

but shorter than the cock's in proportion. Scales of legs all smooth, close, and neat, and the insteps very smooth.

Feet, as cock's in due proportion.

Plumage, very hard, close, firm, short, strong, and neat in feather.

Carriage, upright, neat, active, fierce, sharp, and fiery.

Weight of hens varies, of course, they being heavier when with eggs. Average weight three pounds to three and a half pounds, or one-third smaller than the cock. Large Game hen are bad and clumsy in general, those of the middle size are best.

Judges should carefully handle all Game fowls, both cocks and hens, in judging them, if they have sufficient time to do so. Full grown birds are, of course, better entitled to silver cups than any birds in the chicken classes, as cock chickens and stags are never "fully furnished" as to their spurs and long sickle tail feathers, as is well known to all.

In judging Game fowls, three different kinds or textures of feathers are clearly discernible, in the cocks more especially. First, the close, hard, short, stiff, broad feather, like the ancient coats of armour to the bird, so to speak, lying so close to the body; such birds are rather scant than thick of feathers, though not too much so, of course. Second, the fine or narrow feathered birds; these are often good, quick birds, but are never so hard, strong, or so "game" as the first named sort; these birds often have the narrow, close whip or switch tails rather drooping. Third, the long, soft, and often coarse feathered birds (like Malays), soft both in flesh and feather, and always inferior to the two sorts first named, being larger in body; these are the worst Game fowls, and should never take prizes; they are also quite unfit for the pit, and less healthy.

DEFECTS IN THE SHAPE OF GAME FOWLS.

1. A short, clumsy, bad shaped head, with a wide, thick gullet.
2. A short, straight, bad beak (weak in bone).
3. A short, soft, weak neck (short necked).
4. Narrow and long body and back (weak birds, the worst defect.)
5. Narrow shoulders and breast (weak birds).

6. Breast too lean, too sharp, or too full (not hard).

7. Crooked breast-bone or keel (a deformity).

8. Flat-sided and mis-shapen generally.

9. Broad, long, and high rump or stern.

10. Too deep or too flat in keel or breast-bone.

11. Thighs long, weak, thin, and dangling behind.

12. Legs too long or too short, feet too much webbed.

13. Legs and thighs placed too close together.

14. Short and duck-footed (too much webbed).

15. Spurs clumsy, straight, and high up.

16. Squirrel-tailed, short stump wings.

17. Soft and fat in flesh (loose fleshed).

18. Long, soft, weak, thick, and weedy in feather (loose feathered).

19. Hump-backed, lop-sided.

THE SMERLE, OR ANTWERP PIGEON.

The Smerles are rather small birds, and look very much as if they had been originally bred from a rather coarse blue Owl Pigeon, crossed with a blue Rock. The head, it may be observed, is arched, and the skull capacious, indicating a full development of brain, and offering a striking contrast to the flat, narrow skull of the English Carrier. The most striking characteristic of these birds, is the firmness and great breadth of the flight feathers of the wings. These overlap each other to a great extent, and afford a strong, firm wing, with which the flight is urged. The keel of the breast bone is deep and well covered with muscles; and there is altogether an absence of any oil or large development of any part not used in flight. In rapidity and power of flying, these birds far excel any other variety of pigeon. This power of flight is conjoined with an attachment to home that is not surpassed by that of any other pigeon.

With regard to the value of these birds in Belgium, it is stated that a couple of young Smerles, warranted bred from birds that have been flown long distances, sell for 100fs.; and a pigeon which has carried off several