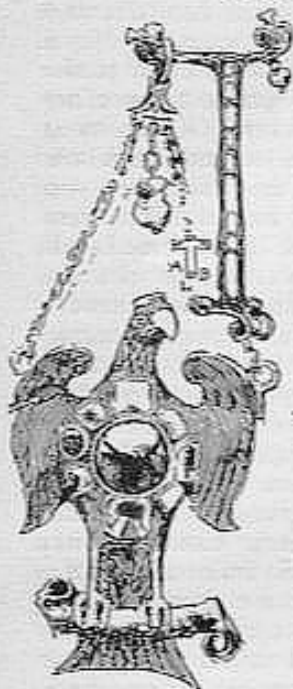


CHICKENS FOR USE AND BEAUTY.¹



HERE has been, during the last quarter of a century, a remarkable improvement in domestic poultry. The motley array of fowls varying in size and color, as uncertain in marking as the pattern of a crazy-quilt, and creating an impression as distinctively unfavorable as that which the ragged followers of Falstaff produced, has given place to well-defined breeds, carefully differentiated into varieties, with colors as rich in hue and as regularly disposed as if laid on by the hand of the artist. The fancier, to whom we are indebted for this wonderful transformation, is indeed an artist, working not in lifeless clay and dead pigments, but in animate bodies and living colors. Under his hand the unattractive has become attractive, ugliness has yielded to beauty. But his work has not ended with this external transformation: the inner and practical qualities have undergone a similar change; productiveness has been increased, weight augmented, fattening power improved. Such fowls as are bred to-day are not only more beautiful but more profitable than those of twenty-five years ago. This increased profitableness has produced a new industry — the raising of chickens and eggs for market as a sole employment. With the old-time fowls such an industry would have been folly, but with the modern fowl it has proved a success. This improvement in external characteristics and useful qualities has been made possible through that mysterious power of indefinite variation which the hen possesses. Fanciers by employing this power, by carefully studying to preserve every beneficial and to avoid every injurious variation, by studying to mate so as to increase desirable variations, have with patient and persevering effort molded to their will the modern domestic fowl.

That all the distinct varieties of the domestic

¹ The illustrations in this article are from photographs of birds belonging to Thomas W. Ludlow, Esq.

hen, differing in size, color, and particular characteristics, should be descendants of a common ancestor, the *Gallus bankivus*, at first seems incredible. To this conclusion, however, the best informed naturalists have come. It is true that the almost infinite plasticity of the chicken, even at the present day, after it has been sought to fix its characteristics by careful selection through many generations, prepares the mind to accept more readily the scientific conclusion of a common origin. The *Gallus bankivus* is a bird of compact form, broad across the back and shoulders, with an erect carriage, protruding breast, and tail borne nearly horizontal, the tips of the sickle-feathers barely clearing the ground. The plumage is abundant, and the hackles, or feathers of the neck, and upper tail-coverts are linear, pointed, and drooping. The head and face are bare, the comb is high and serrated, two wattles depend from the base of the bill, and similar but smaller excrescences exist under each ear. The colors of the males are: upon the head and neck bright orange, fading to pale and golden towards the back; upon the back a rich, deep vinous rust color; the tail-coverts fiery orange, golden tipped; the tail, upper coverts, and sickle-feathers black with a green gloss; wing-coverts like the back, but the last two rows black with a green gloss; the secondaries of the wing chestnut on the outer or exposed web and dusky within; the primaries dusky; and all the lower parts black. The plumage of the female is more somber — the neck golden or tawny, every feather centered with brownish-black, all the upper parts of a burnt umber, and all the under parts reddish-brown. The general aspect and characteristics of the *Gallus bankivus* are closely preserved among its domesticated descendants in the black-breasted red game fowl, of the pit or fighting type. In size the wild fowl is about midway between the ordinary pit fowl and the game Bantam.

So great a difference in appearance and so great a similarity in qualities exist among the domesticated descendants of the *Gallus bankivus*, that any classification of breeds must be considered a matter rather of convenience than of scientific exactness. If it is sought to divide the varieties into two classes, the useful and the ornamental, such classification will necessarily be imperfect, for all the useful varieties are

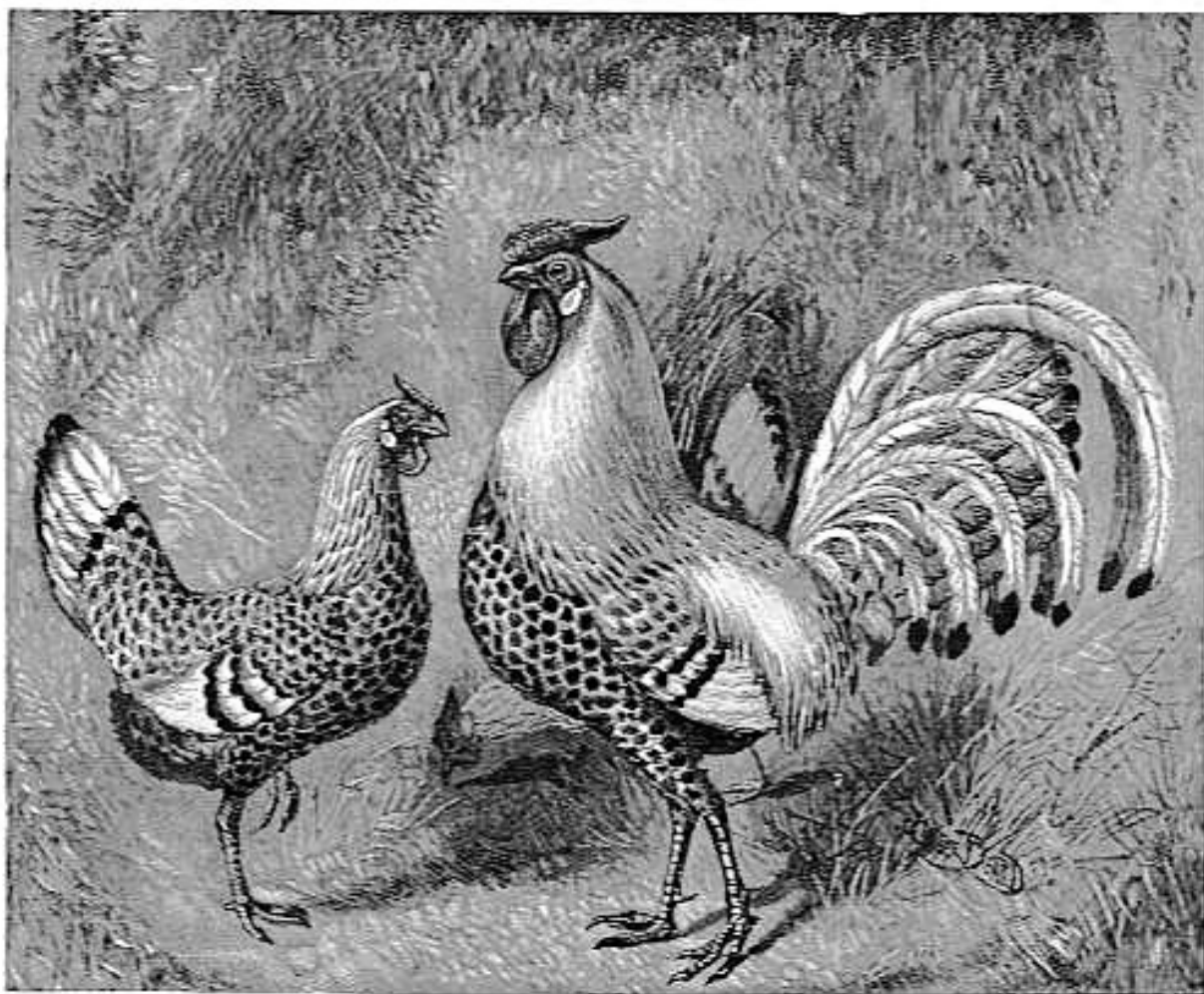
more or less ornamental, and all the ornamental varieties are, at least to some degree, useful. Yet such a classification is serviceable, as leading to a more comprehensive grasp of the subject. The first class, the useful chickens, may be subdivided into three minor classes, the first embracing those varieties which are the most prolific layers; the second, those which are deemed the best for the table; and the third, those which combine the qualities of the two former divisions, are at once good layers and good as table poultry, and are often designated "general purpose fowls." The first of these divisions is the choice of those whose primary object in poultry-keeping is the production of eggs for market; the second, of those who desire to raise the finest dressed poultry; and the third, of those who keep fowls for the supply of their own tables. In the ornamental class are included those breeds which are admired for the symmetry of their forms, the beauty of their plumage, or the oddity of their appearance. The most prolific layers are found among the Spanish or Mediterranean breeds, a group of fowls possessing in common (with a single exception noted below) the following characteristics: a high single comb, deeply serrated, which in the male is erect and in the female droops to one side; long, pendulous wattles; white ear-lobes; a full, round breast, carried prominently forward; a rather long and slender body; a full, upright tail, which in the male is furnished with long, flowing sickle-feathers; and a nervous, restless disposition, which makes them, when at liberty, excellent foragers, and thus economical to keep. Whether these characteristics have been developed by careful selection, or whether they are the result of climate and surroundings, is not known. There are traditions, more or less misty, that the monks who inhabited the ancient monasteries in the countries bordering upon the Mediterranean were ardent poultry-fanciers, and that to their skillful breeding is due the uniformity of type of the chickens of this region; but the foundations for such traditions are at best uncertain. It is more probable that the characteristics in question result from natural causes acting through long stretches of time; for we know that in warm climates there is always a tendency to increase in the size of combs and wattles, and to a profuse plumage, and it is reasonable to suppose that this tendency, operating for many centuries, would produce spontaneously most of the characteristics of the Mediterranean group. Nature is quite as skillful and original a breeder as man; and though she usually works more slowly, she produces more permanent results.

The Mediterranean group includes the White-faced Black Spanish, the Minorcas, the

Andalusian, and the Leghorns. The White-faced Black Spanish is a tall fowl, with long, clean, dark legs, a plumage of intense black, and a white face, covering the space about the eyes, and extending down the sides of the head for a considerable distance, giving it a strange and weird look. For many years it enjoyed the distinction not only of being a very prolific layer, but of producing the largest eggs of any recognized variety of chicken. Of late, owing to the efforts of fanciers to increase the size and improve the quality of the white face,—in which they have been remarkably successful,—the useful qualities of the breed have been lost sight of, and its economic value has steadily declined. Poultry-fanciers have a strong leaning towards the extreme of development; and in securing that they sometimes forget more practical qualities. From the Black Spanish have from time to time come snow-white specimens ("sports"), and by some breeders these have been preserved as the foundation of a new variety. The tendency of black plumage to become transmuted into white is a familiar but little understood fact in breeding. White sports have appeared occasionally from other colors; but such sports are generally traceable to a reversion, and point to a white ancestor not many generations back. But among black fowls, whose pedigree has been carefully preserved for a long period of time, and which have had no opportunity for mixing with other colors, white sports are more common than among fowls of any other color. The White Spanish have never attained any great popularity, and probably never will, for the startling contrast between the color of the face and that of the plumage, which is the distinguishing mark of the black variety, is, of course, wanting in the Whites.

The Minorcas, of which there are two varieties, the Black and the White, in general characteristics closely resemble the Spanish, and indeed were known, many years ago, as Red-faced Spanish. They differ chiefly in having the white on the face confined to the ear-lobe, or deaf ear, and in being rather shorter in leg and heavier in body than the Spanish. This breed has but recently been imported into the United States, though it has long been highly prized in England as furnishing great layers.

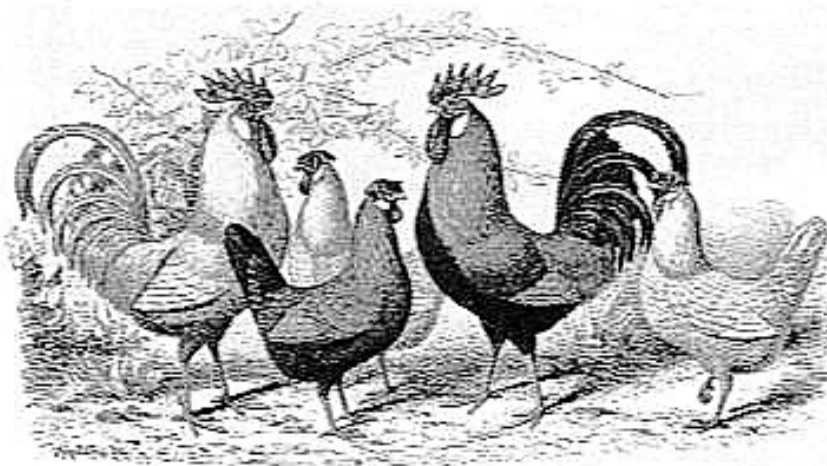
The Andalusian might without impropriety be called a blue Minorca. Its plumage is of a slaty blue,—a somewhat rare color in fowls,—each feather having around the outer edge a delicate lacing of a darker shade of blue, sometimes nearly or quite black. The hackle and saddle feathers are usually darker than the under parts,—in the cock being sometimes glossy black,—and often show purple reflections in the sunlight.



SILVER-SPANGLED HAMBURGS.

The most widespread and popular breed of chickens in the Mediterranean class is the Leghorn, so named from the Italian port from which the fowls were first exported. The earliest importation into this country was of the Brown, then called Red, Leghorns, by Mr. N. P. Ward of New York City, about the year 1835. The chicks bred from this importation were scattered among Mr. Ward's friends, and soon became hopelessly mixed with the common fowls of the country. In 1852 a second importation of Brown Leghorns was made, the fowls being brought to Mystic, Connecticut; and during the next year a third importation came to the same place. With the importations of 1852 and 1853 the history of the Leghorn in the United States really begins. It was not until 1858, when the so-called "Lord importation," and 1863, when the "Stetson birds" arrived, that the White Leghorn made its appearance. The chickens of the Lord importation had, it is said, white legs like White Minorcas, and it is possible that they were Minorcas and not Leghorns; but the Stetson birds had the yellow legs and the trim bodies which are now recognized as characteristic of the Leghorn. England, though she has contributed not a few varieties of fowls to this country, is indebted to the United States for

the Leghorn, having imported the White variety from here in 1870 and the Brown two years later. The Leghorn breed includes six varieties: four with single combs, Brown, White, Black, and Dominique or Cuckoo; and two with rose-combs, Brown and White. The rose-comb is an anomaly among the Mediterranean breeds, and many have held it to be evidence of a recent cross. There is little doubt that many so-called rose-combed Leghorns were produced by crossing the single-combed Leghorn with the Hamburg, which has the rose-comb, but there is unimpeachable testimony that rose-combed chicks appeared among the earliest broods from imported Leghorns. Whether this indicates a reversion to a long-forgotten cross with a rose-combed ancestor, or whether it is merely a noteworthy instance of variation, we cannot determine; but the fact justifies the breeders of rose-combed Leghorns in asserting the purity of their fowls. The Brown variety is of the typical Game or *Gallus bankivus* coloring, the male having hackle and saddle of a brilliant red or orange, with a black stripe through the middle of every feather; dark red back; black breast, body, and tail; and a glossy black bar across the wings. The female is of a brown hue over the greater part of the body, the feathers being finely penciled, and has a deep-



SINGLE-COMBED BROWN AND WHITE LEGHORNS.

salmon breast. The White and Black Leghorns are solid-colored birds, though the males of the Whites have a tendency to show a yellow tinge upon the upper parts—a tendency which is found in all white-plumaged fowls having yellow legs and skin. The plumage of the Dominique or Cuckoo Leghorn looks, at a distance, as if made up of alternate bars of two shades of blue; but upon examining the separate feathers the body color is found to be a grayish white, crossed by transverse bars of black. The rose-combed varieties differ from the single-combed only in the character of the combs.

Ranking next or even superior to the Mediterranean class as egg-producers stands the graceful Hamburg family. The Hamburg proves the impossibility of an exact classification of chickens upon economic grounds, for it is not only one of the most useful but also one of the most ornamental of domestic fowls.

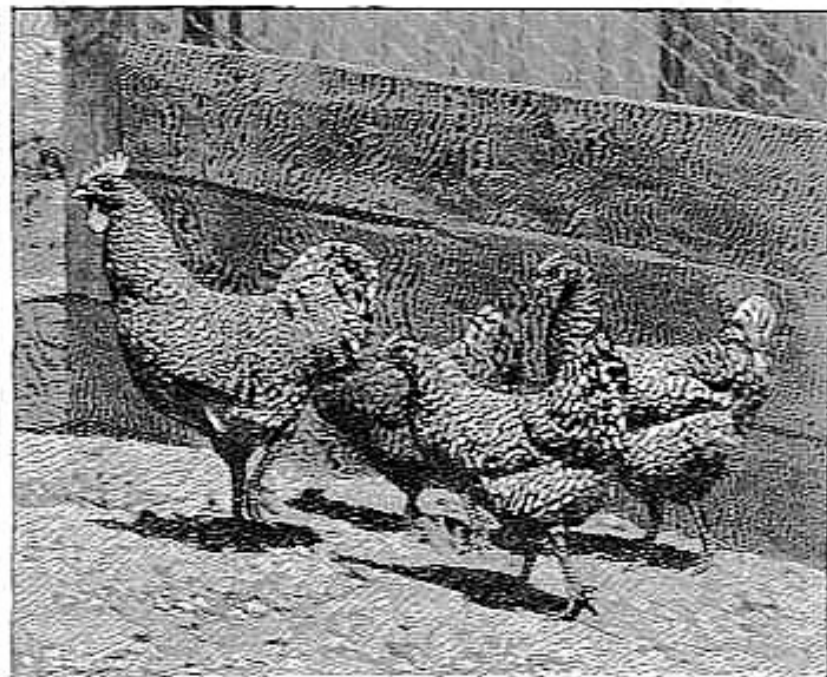
This family includes two breeds: the Hamburg with its six varieties, Golden and Silver-Spangled, Golden and Silver-Penciled, Black and White; and the Red-cap. The Hamburg family is characterized by rose-combs, slender, clean-cut bodies, and well-developed tails. It has masqueraded under a great variety of names, such as Penciled Dutch, Everlasting Layers, Dutch Everyday Layers, Chitteprats, Bolton Grays, Creoles, Corals, Creels, Bolton Bays, Silver Pheasants, Silver Mooneys, Silver Moss, Golden Pheasants, Golden Mooneys, Copper Moss, and the like; but, under whatever name, it has always won a host of

admirers. The Hamburgs have an authentic history reaching back three centuries, and a mythical one that connects them with the "Morning Star" of English song. Chaucer, in "The Nun's Tale," describes with considerable detail a fowl which may have been a Hamburg:

His coomb was redder than
the fyn coral,
And batailled as it were a castel
wal;
His hyle was blak, and as the
jeet it shoon;

Lyk asure were hise legges and his toon;
Hise nayles whiter than the lylce flour,
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.

Whether this description should be applied to the Hamburg or to a game fowl, it is certain that the celebrated naturalist Aldrovandi, who wrote in Latin some three hundred years ago, was familiar with the breed, which he describes under the name of *Gallina turcica*. "The cock whose likeness we give," he says, "is called the Turkish cock. His whole body is in a manner inclined to white. Still, the wing feathers are partly black. The tail consists of feathers that are partly green, partly black; some, also, are half green, some half black. His whole body is exquisitely adorned with lines that are sometimes golden, sometimes silver, and it is wonderful how beautiful an effect this produces. His legs and feet are tinged with blue. The hen, which also is



SINGLE-COMBED BANDED PLYMOUTH ROCKS.

called Turkish, is all white, sprinkled over with black spots; she has the feet tinged with blue, and the wattles short when compared with those of the male. Another hen presents the same appearance, except that her neck is yellowish; she carries a sharp point on the top of her head, her feet are altogether blue, and her tail is immaculate."

Tested by the standards of to-day, this description is somewhat confused; yet it presents a union of Hamburg characteristics—the lines of penciling, the spots or spangles, the silver or golden colors, the blue legs, the projecting spike or point of the rose-comb.

At the date of our author, it is hardly to be expected either that descriptions of fowls should be strictly accurate, or that the modern varieties of a breed of chickens could be definitely differentiated; but a century later both results had been accomplished. The old breeders in Lancashire and Yorkshire established exhibitions of their Hamburgs, at which they competed for prizes consisting of copper kettles and other useful household articles, and they reduced the points of excellence to be prized in their fowls to a carefully written description, thus anticipating the poultry-show and the "Standard of Excellence for Exhibition Poultry" of our day.

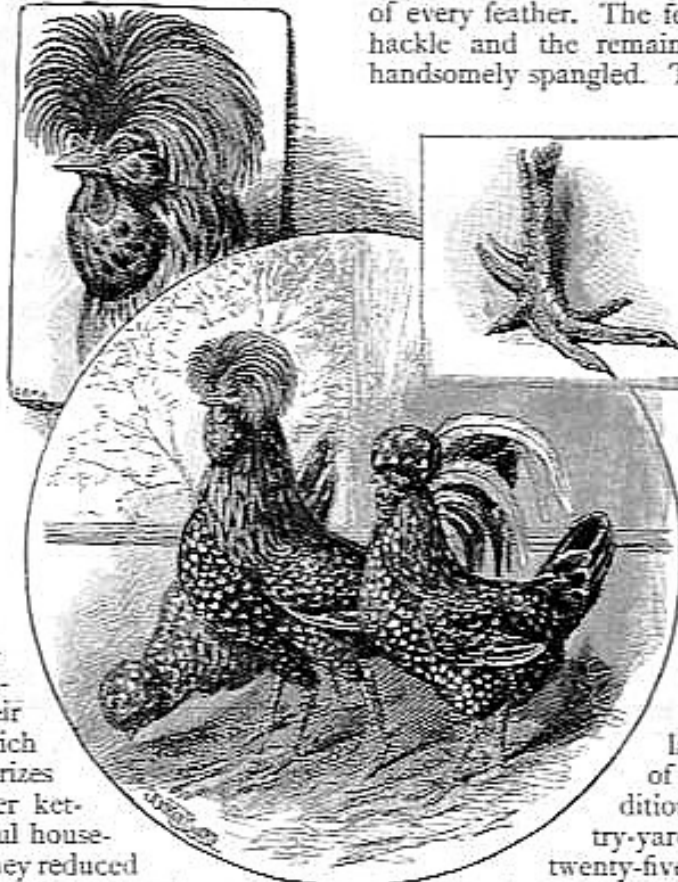
The Penciled Hamburgs were probably perfected in Holland, while the Spangled varieties are clearly of English origin. In size the Blacks take the lead, and the Penciled are the smallest. Originally the Penciled varieties were of a somewhat finer build than the others, but since all have been brought under a common name, and thus more closely associated with one another, they have been brought to a nearly uniform shape. The Penciled varieties show either a silvery-white or a golden-bay ground-color, both varieties being similarly marked. The male bird is nearly uniform in color throughout, except the tail, which is

black, the sickles and coverts having a narrow edging of the ground-color. The females have the neck free from markings, the remainder of the plumage being penciled, or marked transversely, with narrow black lines at right angles to the shaft of the feather, and forming together nearly parallel bars about the body of the fowl. In the Spangled variety the male has a beautifully spangled breast, a slightly striped hackle and saddle, a double bar across the wings, and in the Golden Hamburg a black tail, while the Silver cock has a white tail with a black moon or spangle at the end of every feather. The females have a striped hackle and the remainder of the plumage handsomely spangled. The White and Black

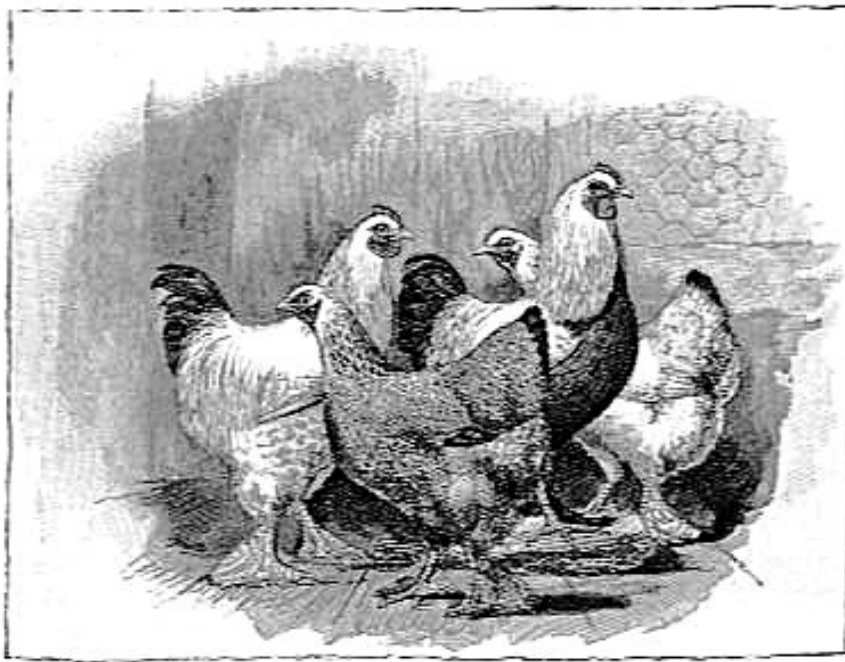
Hamburgs are of a pure, solid color, though spangles are marked on the Blacks by greater glossiness of the tips of the feathers. The Red-cap, so called from the excessive development of its comb, which resembles a red cap, and is often so large as to hang to one side in a manner which for a fowl is not at all jaunty, has long been a favorite in Derbyshire and other districts of England, although it is one of the most recent additions to American poultry-yards. Some twenty or twenty-five years ago there were

importations of this breed, but, like the earliest importations of the Leghorn, these became intermingled with other fowls, and soon disappeared. In general appearance the Red-cap resembles a Golden Spangled Hamburg of poor color, its body-color being less rich and its markings less regular. It is probable that it stands to the Golden Spangled Hamburg in the relationship of a descendant or an ancestor—more probably the latter. It is considerably larger than the Hamburg, which it equals in the number and surpasses in the size of its eggs. Such popularity as it enjoys has been won not by its appearance, but by its excellent reputation as a layer.

Among the fowls most prized for their table qualities there are none that surpass the Dorking and the Indian—or, as it is sometimes called,



HOLLAND.



DARK AND LIGHT BRAHMAS.

the Cornish Indian—Game. The Dorking, whose name comes from the old market town in Surrey where great numbers of this fowl are annually reared, has been for generations the model of all that is desirable in a table fowl. A volume might be made up of quotations in praise of this breed. Mr. Baily, an experienced London poultry judge, says:

There is no breed to be compared with the Dorking, which unites in itself, more than any other, all the properties requisite for supplying the table. . . . There is a natural tendency in the breed to fatten, so that the young ones are made to attain to eight or nine pounds weight, and at table they surpass all others in symmetry of shape and whiteness and delicacy of flesh.

The editor of the "Agricultural Gazette" commended Mr. Baily "in his endeavor to bring us back to Dorkings and common sense." The Rev. E. S. Dixon, in speaking of the excellence of this breed, said:

The breeder and the farmer's wife behold with delight their broad breast, the small proportion of offal, and the large quantity of profitable flesh. The cockerels may be brought to considerable weights, and the flavor and appearance of the meat are inferior to none.

The Dorking boasts of great antiquity. The Latin writer Columella describes a fowl to which the admirers of this breed point as proof that the Dorking antedates English civilization—that before William the Conqueror the Dorking had won popularity, and that along with the conquering cohorts of Cæsar the equally victorious fowl invaded Britain. Columella's description will certainly pass if applied to this famous breed. "Let them," he

says, "be of reddish or dark plumage, with black wings. . . . Let the breeding hens be of robust body, square-built, full-breasted, with large heads, and upright and bright-red combs. . . . Those bred with five toes are held to be the best." There are, however, skeptics, of the ruthless mold of those who have already destroyed many of the cherished illusions of our younger days, who would have us believe that this supposedly ancient breed of Dorkings is little more than a century old, and that it originated, not in Rome, but

in England, not far from the quiet little town which gives it its name.

No better brief description of this fowl has been written than that of Mr. Lewis Wright, the author of one of the most comprehensive books on poultry.

The body should be deep and full, the breast being protuberant and plump, especially in the cock, whose breast, as viewed sideways, ought to form a right angle with the lower part of his body. Both back and breast must be broad, the latter showing no approach to hollowness, and the entire general make full and plump, but neat and compact.

There are four varieties of the Dorking: the Colored, which is the largest, the Silver Gray, the Cuckoo, and the White, which is the smallest. The Colored and the Silver Gray bear a close resemblance to each other, the chief difference being that the latter throughout is lighter in plumage. The Colored male has a white hackle and saddle striped with black, a black-and-white back, a black breast, body, and tail, and a wing with a broad black bar. The female is of a dark reddish-brown marked with black, and has a deep salmon breast. The Colored variety is bred with either single or rose combs, the Silver Gray with single-combs only, and the White with rose-combs only. The Cuckoos are barred with white-and-black like the Cuckoo Leghorn. All varieties have a white or flesh-colored leg, and five toes upon each foot. The Indian Game is with us a much more modern breed, having come into notice in America only within the last two or three years, though it has been extensively bred in England for a longer period. The first fowls of this breed were imported into the

United States in 1887. At the great English poultry exhibitions, the Indian Game, whether bred pure or crossed upon some other fowl, has for the last two or three years won all, or nearly all, of the prizes in the department of dressed poultry, a practical department which

intense black. The feathers are short, hard, and glossy, and in the sunlight gleam like precious stones. The female is of a rich, warm brown body-color, beautifully penciled with V-shaped black markings that appear as if embossed, and are scarcely less iridescent than



BUFF COCHINS.

always forms one of the chief exhibits in foreign poultry-shows. It has the requisites of the best table-fowl — size, reaching the weight of nine or ten pounds; a thin, delicate skin; a plump, meaty carcass; great breast development; and, what is of prime importance to the American poultryman, shanks of a rich yellow color. It may seem ridiculous that the color of the legs should affect the sale of dressed poultry; but the mind of the American housewife is wedded to the yellow shank, and for some inscrutable reason she regards it as evidence of superior quality of flesh. The Indian Game is not only a thoroughly practical but also a very beautiful fowl. It is graceful in shape, having a symmetrical body supported by stout legs, a finely carried neck, and a somewhat drooping tail. The male has a black hackle, every feather having a crimson shaft; a crimson-and-black back and saddle; a handsome wing, with black bar and chestnut wing-bay; and the remainder of the plumage of an

the plumage of the male. A flock of hens of this breed might be mistaken at a distance for a covey of English pheasants, the plumage being very similar.

Among the table-fowls are also to be classed the French breeds: the crested and bearded Houdan, with its mottled plumage of black and white; the large, somber Crève-cœur, with its solid black garments; and the La Flèche, with its antlered comb — “a long, weird, hobgoblin-looking bird,” a veritable nightmare among fowls. In their native land these three breeds enjoy an immense popularity; in this country such claim can be made for the Houdan alone, this fowl being hardy, well formed, an excellent layer of remarkably large white eggs, and very quaint in appearance from the large size of its crest and muff of feathers. At one time the Crève-cœurs had a little popularity; but owing to their slow growth, at least in America, this has gradually approached the vanishing point, and until recent importations

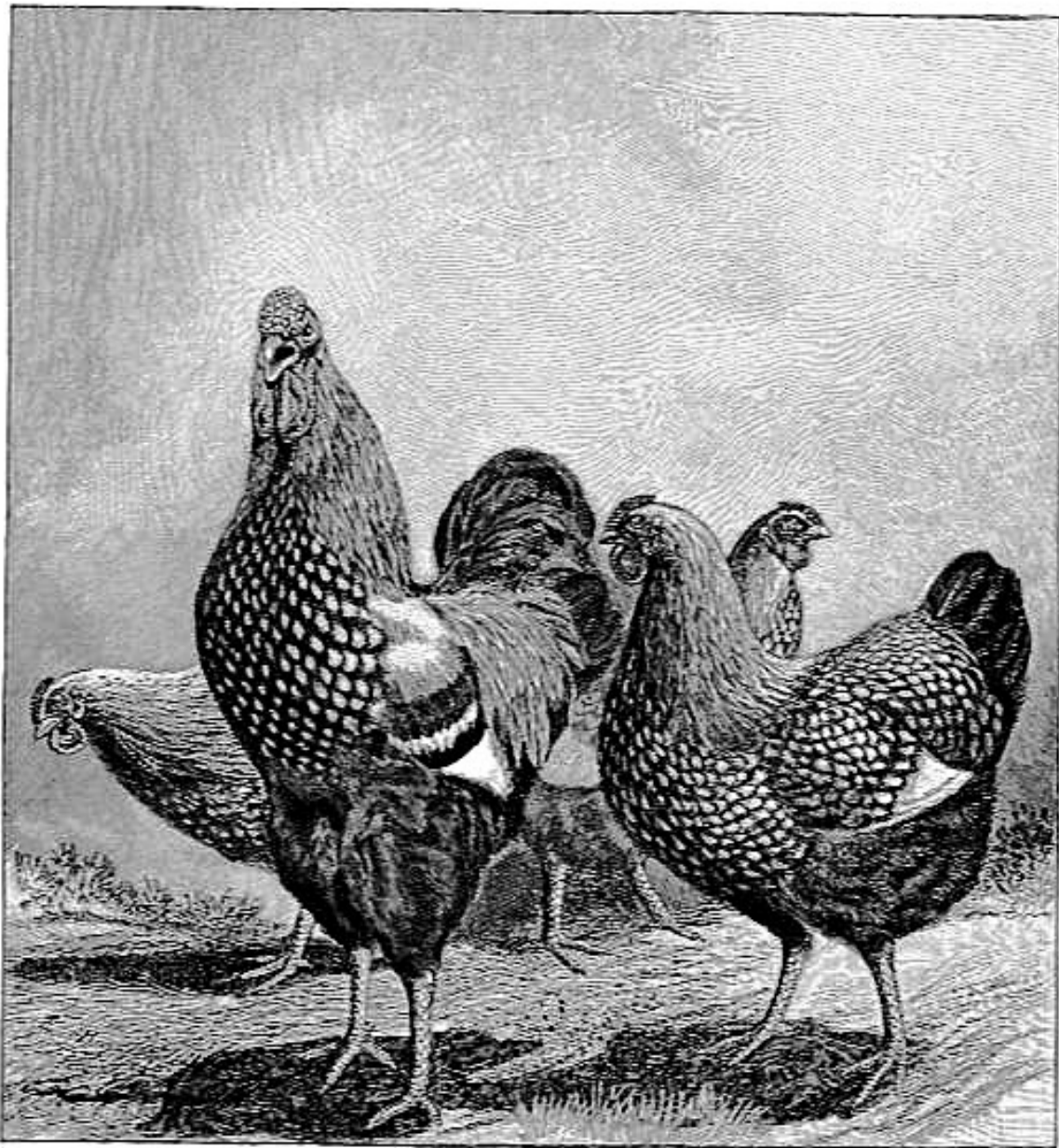
we have had no La Flèche fowls worthy of the name. There are now a few in the country which, if the climate proves suitable for their best development, may form a valuable addition to the table poultry of the United States. Among the "general purpose" fowls, the varieties belonging to the American and Asiatic classes take first rank. Their combination of practical qualities assures them the favor of poultrymen and farmers. The American does not despise beauty, but he worships utility. A chicken that is good for laying and also good to eat is his ideal; and in these two classes he finds such chickens. An examination of the records of the various poultry exhibitions, of the advertisements of poultry-breeders in their special publications, and of the poultry-yards in almost any locality, will convince any one that it is within the bounds of truth to say that there are more chickens belonging to these two classes bred in the United States than of all the other classes together.

The American class includes five acknowledged breeds and twelve varieties: the Plymouth Rock, with its single-combed Barred, pea-combed Barred, and White varieties; the Wyandottes, Silver, Golden, White, and Black; the Javas, Black, Mottled, and White; the American Dominique; and the Jersey Blue. Of these breeds the Plymouth Rock is perhaps the most popular, though this rank is closely contested by the Wyandotte. The original Plymouth Rock was the variety now called the Barred, and was bred with a single comb. It originated in a cross of a Dominique male and Black Java females, though to increase size and improve color other crosses were subsequently used. It was at first hailed with derision, designated as "the great American Mongrel," and furiously opposed by those whose pecuniary interests lay in other breeds; but it steadily advanced in favor, and soon compelled even its opponents to accept it. No other new breed of chickens has ever won and maintained through a long course of years so great and so constantly increasing popularity. From this fowl the pea-combed variety appeared as a sport, and a few breeders, recognizing the advantage of the small, low triple comb, especially for those sections of the country where the winter weather hugs the zero point for a considerable period, made use of this variation to establish a new variety. Similarly the White variety was an offshoot from the original stock.

The original Wyandotte is the variety now distinguished as the Silver, a compact, well-made fowl, having a rose-comb and plumage of a white ground heavily laced with black. It is a cross-bred fowl, as is abundantly shown by the uncertainty of breeding of the earlier specimens, and by the wide variation even now

in the color of young chicks; but who made the original crosses, or what they were, no man can say with certainty. Yet the breeds that enter into the make-up of the Wyandotte can be guessed at, and a skillful breeder could reproduce a type of fowl like the Wyandotte if it should suddenly be destroyed. There can be no doubt that the Dark Brahma and the Silver Spangled Hamburg, and very possibly the Silver Sebright Bantam, have contributed to the composition of this useful breed. From the Silver Wyandotte came as sports, and at least in some strains as the result of crossing, the White and the Black varieties. The Golden Wyandotte, which is the counterpart of the Silver, with a rich yellow or golden bay body-color in place of the white, is confessedly a cross-breed, having been produced from a union of the Silver Wyandotte and the "Winnebago," a fowl of the black-red Game type of plumage. Crosses also of the Golden Spangled and Golden Penciled Hamburg, and of the Partridge Cochin, with the Silver Wyandotte, have been used to produce Golden Wyandottes.

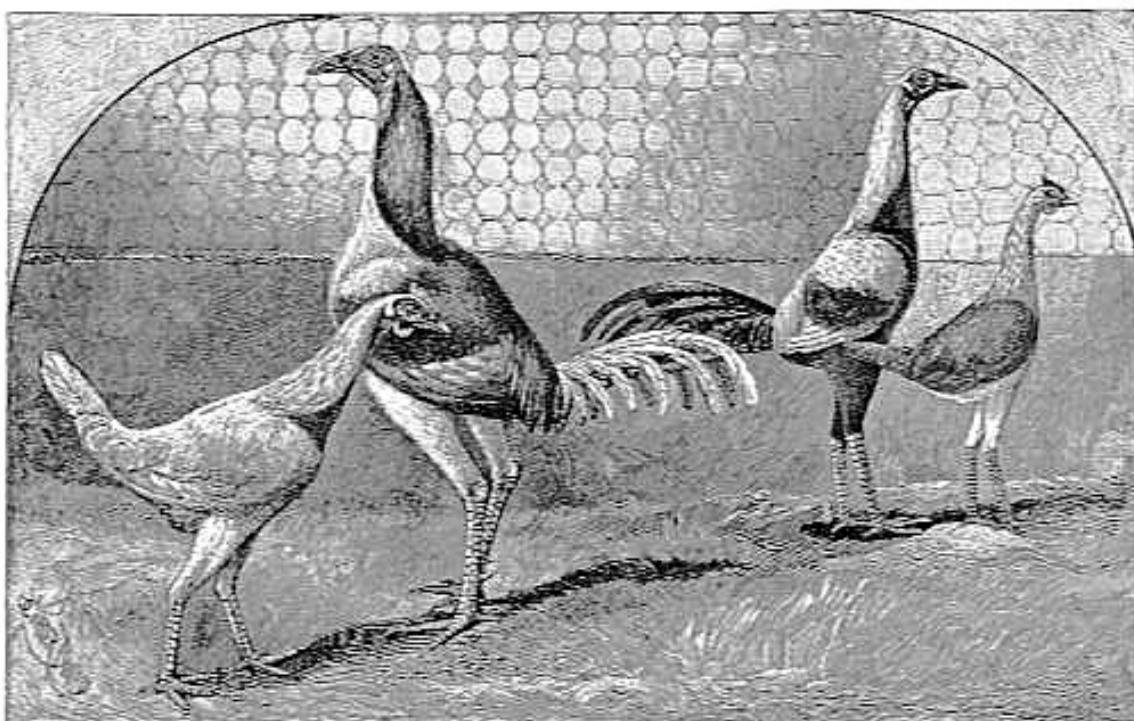
In the Java breed the Black was the original variety. This color, in the modern Java, has been obtained in certainly two, and perhaps in more, ways. In some instances it marks the direct descendant of the old-fashioned Black Java, the fowl that entered into the making of the Plymouth Rock; while in other cases it has undoubtedly come from the black chicks which were at first common among broods of Plymouth Rocks. The Mottled Java was bred from a Black Java cock and a white hen of no known breed, but which possessed the general characteristics of the Java. From both the Black and the Mottled Javas the white variety has been obtained. The Java differs from its near relative, the Plymouth Rock, chiefly in being longer in body and having in the males a more fully developed tail. At present it is required by the Standard to have a willow leg instead of the yellow leg which is characteristic of the Plymouth Rock. The Dominique is one of the oldest of American varieties, and is, in an improved form, the old "hawk-colored" fowl that used to be largely kept by New England farmers. As now bred, its plumage resembles that of the Plymouth Rock; it has a well-developed rose-comb, yellow legs, and is about a pound lighter in weight than the Plymouth Rock. The Jersey Blue, although but recently recognized as a worthy breed by the American Poultry Association, which establishes the Standard, is one of the oldest in the American class. In shape it is like the Plymouth Rock, though its neck is somewhat longer and less arched; in color it is blue, having plumage almost identical with that of the Andalusian.



SILVER (LACED) WYANDOTTES.

The Asiatic class includes the Brahas, Light and Dark; the Cochins, Buff, Partridge, Black, and White; and the Langshans, Black and White. In this class are found the heaviest known varieties of chickens, the Light Brahma being the largest of all. Fowls weighing twelve or thirteen pounds are common, while, in exceptional cases, fourteen or fifteen pounds, and even greater weights, have been obtained. The origin of the Light Brahma has provoked a wordy war of an international character, Mr. George P. Burnham of Melrose, Massachusetts,—who, by the way, at one time presented to Queen Victoria a coop of these fowls, which her Majesty graciously acknowledged by the gift of her portrait,—and Mr. Lewis Wright of London, taking the most prominent part in

the controversy. A ridiculous mouse was born from the labor of these mountains; for the facts concerning the origin of the Light Brahma were carefully collected and sifted, not by the controversialists, but by Mr. H. H. Stoddard of Hartford, Connecticut. The Light Brahma was found to be descended from some fowls brought to New York, and from thence, in 1847, to Hartford, by Mr. Charles Knox; in 1848 they were bred in Hartford by Mr. Nelson Chamberlain; they were first exhibited in 1851 at the hall of the Fitchburg Railroad Station, Boston, by Mr. Samuel O. Hatch of Franklin, Massachusetts; and the first ever seen in England were sent from America in the fall of 1852, having been selected by Mr. C. C. Plaisted from a stock owned by Dr. John C. Bennett. The original specimens were believed to have



RED PYLE AND SILVER DUCK-WING EXHIBITION GAMES.

come from some Asiatic port, but what port is not known. From what seem to the writer reliable data, he does not hesitate to state, as his opinion, that the whole Asiatic family is of Chinese origin. That some of the present family have come directly from China is known, and the whole family possesses in common many distinct characteristics, as large size, profuse feathering upon the bodies, abundance of fluff, feathering upon the shanks and toes, and a quiet and contented, or somewhat sluggish, disposition. All lay large eggs of various shades of brown.

The Brahmans are distinguished from the other Asiatic breeds by having a pea-comb and a somewhat less compact build, and they are in general better layers and foragers than the Cochins. The Light Brahma is mainly white in color, the neck and saddle of the male having a heavy black stripe in each feather, and the tail and the wing feathers being in part black. The female has the same markings, with the exception of the black stripe on the saddle-feathers; but in her the black is less prominent. The Dark Brahma in shape and size is intermediate between the Light Brahma and the Cochins, partaking of the characteristics of both. This is not strange, for the Partridge Cochin was employed as a cross to perfect the beautiful pencilings in the plumage of the Dark Brahma female. The Dark Brahma, in spite of its beauty, is a less popular variety in the United States than the Light Brahma—perhaps from the great skill in breeding required to produce it in perfection. The male, with his

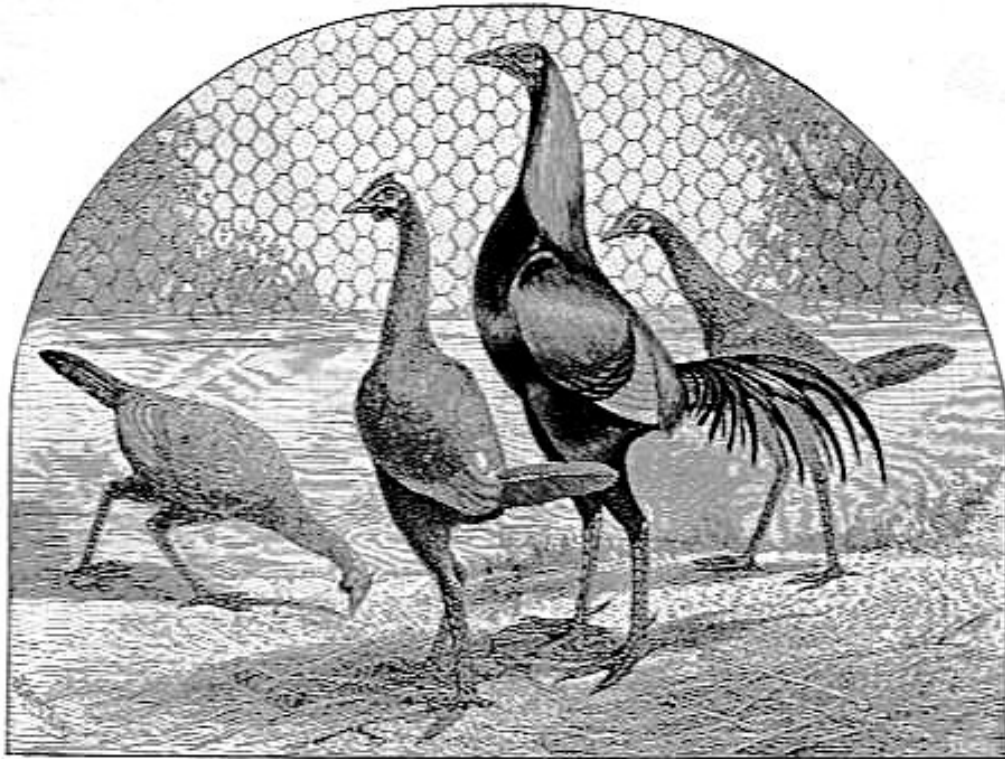
silver hackle striped with black, his solid black breast, and his handsomely barred "duck-wings," is certainly a handsome fowl; but the steel-gray robe of the female is even more to be admired for the chaste but exquisite marking of every feather. The Cochins are the shortest in neck, shortest in body, shortest in tail, and shortest in limb of any chickens in proportion to their size. The plumage is long and soft; the fluff abundant, giving a very broad appearance to the rear; and the feathers of the back, especially of the hen, rise in a concave mass and nearly bury the tail from sight. The Buff variety is the most "Cochin of the Cochins," and has a rich golden color throughout, usually deeper in the male than in the female. The Partridge Cochin is of the typical black-red or *Gallus bankivus* coloring, the male having red as the prevalent color on his upper parts and black on the under parts. The Partridge female is of a rich brown heavily penciled with a darker brown or black, the pencilings following concentrically the outline of the feather. The White and Black Cochins are fluffy masses of their respective colors. The Langshan, the smallest member of the Asiatic family, long held to be merely a Black Cochin, but now recognized as a distinct breed, has been bred to three distinct types, besides numerous intermediate gradations. At first the Cochin type appeared, and lent force to the arguments of those who contended for the identity of Langshan and Cochin; then came a high-tailed, long-legged, slack-breasted type; and finally, what is recognized abroad, and

probably will be here, as the true type, a fowl having a symmetry approaching that of the Hamburg, and thus longer and more slender of body than the other Asiatics. The Langshan has longer wings, better powers of flight, greater pugnacity, a more restless disposition, and is a better forager than any other of the Asiatics. Like other black breeds, it occasionally produces a white chicken, and White Langshans have recently been seen at some Eastern poultry exhibitions, and announced as well on the Pacific coast as imported direct from the Langshan ("Wolf Mountain") region of China. The Asiatic family, being very warmly feathered, are generally the best layers we have in the colder months of the year, and, if killed at the proper age, make fairly good table-poultry. The Langshan, while objectionable to Americans as a market fowl on account of the dark color of its plumage and legs, is exceptionally good eating, the flesh being of about the same quality as that of the Houdan.

Among the more distinctly ornamental fowls

though no variety reproduces itself with greater fidelity than the Games, the finest of them have been produced by but very few men, and even by them only at infrequent intervals. The earlier history of the Game fowl is a history of the cock-pit, once a favorite resort of royalty and nobility, and even supported at public expense by the states of ancient Greece for the lessons of courage and endurance it was believed to offer, but now justly under the ban of the law; and this history is interesting to the fancier of Exhibition Games only as the record of the ancestral stock from which his favorites spring. The times have passed when monarchs and bishops associated with "broken-nosed Bobs," and when assemblages from the most diverse ranks and orders of society were entertained by such songs as—

The main is fought and passed,
And the pit is empty now—
Some cocks have crowed their last,
While some more loudly crow,
From the shock!
In the world the same we see,



BLACK-BREADED RED EXHIBITION GAMES.

there is no breed that possesses more admirers, and upon which more thought, time, and money have been lavished, than the Games. Hundreds of dollars have, time and again, been paid for a single remarkably perfect specimen, and it is not certain but that it is cheaper to buy such a specimen, even at the extravagant price, than to undertake to obtain one like it by the slow process of breeding; for,

VOL. XL.—8.

Where'er our wanderings be,
So here 's a health to thee, jolly cock!

And with these times has waned the renown of the fowl to which the poet attributed the

Spirit that can dare
The deadliest form that death can take,
And dare it for the daring's sake.

The Pit Game, it is true, survives, and in some parts of this country, especially in the South, is extensively bred, but in the pens of English and American fanciers it has been displaced by a fowl more elegant in shape, more brilliant in coloring, and more accurate in marking. The Exhibition Game differs greatly from the Pit fowl. The latter is comparatively short in leg, with a full, flowing tail and an abundant hackle. The Exhibition bird is tall, slender, very erect in carriage, with very short, hard, and glistening plumage, and a small, close tail, carried low. Length of leg and neck

back is flaming orange; the breast is black, with a brownish-red shaft and a narrow golden margin or lacing to the feathers. The female has a lemon-colored hackle, darkly striped, and is almost black in the remainder of the plumage, the best specimens having the breast lightly but distinctly laced with gold.

The Red Pyle Game cock has an orange-red head and hackle, crimson back, white breast, somewhat marked with chestnut, crimson wings, with a white transverse bar, and a white tail; the hen has an orange-red head, a white hackle laced with gold, a dark salmon breast,



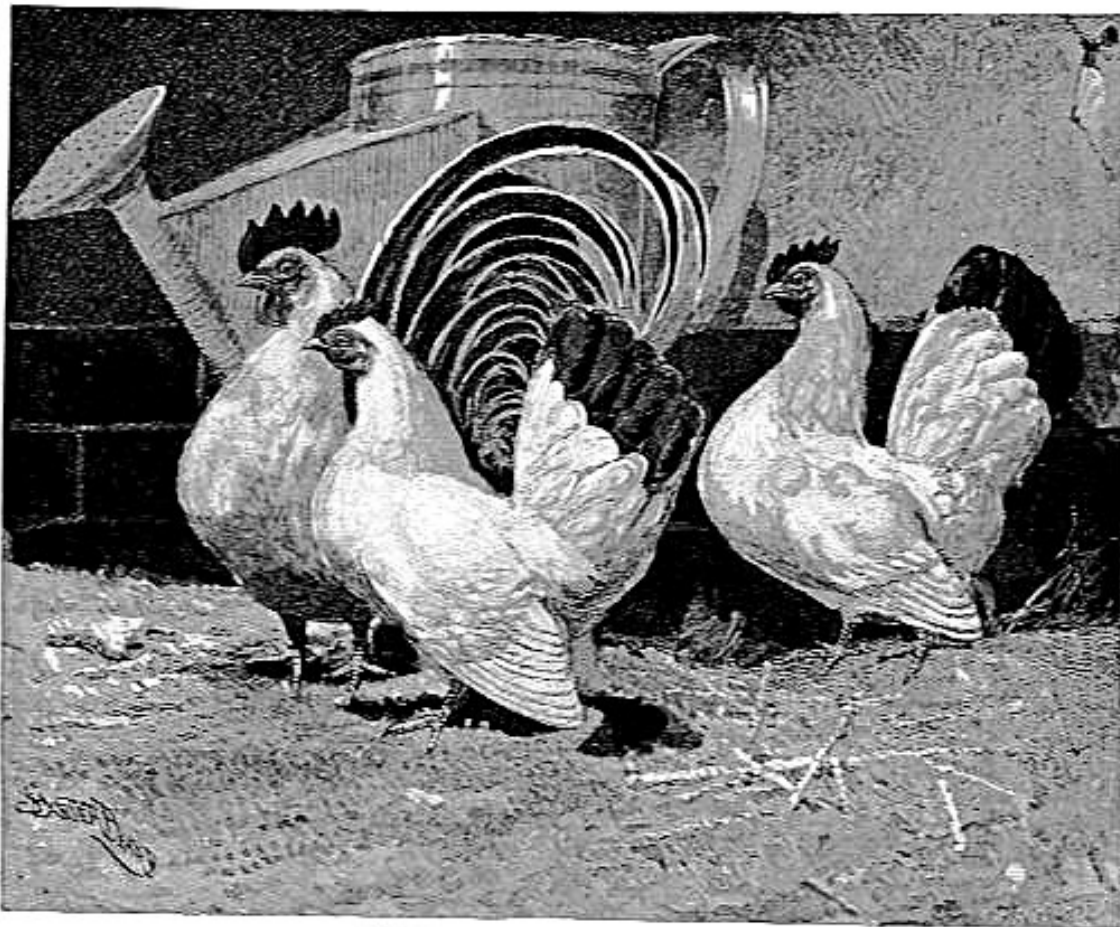
WHITE-CRESTED BLACK POUTER.

are characteristics much sought. Hackle and saddle feathers must be very short and close.

The Black-breasted Red Game is at once the most popular and the most typical variety. It has reached the highest development of form, and possesses the richest combination of colors. The hackle of the male looks almost like spun silk of an orange or light-red hue, the back is of a rich red, the breast is jet black, and the wings are dark red, traversed by an iridescent bar of black. The female is mainly of a somewhat grayish-brown hue, with a salmon breast. The Brown Red Game presents in coloring a glittering combination of black and gold. The hackle of the male is red, shading to lemon, and striped lightly with black; the

white wings slightly marked with chestnut, and a white tail.

The Duck-wing Games, so named because the metallic blue-black bar across the wing rivals in beauty that upon the wing of the Mallard drake, are of two varieties, the Silver and the Golden. The females are much alike, except that the Silver is somewhat the lighter in shade. The Silver male has a silvery hackle, saddle, and back, a glossy black breast, a silvery wing, with its distinctive blue-black bar, and a black tail. The Golden male is like the Silver in the arrangement of color, but the silvery white gives place to a light yellow or straw color upon the neck and saddle, and to a rich copper hue upon the back and wing-bows.



BLACK-TAILED WHITE JAPANESE BANTAMS.

The Duck-wing Games are among the most beautiful of domestic fowls, but in America they have never been brought to the perfection of form attained by the Black-breasted Red variety. In this, English fanciers are considerably in advance of us.

The Black and the White Games complete the list of American varieties of this breed; though in England other varieties also are cultivated, as the Wheatens and Ginger-Reds.

The Black Sumatra is a fowl of lower station than the Game, having a low "strawberry" comb, and full, soft plumage. The tail is very long and sweeping, and the plumage throughout is brilliantly iridescent. The cock often displays, like some pheasants, two or three spurs upon each leg.

The Black-breasted Red Malay, also associated with the Game family, and in its color-scheme approaching a very dark Black-breasted Red Game, is a tall, heavy, stilted-

looking fowl, with overhanging eyebrows, which give it a ferocious expression, and do not belie its disposition.¹

Among the most peculiar fowls related to the Games are the Japanese Long-tailed breeds known as the Shinotawaro or Phoenix, and the Yokohama fowls, the former being colored, the latter white. The peculiarity of these fowls is the remarkable length attained by the tail-feathers. In the museum at Tokio there is a specimen, the longest tail-feathers of which, twenty in number, have the astonishing length of thirteen and a half feet. The length and luxuriance of the tail increases at every succeeding annual moult, and does not reach its fullest development until the bird is four years old. At four months old the tail often measures ten to twelve inches, and at a year old about two feet or two feet and a half.

Among the most universally admired of ornamental fowls are the Polish, with their rose-

¹ The Malay differs from the Indian Game, as now exhibited, in little but the beautiful penciling of the feathers of the Indian hen in concentric lines of glossy black on a cinnamon ground, which penciling often appears on the breast of the cock also, and in the triple or pea comb of the Indian Game, often large in the male, as opposed to the flat or strawberry comb of the Malay. The Malay cock always shows solid black

breast, and the hen, though the latest Standard favors an almost uniform cinnamon or chocolate color, often has the plumage heavily laced with glossy green-black with brown centers, but never penciled like that of her Indian relative. A superficial observer would be apt to confound the two breeds, though the votaries of the Indian Game, at least, contend for their absolute distinctness. — EDITOR.

like crests and dependent beards, their graceful figures and harmonious colors. Whether we prefer the Golden variety with its rich body-color and its spangles of black, the Silver with its effective lacing of black and silver, the Buff-laced with its soft lines of buff and white, the White-crested Black (beardless) with its glossy black body and the striking contrast of its white crest, or the White with its snowy plumage, there is about the fowl enough of beauty to awaken a lively interest. At an exhibition no display attracts more attention or admiration than that of the Polish. And it is, withal, one of the best laying fowls in our list, while the supposed difficulty in rearing the young chicks has been much exaggerated.

An account of ornamental poultry cannot omit those Lilliputians of the poultry-yard, the pets of the children and the delight of the true fancier, the beautiful and consequential Bantams. Diminutive size, proud carriage, absolute fearlessness, are the common characteristics, while in figure and color they vary as the larger fowls. In the limits of a paragraph it is impossible to do more than to enumerate some of the varieties. The Game Bantams are, except in size, an almost exact reproduction of the Game fowls; the Pekin Bantams are diminutive Cochins, with the same blocky figure and profuse feathering as the prototype, and in color are a rich golden buff, pure white, shining black, or partridge-marked, as the case may be; the Sebrights,



Golden and Silver, differing only in the ground-color, have feathers exquisitely laced with black, rose-combs, blue legs, and enjoy the distinction, accorded to no other Bantam, of having had exhibitions devoted solely to themselves; the Rose-combed Blacks and Whites are diminutive Hamburgs; the Polish are similar to their larger originals; the Booted have very long feathers upon shanks and toes, sometimes measuring nine inches in length, and are either solid black or white in color; the Japanese,—Black-tailed White, pure White, and Colored,—with short legs, high single combs, trailing wings, and large, erectly carried tail, are strikingly peculiar in appearance—a characteristic production of their most original and picturesque country. Such are some of the better known Bantams, but this list is very incomplete. Not to mention the old varieties, Nankin, Spangled, Partridge, Silk, and

Jumper, now forgotten, though some of them may yet win their way again into favor, there are many new breeds already perfected or far on the way to perfection, among them the Malay, with its stilted legs, the massive Brahmas, and the Spangled Hamburgs. The time is not far distant, if the present activity in producing new varieties of Bantams continues, when for nearly every well-established variety of chickens there will be a Bantam counterpart.

H. S. Babcock.

Pictures by James C. Beard and August Will.

THE CENTURY
ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY
MAGAZINE.

May 1890, to October 1890.



THE CENTURY CO., NEW-YORK.

T. FISHER UNWIN, LONDON.

Vol. XL

New Series Vol. XVIII