POLISH

Edinburg. Thomas C. Jack.

of rare occurrence, though the former may be considered more objectionable than the latter, as being more unnatural.

The points of Gold-laced Sebright Bantams are:—*Plumage*, golden brownish-yellow, each feather bordered with a lacing of black; *tail*, without sickle feathers, carried well over the back, each feather tipped with black; *comb*, rose, pointed at the back; *wings*, drooping to the ground; *saddle* and *neck hackles*, totally absent; *feet* and *legs*, lead-colour and clean; *ear-lobes*, white.

The Gold-laced hen corresponds exactly, in plumage, with the cock, but is considerably lighter in weight.

The Silver-laced differ from the above only in the ground-feathering, which is silvery instead of golden.

The more nearly the shade approaches to white, the more beautiful is the specimen; too often a yellowish tinge is visible.

Both classes are distinguished for their strutting braggadocio air, and puffed-out breasts, making, as it were, the most of themselves.

The *Black* and *White Bantams* are perhaps the smallest of that tribe. One description will suffice for both, as they differ only in colour, which must be stainless in either. Cock—*tail*, sickled and flowing; *comb*, rose; *wattles*, scarlet; *ear-lobes*, white, and well developed; *legs*, deep slate-colour. *Hen*—similar in plumage. In breeding the White Bantam, white legs and bill are to be aimed at; these points greatly enhance the beauty of these little favourites.

Game Bantams resemble the real game in form, colour, and high courage (only, in *size*, on a ridiculously reduced scale); this gives to the tiny breed a degree of interest superior to any other.

Fanciers can keep these representatives of by-gone days, and “fight their battles o’er again,” *in idea*, “thrice rout all their foes,” and “thrice slay the slain.”

Even these innocent little creatures are subjected to the cruel process of dubbing. It is indeed monstrous to rob these pretty fairies of any beauty with which nature has adorned them.

Game Bantam fanciers! will you listen to the

cry of a "Sister of Mercy," and abolish at once this barbarous remnant of antiquity?

The *Duckwing* and *Black-breasted Red* are the two most esteemed varieties. The points of the former (small size being essential) are:—*Cock*—*Breast*, black; *tail*, black and sickle-feathered; *neck* and *saddle hackles*, silvery white; *face*, red; *head*, thin and long; *beak*, curved. The lower wing coverts of the male bird, which is always the most marked and brilliant in plumage (giving, in fact, the name to the breed), should be marked with blue, forming a bar across the wing.

Hen—*Breast*, robin colour; *body*, ash grey; *hackle*, silvery; *legs* vary in colour, white are much coveted, but very rare.

Black-breasted Red.

Cock—*Breast*, black; *neck* and *saddle hackles*, bright orange-red; *back*, brown-red; *tail*, black.

Hen—general colour chestnut-brown; *hackle*, pale buff, edged with black; *breast*, deep fawn; *body* and *wing coverts*, partridge colour.

Each amateur has his own predilection as to

the colour of legs and feet. Uniformity, however, in a pen, is indispensable.

There are other varieties of Game Bantams, as in their larger progenitors, but it is not possible to give the descriptive characteristics of each.

A
Crève Cœur.

This hobgoblin-looking fowl is really a good and useful one; it is perfection for the table, and the eggs are very large.

Some think its name is derived from the resemblance the comb presents to a split heart; others (with whom I agree) do away with this romance, and attribute it to the preponderance of the breed in the village of Crève Cœur, in Normandy, whence, we can distinctly trace its origin.

The hens do not sit, but lay for many months unceasingly.

I have bred these birds largely, and continue to do so, which is a sure proof that I consider this variety (so little known) worthy of considerable attention in this country. Parisians are quite aware of its merits.

The breed is scarce, and I have found much

difficulty in procuring birds, of a different strain, to breed from—true to colour.

The pure-bred Crève is of large size; the cock should weigh nine and a-half pounds, and the hen (which is heavy in proportion) about eight and a-half pounds.

The pullets come to maturity at an early age, and always outweigh the cockerels.

Crèves possess the great advantage of thriving in a confined space, are remarkably tame, and of great amiability.

The points to be aimed at are as follows:—

Cock—jet black, body and tail with the greenish hue of the Spanish.

Neck and saddle hackles—streaked black and gold colour.

Top—must be as black as possible.

Ear-lobes—red.

Wattles—bright scarlet, long, and pendulous.

Beak—black.

Legs—black, and free from feathers.

Comb—scarlet, in shape, a cleft heart, or rather like the horns of the fallow deer.

Hen—identical in colour with the cock, as

regards body, legs, tail, and top, all which should be black, but without the golden tinge on hackle ; the comb is, of course, smaller.

The *body* must be square, *breast* full, and *legs* short.

Turkeys.

The evidence seems in favour of our being indebted to our transatlantic cousins for this gigantic race of Poultry.

There can be no doubt of the existence now, in America, of two distinct classes, the domestic and the wild, although they must originally have centred in one common stock.

The former is famous for its immense size, the latter for its beauty.

In our own country we have several varieties, distinguished by *colour* only, for they are all identical in their habits and general form.

I shall dilate on the peculiar characteristics of each, though I do not think the Turkey is a *profitable* denizen of the farm-yard. Their chickenhood is so delicate, that *many* do not arrive at maturity, even after the greatest care has been bestowed upon them, and much food wasted. When successful, and fine birds are reared to grace the

Christmas board, the price, they command, is not at all commensurate with their cost; they are defunct debtors.

To pay, I consider they must be bred in *numbers*, and on a system of exclusive attention; but a single brood reared on a farm, fed up to great size and weight, and pampered to their heart's content, will (at the period of sale) have cost double its price in food.

I know many who will bear me out in this.

Does any one, then, ask "Is this species to be tabooed in private establishments?" I say, most certainly not; it cannot be dispensed with, so elegant in life, so useful in death: who ever heard of a *dinner* without a Turkey?

Where attendance is ample, the Turkey may be raised with ease, without any important extra expense in that respect, though its food must, of course, always be a heavy item.

Adult birds are very hardy, and poults, when fully feathered, will have, in a great measure, survived their earlier delicacy.

For breeding purposes, birds of mature age, even three or four years, are preferable to those

of only one year; the hens may be unlimited in number.

Turkeys select their own laying places, and will return to them faithfully, though their eggs are removed daily, provided a nest-egg is left to mark the spot.

When broody, the hens may be deposited in any corner, as they are persevering sitters, and will not desert their eggs wherever placed.

If the nest, chosen by the hen, is in a sheltered and secluded spot, it is as well to return her eggs when she gives evidence of a wish to sit.

I have always found the healthiest birds are obtained from this natural treatment.

Turkeys roam far in search of privacy for laying, and steal off most cunningly to the selected retreat; they sometimes even defy detection, and are not seen till they appear with their brood (generally a small one), for, if the weather is wet or cold, the chicks die off, as do those of our wild birds—partridges and pheasants.

Fifteen eggs are sufficient to place under a Turkey; they are hatched on the 31st day.

A similar treatment should be adopted with the chicks, as with those of the common hen. Leave them for twenty-four hours with the mother; then offer them the yolk of hard boiled eggs, bread crumbs, curd, minced green food, and confine the hen to her coop for a few days, and *always* till the grass is dry.

She will, when at liberty, lead them into the unmown hay, and dry plantations, where they will pick up much food, in the shape of seeds and insects, but they must also be fed by hand, three or four times a day, and at regular intervals.

Porridge and milk, chopped nettles, onions, docks and cabbage, are all favourite items in their dietary; some are nourishing, some stimulating; they must also have their share of the soft balls described in my chapter on food, and grain of any or every sort.

The curd I have mentioned is prepared according to a recipe kindly sent to me by a friend who is a great Turkey-breeder, and I have found it excellent, both as food and medicine, the astringent qualities acting as tonics, and my gamekeeper

has found it a most valuable preparation for young pheasants, reared under hens. It is made as follows:—Mix one teaspoonful of pounded alum, with four quarts of milk slightly warmed, separate the whey from the curd, and give only the latter in a soft state.

If judiciously and fully fed, Turkey male poults should weigh at least twenty pounds at Christmas, and *that*, with only their natural feeding. Any other I *repudiate*, along with all those who have any experience in this breed.

The classes of our domestic Turkeys are the Norfolk, Cambridge, and White.

There is also a pretty buff-feathered bird, more to be admired, however, for its singularity than usefulness; also a grey variety, sometimes called Virginian, small but elegant.

Wild American Turkey.

Last, but not least, comes the *Wild* American Turkey of the "forest primeval"—in form, slender and erect, of stately proportion, and dignity of mein—resembling its native pursuers, the chiefs of the prairie.

It is impossible to conceive any tints more glowing than those which light up the plumage of this beautiful bird; they are brilliant in the extreme; a ground of brown, burnished with gold, ruby and green, which, in the sunbeam, have quite a dazzling effect.

Unless in the Peacock, I know not of such exquisite hues, and in graceful bearing the Wild Turkey stands alone.

Many of the *so-called* wild birds sent to this country are hatched from eggs laid in the bush by domesticated hens, which, in accordance with their habits previously mentioned, often lay at great distances from home.

The *really* wild Turkeys are seldom seen in Great Britain; they *never* breed, if shut up, they are so shy and restless, lose all brightness of colour, and pine away.

Their large woman-like, gentle, dark eyes seem to reproach their gaoler, and their plaintive cry to plead for liberty; I, for one, never resisted the appeal. They wander to incredible distances, if allowed free range.

Hence the difficulty of keeping the pure breed.

Their long slender red legs appear made for traversing the fallen pines, and their close firm plumage for resisting the tangled brushwood. The hens will sometimes cross with our "domestic Cambridge," improve the constitution of that bird, and impart some of their native characteristics and beauty.

For *exhibition*, the *Norfolk* Turkey must be in plumage, *jet* black (not a *blue* black), free from any admixture of colour; legs and feet the same.

Cambridge may vary from pale grey to dark, with a deep metallic tint of brown; *legs*, light in hue.

Good matching is *imperative*; a dark cock must have dark hens, and a light cock light hens.

This being attended to, size and weight decide the victory.

Geese.

These *domestic Goliahs* are generally divided into two classes, the White, or Embden, and the Grey, or Toulouse, equally advantageous in size, and other good qualities.

The Goose lays early, if well fed, and is certainly a most profitable denizen of our poultry yard, looking to the immense amount of food she contributes to the general use.

The feathers and down, alone, make Geese valuable stock, even though we do not follow the barbarous practice of plucking the poor creatures alive, once a-year, for the sake of them.

I find the Turkey an excellent mother for goslings.

The Goose wanders too far with them, and does not allow them to be familiar with their keeper, of whom, indeed, they soon can be quite independent, as they feed on grass, and forage well

for themselves. Treated thus, however, they will never arrive at the size and weight of *exhibition* birds, and I therefore recommend a Turkey mother, or even a large common hen; this latter will cover three eggs; a Turkey seven; the period of incubation is 30 days.

Goslings *cannot* be too highly fed; meal, grain, bread, onions, cabbage, &c., *all*, in abundance, should be set before them. Rats are their natural enemies, and from these they must be protected; in addition, a dry bed under cover is all they require in the way of night housing.

Geese are much less hydropathically inclined than people fancy, and do not require more than a large trough to bathe in; the breeding stock, 5 in number (1 male and 4 females), should be of mature years.

My ideas as to weights and points correspond with those of the *unconquered* (though I trust not the *unconquerable*) Mr Fowler, our "Magnus Apollo."

His experience is—"Toulouse Geese should be tall and erect, with their bodies hanging on the ground; light grey *breast* and *body*.

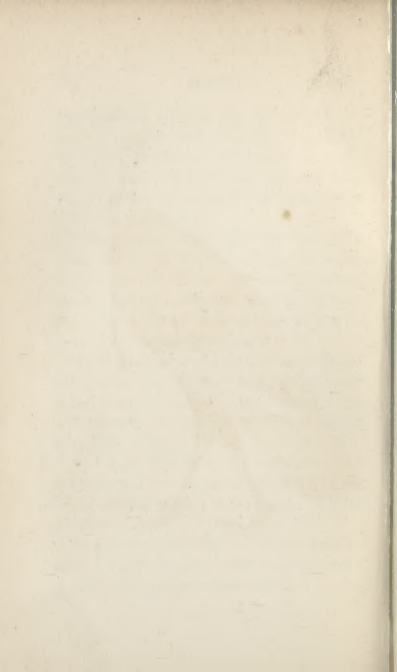
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WILD AMERICAN TURKEY.

Edinburgh: Thomas C. Jack

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“*Back*, dark grey; *necks*, darker grey; *wings* and *belly* should shade off to white, but there should be little *actual* white visible; *bills*, pale flesh-colour, hard and strong; *legs* and *feet*, deep orange, approaching to red.

“The weight of these birds, by careful feeding and management, has become extraordinary; 74 lbs. for *three* birds has been attained. The cup gander at Birmingham in 1859 weighed 33 lbs., and in 1860, 30 lbs.; the three, 71 lbs. The weight of geese may be from 20 to 25 lbs.

“Goslings, at Michaelmas, often weigh 20 to 22 lbs. “J. K. FOWLER.”

Chinese Geese.

There are several semi-domesticated varieties of Geese. The only one I consider of any utility is the Chinese; it lays a great number of eggs, and a cross between it and the Toulouse gives a delicious bird for the table. Their time of incubation is about 35 days.

The goose resembles the gander in form and colour, and both have a dark brown stripe down the back of the neck. They are graceful in form, but have that greatest of all defects, a discordant voice, and, being very loquacious, it is a serious evil to be constantly exposed to their whining, discontented, harsh cry. On a *distant* piece of water, they look well, as they are peculiarly elegant in movement; their colour is brown, shaded into white on the *breast; bill*, tuberculated and black; *neck*, long; *feet* and *legs*, black.

Emden Geese.

Blossom-white plumage; *bills*, flesh-colour; *legs* and *feet*, orange.

These birds attain great weights, and are valuable in the market, on account of the superior quality and colour of the down, but, to look well, they must have access to a pond, and are therefore alone available to those who possess this advantage.

Ducks.

There is not a great variety in our domestic ducks; only three distinct *exhibition* breeds exist, viz., the Aylesbury, Rouen, and Buenos Ayres or East Indian.

They are very hardy, sleeping out of doors in all weathers, from preference. Of course, as in all poultry establishments, there should be a duck-house—a mere shed suffices, without door; but a yard is indispensable, if they are shut up at nightfall.

Where two or more varieties are kept, they must not be allowed to mix at *any* season; therefore separate apartments become necessary. Both house and yard should be littered down with straw, frequently renewed.

A duck sits faithfully, but is the worst possible mother for her own progeny, as she waddles

off with them as soon as hatched to her favourite element, generally leaving the half of her family immersed, unable to extricate themselves ; hence the small broods of wild ducks generally seen—the delicate ones were, in all likelihood, drowned in their infancy. Ducks' eggs are better set under a hen, who will rear her foster chicks most tenderly. It is even *advisable* to give a valuable hen duck's eggs to bring out, as she will have more liberty with them than with chickens, and (not being obliged to cover the young flock,) will not have her plumage destroyed.

Ducklings soon become independent of a mother's care, and, if protected from rats, can be cooped in numbers together, at night.

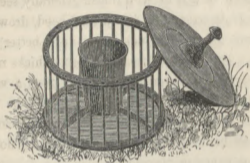
Their food should consist at first of meal made into a paste, and given frequently ; later, groats thrown into water.

I find a square, flat, tin dish, the best vessel for this purpose, as also an iron hopper, a cut of which is appended, (fig. 8.) It is filled from the top, and, being heavy, cannot be upset, or the food wasted.

Ducklings are sometimes affected by cramp ;

this must be attributed to the absence of dry straw, or the presence of too deep water.

Fig. 8.



When fully grown, ducks should be fed only twice a-day, on soft food and any kind of grain, *always* in water; in their wanderings, they pick up a great deal very much to their taste; they begin to lay regularly in February, often at Christmas, and continue many months.

The eggs of the Rouen are large, and of a greenish-blue tint; a drake should not be allowed more than four females, or many of the eggs will prove unfertile.

The wild drake is monogamous, and there is no doubt, to it, our domestic Rouen breed owes

its origin, though it now differs from it essentially.

With respect to exhibition points, colour, and weights, I can give no information that will be so acceptable to my readers as that of Mr Fowler, the well-known agriculturist, and the most successful breeder of ducks known.

I subjoin his kind remarks on this variety:—

“PREBENDAL FARM, AYLESBURY.

“*Rouen Drake* should have a yellowish-green bill, without splash of black or any colour, except the black bean at the tip; it should be long, broad, and rather wider at the tip than the base, well set on to the front of the head. *Head*, rich, lustrous, green and purple; distinct white ring round the *neck*, not quite meeting at the back; rich brown or claret *breast*, reaching low down to the water line. *Back*, dark-green; *body* beautifully soft grey, almost coming to white near the tail; *tail*, darkish green, and curls firm and black; *wings*, brownish, with broad ribbon mark of purple and white; on *no account* white flight feathers, this defect is *fatal*; *legs*, orange,

or brown and orange; weight about 8 lbs., sometimes 9 lbs.; when heavier, some defect of plumage or bill is always found.

“*Rouen Duck*—brown pencilling on a greyish *body*, the *back* beautifully marked with blackish green on light brown base; ribbon mark and other colour of wings nearly like the drake; towards the *tail* the feathers should be well pencilled, quite to the tip. The *head* should be marked with three dark longitudinal stripes from the bill past the eye, and the neck on no account should have the least appearance of a white ring; this would be as heretical as a white flight feather in the wings. The *bill* should be broad, long, and somewhat flat, brownish orange, with a dark blotch on the upper part. A slate-coloured bill, or an absence of orange, is a sure disqualification; *legs*, brown and orange. Weight of first-class birds, 7 lbs. It should be remarked that *Rouen drakes* change colour in an extraordinary manner; they first resemble the ducks, then moult to their true colour, then back to the colour of ducks, and the fourth time moult to their original beauty.

“ J. K. FOWLER.”

Aylesbury Ducks.

The great beauty of this breed consists in its snowy plumage; the delicate rose-coloured bill must also be admired. To obtain it without stain or blemish, free from yellow tinge, is the great aim of all Aylesbury breeders.

A ferruginous soil, as I have experienced, affects the colour of the bill very much. Although correct as to tint, when brought to the fatal spot, in a few days the yellow shade makes its appearance, and can never be got rid of; true, old age produces this colour on *any soil*.

The Aylesbury is admirable for its pure white downy feathers, and, as it lays early, the ducklings are always first in the market.

The eggs are white, and excellent in flavour.

Mr Fowler says:—

“*Aylesburys*—purest white *plumage* all over; *bills*, delicate flesh-colour, long and broad, and set on like the bill of a woodcock; any spots of black or yellow hue must disqualify. *Legs*, deep orange; *necks*, fine and long.

“*Drake and duck quite alike*, in form and colour.

“A first-rate *drake* weighs from 9 to 9½ lbs. *ducks* have weighed 9 lbs.

“A good average pen of three, at a show, should weigh 23 or 24 lbs.; at Birmingham (where four are shown), 32 lbs. is a great weight.

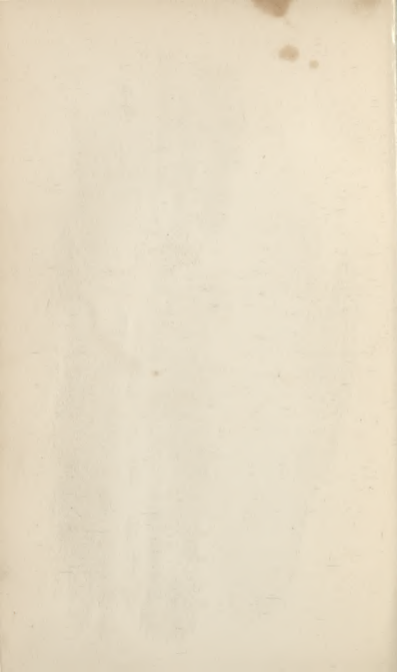
“It should be noticed that Aylesbury and Rouen ducks, as well as geese, suffer much in weight from travelling; quite as much as 1 to 1½ lbs. each on a journey of fifty miles; *geese*, perhaps, even more.

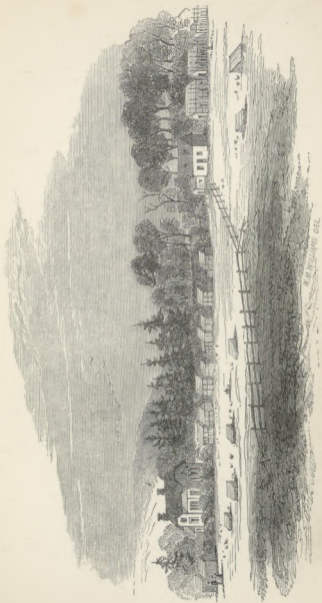
“*East Indian Ducks* should be all of a rich lustrous greenish black, with a perfect absence of white feathers; dark legs and bills. The bill of the drake, dark greenish yellow; a brown breast is inadmissible. They should be as light in weight as possible; as little as 2 lbs. each would be desirable.

“J. K. FOWLER.”

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My Poultry Yards and Houses.

My Own Experience.

“Richard loves Richard ; that is, I am I.”—SHAKESPEARE.

“POET of all time,” gracing the closing chapter of even the struggling “Henwife ;” yes, immortal Bard of Avon ! little did you think, when you penned these words, that you might have owed fame to these pages, had not the veneration of your posterity forestalled it !!

To carry out my principle of practicality, I now treat of “my own experience ;” *egotist*, necessarily, I must be, in so doing ; but without some measure of self-esteem, we could not be conscious of our own identity, and no such being could have shone forth as a Patriot, or a successful Poultry Exhibitor.

I write, however, in no vainglorious spirit ; I have been beaten too often to boast ; my wish only is to show what amount of success may be

achieved by a novice, such as I was a few years ago, in *exhibition*, though not in *table*, Poultry.

Feeling the utter hopelessness of winning any honours with my own stock, I commenced my career by purchasing, in "Merrie England," a splendid pen of Dorkings, which carried all before it, at my first and second exhibition, in Scotland; so I began well, and though, of course, I buy, every year, for change of blood, I now breed my own exhibition fowls,—ay, and sell to others for that purpose; and have even been beaten by my *own* birds shown against me.

To breed successfully, one must part with the good as well as the indifferent, when too nearly allied, and, though loath to lose them, *go* they must, either privately or by public sale, which latter is always more satisfactory, both to feeling and purse; if good, the birds fetch high prices, and there can be no after-reproach; the public fixes its own rate, and relieves you from that responsibility, which is no small one.

It is always extremely difficult to know how much an intending purchaser will give; you fear to lose a customer, and also to ask too little; it is

inherent in human nature to love a good bargain.

From year to year, I have added to my hen-houses and yards, till I have arrived at the grand total of forty-two separate runs; many of a very rude and primitive construction. Some are on the plan given in page 5; others are erected at the edge of plantations and shrubberies, as shown in annexed cut, (fig. 9.) These have no yards, as the occupants enjoy complete

Fig. 9.

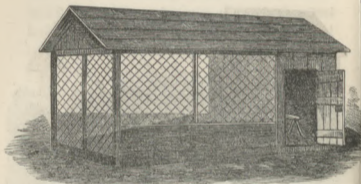


Laurel House.

liberty; there I place my choicest breeding pens, free from all restraint, thus giving them the best chance of retaining health and vigour.

When the hens become broody, and are removed to the sitting-houses, chickens take possession; and remain till the sale in the early

Fig. 10.



year, which makes room for their successors. "Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest."

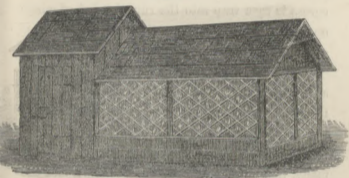
The *parent* cocks, meanwhile, are shut up in the yard-houses with a few hens of any variety, in order to keep up a succession of cross-bred chickens for the table.

I have found the advantage of a number of *small* houses with covered-in wire runs, (moveable

at pleasure to fresh ground,) a drawing of which I give, (fig. 10.)

Some of these yards are of glass, laced over with wire, the houses in both cases being alike detached, but fitting closely to the runs, (fig. 11.) These "Crystal Palaces" answer admirably for a

Fig. 11.



brood of early chickens, protecting them from rain, wind, frost, and snow, and affording the advantage of their receiving every ray of sunshine attainable at the season. In this variable climate, I never feel confidence in the weather till May is out; before that, it is often damp and chilly.

The houses are 6 feet high, and 4 square; the

yards only 4 feet high, 6 long, and 4 wide. The roofs are wooden, covered with waterproof felt; ventilation in the houses is secured by small holes pierced in the ends, and, on fine days (when the hen is allowed to sally forth with her family), I leave the door open till her return.

At all other times it is locked, and the only egress is by a trap into the run, the end of which opens like a door, and can, thus, easily be cleaned out.

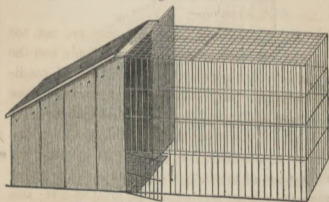
The interior of these houses is fitted up with a row of nests; occasionally I set two hens in these, and, when the broods are hatched, give all the chickens to one.

Being protected from cold, they are not too many, the mother feels herself at home, and the chickens are comparatively in a natural condition; they even *winter* very comfortably in these houses and runs. I find them very useful for a pen of fowls put up for exhibition (in which case a moveable perch is required); and for chickens deserted by their mother at too tender an age, when they demand the greatest care; also for many other exigencies.

In summer, all my small houses are placed on grass, in winter, on dry earth, against a beech hedge, facing the west; twice a-week they are moved to fresh ground: if done regularly, and in line, the ground has time to freshen during each remove.

When not in use, I have the runs set aside so as to leave the pasture perfectly clear; the grass springs up luxuriantly, and should be mown at intervals. Lime is sprinkled over the portion of the park allotted to them, which keeps it free from taint.

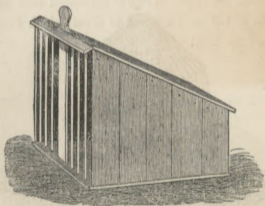
Fig. 12.



Coop, with wire range, (fig. 12), is specially

useful for the night-housing of ducklings and goslings; indeed these tempting morsels easily fall a prey to rats,—they seem their favourite dainties. Chickens they do not touch, unless pressed by hunger, which (perhaps fortunately) is impossible, where so much food can be had for the taking; yet I have had twenty-seven ducklings and three goslings carried off in one night.

Fig. 13.

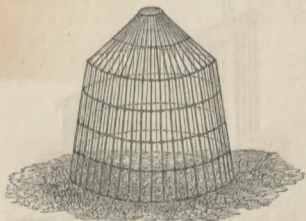


For hens and turkeys which must be confined for a part of each day, (and many *altogether*, if they fight with and ill-use stranger chickens), coop (fig. 13) is essential. The bars of this should

be rounded, two inches apart; in the middle a flat spar, which, when taken out, permits the egress of the hen.

If wooden floors and shutters are wished, they should be made to slide, and more than one for each coop will be requisite. *Mine* are washed, and put up to dry every second day; hence the necessity for duplicates.

Fig. 14.



Coop (fig. 14) is a mere frame of wire, which is employed to secure a refractory hen, while her proper abode is being cleaned, or as a safe-

guard for the food devoted to the chickens; *they* have access to it through the wire, and they only.

Goslings and ducklings, alone, of all young stock, should have food always before them; they eat little at a time, and (for exhibition), require to be pushed on and tempted.

I have no special houses, coops, or troughs for Turkeys. They require none; but live in a semi-wild state *after the first month*, during which the young poults associate with the chickens—the mother being confined in the coop before-mentioned, except an hour or two each day.

Sometimes, when all my little domiciles are full, I am obliged, *bon grè, mal grè*, to let my broods wander at large; the *strong* chickens take no harm, and, perhaps, this roving gipsy life makes them even less liable to disease. Many deaths, however, must occur among the weakly birds; doubtless a provision of nature, in order that the one may not hamper the other.

The mother walks off with the utmost *sang froid*, leaving her helpless babes sprawling on the ground, uttering piteous little cries for help,

quite disregarded and neglected;—they are left alone to die.

When the time comes to draft off the chickens to their adolescent ranges, I carefully select the most promising for the superior ones, putting all the best of one kind there, and mixing the worst indiscriminately together in inferior houses and situations; from these the table and market are supplied.

The points of Dorkings, Brahmas, Spanish, &c., can be pretty well guessed when the hen leaves the brood.

I put about twenty chickens into each hut, and, from time to time, take away any that have fallen off in looks since their location there, to make room for those of a better stamp. I thus weed my runs to the best of my judgment, and a little experience soon makes it comparatively easy to pick out, and do away with, the worst.

Even with the greatest care, some thrive better than others; these are the “lights and shadows” of poultry life. How often does a *single* bird represent a brood, if the season proves unfavourable to delicate varieties; such I do not recommend

to be hatched early; they cost us too much in care and affection.

Slight defects in comb or claw are not fatal to the chickens' merits as table fowls; I, therefore, feed such as well as the very best, but do not crowd my *intended* prize-winners with them.

I keep an exact (even fastidious) account of all dates and numbers in my Poultry Diary, for correctly filling up schedules, arranging my sale catalogue, and for my own general satisfaction.

Each day the number of eggs laid is noted down, the houses are all numbered, and the figure of that in which the egg is found, marked on it by the collector, who *need* not know one sort of fowl from another.

I alone arrange the eggs in their different baskets, writing on the shell with pencil the date and speciality.

Chickens, as they are hatched, are entered in the Diary, as also the fowls killed for table and market, at their respective values.

When my assistant hen-wife receives orders for settings of eggs, I mark them down in due order, that each purchaser may be supplied according to

the date of application; on the day wished, I select the eggs myself, and superintend the packing of them.

This is the form of hamper used (fig. 15); they are made by my own gardeners, and answer the purpose admirably.

Fig. 15.



I wish I could say, all the eggs sent in them hatched well; but this I cannot.

Purchasers, however, should make themselves *au fait* in the treatment of travelled eggs, as the sender is often unjustly blamed.

I have sent eggs to the *Bahamas* (which hatched in the proportion of 8 to 13); also to Ireland and Shetland; these did well, while others, not carried a mile, failed.

I buy eggs for setting every year, and have had varied fortune ; I do not, however, take for granted, that the sender is to blame—when I am unlucky. Even wild birds' eggs do not hatch well in some seasons, and every poultry fancier knows that high-bred prize stock is seldom prolific—the life is too artificial.

If even two birds are hatched, from a setting at £1, 1s., these *alone* are worth the money ; honest dealers (and such names as Watts, Vernon, Baily, Fowler, Stretch, Burn, &c., are material guarantees that they are to be met with) find *that* price too low for eggs from really prize stock, and put an almost prohibitory value on them, I myself among the number.

It is nonsense to talk of eggs having been doctored ; *Quid nuncs* may swallow such tales, but not the practical fancier or breeder. Our names are too valuable to us in the poultry world, and our honour is *quite* as unimpeachable as that of thieves!!

When my eggs have hatched badly, I have given a fresh supply, ungrudgingly, and I may say—have also received it.

My method of packing is to put each egg upright (previously wrapped in strong paper) in a little nest (as it were) of hay, tightly compressed; they are placed as closely as possible in the hamper; on the top is a layer of hay, and paper over all; with a packing needle and twine the lid is then fastened down.

Some use wooden boxes, and pack the eggs in sawdust or bran; but I consider the nailing down of the lid causes a jar which is apt to fracture the eggs. I may say that I never received a setting, packed in this way, which reached me in perfect preservation.

Railway officials, moreover, handle boxes much less carefully than the more fragile-looking hamper.

As soon as eggs for setting are received, they should be put under the hen. I have had complaints of the failure of eggs from my yards which, I have found, were actually allowed to lie in their hamper a fortnight unset; the wonder is that any hatched at all. Often, too, laying hens are allowed access to the sitting hen's nest, and eggs are broken in the struggle which invariably ensues.

Hens often lay during incubation, and, if these eggs are not removed, the result will be the appearance of mongrels in a clutch of a supposed distinct breed.

A little attention would have ensured the *non-intrusion* of such black sheep, and probably the better hatching of the travelled eggs, for such require abundant warmth, *even more* than those laid at home; a tutored eye at once detects the presence of these unbidden guests.

On the 9th day I examine the eggs, by the aid of a candle, in a darkened room, in the same way as advised in my chapter on Hatching. If the egg is to prove productive, it will appear quite *dark*, except a small clear disc at the top; if clear *throughout*, I remove it as hopeless, and have all such boiled hard (to feed the young stock), which is a great economy.

I have found that hens hatch well in small separate houses made something in the style of the annexed cut (fig. 16); they may be placed in the shrubberies, or anywhere, if secluded, and the door left open, or closed, as circumstances dictate; when the sitting-houses are full, these little

willow-retreats will be found useful and acceptable beyond expression, to the intended sitter.

Fig. 16.



Willow Sitting-House.

Having before advised my readers to preserve all supernumerary eggs of summer, I now give them my own recipe for so doing.

Once a-week I clear my baskets, selecting only *perfectly formed* eggs; the slightest fracture or imperfection in the shell would cause the failure of a whole batch.

I place the eggs carefully in a jar, and pour over them lime-water, which is made by dissolving

quicklime, in the proportion of two shells to four gallons of water; this must stand a day, at least, till the residue has settled at the bottom of the vessel; the clearer portion is then poured over the eggs, so as to cover them.

Should the jar not be full, fresh eggs are added from time to time, and as the lime water rises, it is poured into another jar ready to be filled in like manner.

Be careful that the eggs are at least an inch below the surface of the water; place a plate, or lid of wood, over them, to prevent their floating; tie up the jar, and label it, stating the date, and number of dozens.

These eggs are only worth, perhaps, sixpence a-dozen at the time, but when you use them (which will be in the scarce season), they will be worth 1s. 4d. at least.

For even culinary purposes *foreign* eggs,—the collection of months,—find ready purchasers at that price; but, (were preserved eggs more in use), we would not be so dependent on our gallant allies for a winter pudding; the sun's partiality makes us owe the juice of the grape to

the "*Gallic cock*," but we have no occasion to be indebted to his *hens*.

Our own poultry yards should furnish our tables; there need be no limit to our supply of eggs and poultry,—at present, not, by any means, equal to the demand; for a bountiful and "all-the-year-round" stock, I ask only a fair trial of my advice.

Every one has experienced the scarcity of poultry in the country; a dire necessity exists for reform,—let us have it, and we shall no longer be obliged to eat things—called chickens—too often to be classed only with Pharaoh's "lean kine."

We have brighter hopes for the future, we *will* no longer give the "*pas*" to our continental dealers; we shall equal them, and then cry, *Liberté, égalité, fraternité*.

Farmers say that "Poultry rearing is unprofitable, won't pay, that *prices* are small," &c.,—so are the *chickens*,—make them larger, and prices *must* rise.

The importation of eggs and poultry from abroad is enormous; I do grudge to see our

farmers throw away so great a source of profit. All keep poultry on a greater or lesser scale, thereby admitting the necessity of such stock,—now, if kept at all, let it be of remunerative kinds. My maxim is, “Whatever is worth doing, is worth doing well,”—and I would rather see our agricultural husbands “hen-pecked” all their lives, than beaten by foreigners.

Let *us* give our neighbours useful lessons in poultry, as in the management of the farm, and they must succumb, in spite of their more genial climate.

Perhaps my little book may assist in this laudable endeavour; a certain degree of knowledge is necessary to organize a system.

I assure my readers mine is not merely theory; they may judge of this by my *facts*. To back up this pretension, figures are requisite, and they are forthcoming.

The “farm-yard” is patronized by royalty, and dealings in stock—not despised; many ladies take an interest in the “Dairy;” I advise their turning their attention to the “Poultry-yard” as well,—thereby giving a stimulus to the

breeders of fine poultry, and certainly benefiting their own *ménages* by the introduction of such.

At the risk of even *my word* being doubted by the ignorant, I subjoin the weights of Turkeys, Geese, Ducks, Dorkings, Cochins, &c., from my own yards. Only those who have real experience in modern poultry will credit the weights to which they have attained, by judicious breeding and feeding. A friend of mine, the other day, spoke (with a mixture of surprise and incredulity) of a Turkey he knew of which was *said* to weigh 20 lbs. His surprise was considerably increased when one was pointed out to him weighing 34 lbs., which was strutting about in my yard in all its pride, the consequential protector of twenty hens, the best of which would rival the weight of the cock that caused so much astonishment to the novice.

I had once a Turkey that weighed 40 lbs., but alas! he is no more, though he lives in his posterity.

I consider the following good exhibition weights, where they are an element of success, which, in many merely fancy varieties, is not the

case—colouring and condition being the *desiderata*:—

Turkey Cock,.....	25 to 30 lbs.
Do. Hen,.....	17 to 20 „
Toulouse Gander,	25 to 30 „
Do. Goose,.....	20 to 24 „
Grey Dorking Cock,	10 to 12 „
Do. Do. Hen,.....	8 to 10 „
Rouen Drake,.....	7 to 8½ „
Do. Duck,	6½ to 7 „
Aylesbury Drake,	8 to 9 „
Do. Duck,.....	7½ to 8½ „
Cochin Cock,.....	10 to 12 „
Do. Hen,.....	8 to 9 „
Brahma Pootra Cock,	10 to 12 „
Do. Do. Hen,.....	8 to 9 „

I may mention that a pen of two goslings I sent to Birmingham, in December, 1860, weighed 42 lbs., their age being five months. Three Dorking pullets (six months' old) I sent to the same show weighed 23½ lbs.

My own expenses are, perhaps, greater than are required. Poultry is my “hobby,” and I ride it. My “staff” numbers *three*,—a man and two women; my own *valuable* services must not be lost sight of,—a galaxy of talent—at least we think so, and that is the same thing.

Fortunately there are full lists of our prizes and precedents, during past years, to refer to. I do not think they will show I have been a laggard in the fray; *badinage apart*, we have been given laurels, and gratefully wear them.

Not the *least* pleasure of social life is that of making friends, and retaining them by the interchange of ideas and experience on a subject of common interest.

Such is the mysterious and cabalistic tie which binds poultry-fanciers together, that, without even an introduction, they look upon each other as *friends*, and are delighted to acknowledge the freemasonry that exists among them.

From a simple question about poultry has arisen a personal friendship, and the kindest possible feeling; how pleasant a chat upon poultry can be, is only known to the initiated few.

The cottager seeks for information from his wealthier (in poultry) neighbour, and it is *for him* I enjoy the small country shows, if conducted on an amiable and friendly footing; they are the annual exponents of poultry progress, and a true lover of poultry will take defeat in good part,

provided he feels sure that he has been fairly dealt with ; though disappointed, he will bear no malice ; but justice there *must* be, to avoid grumbings and heart-burnings.

Now for my "Balance Sheet,"—dreadful words to not a few ! Bear in mind that the *profits* and *expenses* of exhibition about make an even balance in the debit and credit account, and are therefore excluded ; if I *buy* at shows, I *sell* also, and in the long-run nothing is lost. I give my regular yearly expenses, and returns of private and market sales—including the value of poultry-yard produce used in my household.

Balance Sheet

Assets

Liabilities

Equity

1

Balance Sheet.

Balance

POULTRY ON HAND—BREEDING STOCK.

15th February, 1861.

14 Geese at Market value	L.7 0 0
25 Turkeys at 10s.	12 10 0
15 Rouen Ducks at 2s.	1 10 0
6 Buenos Ayres Ducks at 2s.	0 12 0
55 Dorkings at 2s.	5 10 0
36 Brahmas at 2s.	3 12 0
15 Buff Cochins at 2s.	1 10 0
25 White Cochins at 2s.	2 10 0
12 Crève Cœurs at 2s.	1 4 0
30 Cross-bred Hens for Setting at 2s.	3 0 0

L.38 18 0

The manure from the poultry houses, which is very valuable, in fact the

RECEIPTS, 1860.

Eggs sold at market	L.18 8 0
Poultry sold at market	12 6 6
Eggs for household	11 4 0
Poultry for household	34 5 0
Eggs sold for setting	36 16 0
Poultry sold for breeding	53 12 6
Feathers and Down	5 11 3
Poultry sold by public auction	148 15 6

L.320 18 9

Balance brought down L.17 1 0

Balance brought down 9 16 0

Total profits, L.26 17 0

Sheet.

POULTRY ON HAND—BREEDING STOCK.

15th February, 1860.

5 Geese at Market value	L.2 10 0
10 Turkeys at 10s.	5 0 0
10 Ducks at 2s.	1 0 0
36 Dorkings at 2s.	3 12 0
36 Brahmas at 2s.	3 12 0
10 Buff Cochins at 2s.	1 0 0
10 White Cochins at 2s.	1 0 0
6 Golden Pencilled Hamburgs at 2s.	0 12 0
8 Crève Cœurs at 2s.	0 16 0
5 Bantams at 1s.	0 5 0
25 Hens bought in for Setting at 2s.	2 10 0
	<hr/>
	L.21 17 0
Balance carried down	17 1 0
	<hr/>
	L.38 18 0

richest Guano, I consider quite an equivalent for the straw and hay used.

EXPENSES, 1860.

Wages	L.80 0 0
Grain and Oatmeal	115 7 0
Paring Meal (or Thirds)	23 5 0
Bran	3 2 6
Indian Corn	31 16 9
Hemp Seed	6 2 9
Buckwheat and Linseed	3 8 0
Eggs for Setting	6 17 0
Medicine	2 1 0
Ale and Beer	5 10 0
Bread	5 15 3
Meat	3 14 3
Advertising and Diary	14 3 6
Carpenter-Work and Wire	7 1 3
Wicker-Work, Setting Coops	1 13 0
Cutlery	0 7 0
Feeding and Drinking Vessels	0 18 6
Balance carried down	9 16 0
	<hr/>
	L.320 18 9

I must leave it to the reader to put a price on my own personal labour, time, &c.; do not set them down at too low a figure.

All dainty food I distribute with my own hands, or give it in charge to one who is acquainted with the wants and circumstances of my favourites.

Even as late as ten o'clock, on a summer night, I may be seen, basket in hand, containing vinegar, oil, and other "*impedimenta*," making the round of the houses, and coops, in which some of the occupants require the different medicines.

Should *roup* unfortunately appear, a regular routine of washing is established; a small basin for vinegar, and a sponge, are produced from my basket, and every night, and every morning, each sufferer is attended to.

Such care is rewarded by the speedy recovery of the patients, and then I gladly lay aside the physic for the food, and rejoice the hearts of the convalescents with some little additional treat.

They all know me quite well, and, at the usual hour of feeding, will come far on the way to

meet me, a circumstance which occasioned a most absurd remark, "that I starved my fowls." Yes, —this really *is a fact*.

The poor things, in their attachment to me, and feeling confident that they would meet only with kind treatment at my hands, thus, unconsciously (by their very fondness), gave a colour to this notion.

* * * *

"He prayeth well that loveth well
Both man, and bird, and beast;

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things, both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made, and loves them all."

"No man can tether time or tide," this is beyond the energies even of the "Henwife," and I must now make my *congé*, a book not being (as *were* Othello's "bloody thoughts")—

"Like to the Pontic Sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont."

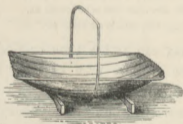
I would not lag "superfluous on the stage:" sweet is the sailor's rest when the voyage is over,

and sweet the Author's dreams when the toil is ended.

Many, perhaps, have deemed me a fanatic, and have, long since, thrown away my book as the raving of a monomaniac.

But all have not the same tastes, and if any have been my unwearied companions through the pleasant fields of Poultry, I thank them with a warm and grateful heart. With *such*, "parting" is, indeed, "sweet sorrow."

"Farewell,—a word that must be, and has been." Farewell—kind reader.



The Henwife's Own Basket.

ERRATA.

Page 40, 2nd line, for *this*, read *the*.

Page 97, 4th line, for *at this season*, read *in autumn*.

Page 102, 2nd line from bottom, for *miniatures*, read
creatures.

Page 155, 6th line, omit *as*.



