

White-Crested Black Polish.

This beautiful variety of fowls is gaining rapidly in popularity on this continent, and as the knowledge of how to breed, care for and prepare them for exhibition becomes more general, they will rank in all sections as first of the fancy varieties. The large, white globular top-knot and the glossy black plumage of the body gives such a striking contrast that the mere casual observer of poultry is struck by it, and their neat shape and sprightly bearing at once fixes them in the mind as something really beautiful and attractive. For the country residence or the lot in town no other variety will compare with them when in a flock on the lawn or grass plot. Although the hens sometimes prove to be excellent layers, they must be regarded as a fancy variety, as much for ornament as use, as for purposes of utility they are not to be compared with many other varieties that have been bred principally with the object of developing their laying and table properties.

Canadian fanciers can justly lay claim to having bred and exhibited the best specimens of this variety seen on this continent. A prominent American fancier lately informed us that the exhibit of White-crested Black Polands at a third-rate show he visited in Canada was superior to the best of many he had seen at the largest shows in the United States, and at these, on inquiry, he found that the best specimens were bred in Canada. At the shows of last winter many elegant specimens were on exhibition, and scarcely a prize fell to a bird that would not have scored very high.

We have frequently heard complaints from parties who have purchased fowls, that after moult black feathers appeared in the crest where there were none before, and the seller was condemned. The subjoined article from the pen of W. Hewitt, (a noted judge and one of the most successful exhibitors of his day,) in *Wright's Illustrated Book of Poultry*, may afford much information and encouragement to fanciers of this variety who have been disappointed in their efforts to get the crest as they wish it.

"Among the great variety of breeds of domesticated poultry, none perhaps are so universally admired as the Black Polands. The striking contrast of the white crest, and, in highly bred specimens, the beautiful iridescent character of the general plumage, never fails to attract the attention and to elicit the admiration of even such individuals as do not make poultry culture a matter of either amusement or profit. These fowls certainly were one of my most favorite breeds for a number of years, and few persons who have given them a fair trial report of them otherwise than most favorably. It must, however, be constantly borne in

mind, that to be fully successful, Black Polands must enjoy a very dry run, for if kept on a wet cold subsoil, where the rain lies long on the surface, they soon become unhealthy, and are perhaps more difficult to cure when disease has once overtaken them than any other breed of fowls with which I am acquainted. A gravelly, sandy or chalky soil therefore suits them admirably. Though not large, they are a good-flavored plump fowl on the table; and as to the production of eggs few, if any, excel them. That hens of this description vary greatly as to their productiveness I at once admit; but no doubt this irregularity might be readily equalised, if eggs from the best laying hens were selected for the production of future brood stock, rather than the plan now all but universal of hatching the eggs of the largest crested hens, altogether irrespective of their laying properties. The greatest number of eggs I myself ever knew laid by a single fowl in one season occurred in a hen of this breed; when, however, they lay so uninterruptedly they are prone to become so weakened (being non-sitters, and having consequently no rest) that consumption ensues, which in such a case rarely admits of remedy. I may add, the eggs are of a very palatable quality.

As one of the most important traits characteristic of this unique variety is a fully-developed globular crest, without any irregularity, perhaps it may be well to name what long experience proved to me, viz., that a cock possessing this feature, even if mated to a hen with comparatively poor crest, produces chickens with better top-knots than can be obtained where the hen is all that could be desired, but the brood-cock comparatively inferior in crest. Of course where both parents are ample in crest a favorable result is still more certainly ensured, as this kind of fowls usually breed with great regularity when the parent birds are well chosen; but the selection of the cock is decidedly the most important feature.

In no other breed of fowls is trimming more universally practised than in Black Poland; in fact, in the largest entries, it is a rarity to find even a single pen in which the crests have not been assiduously prepared for exhibition. A foolish notion exists in the minds of some amateurs that the crests of Black Polands should be *wholly* white; certain it in no instance ever yet occurred of its being naturally so, though to the superficial visitor at our poultry shows they appear as plentiful as blackberries, trimming more or less having been resorted to by the exhibitors, incurring in many cases immediate disqualification (or their pens simply being passed over), when if such deception had not been attempted prize-taking would as certainly have resulted. It is a matter worthy of remark that, although in case of the