

# POULTRY

## OLD ENGLISH GAME.

BY H. S. BARCOCK.

**T**HE Pit, or, as I prefer to call it, the Old English Game, is attracting a great deal of attention in England, and it seems to me, rather more than a usual amount in this country. This attention is not that derived from its power to kill its rival and its courage that will dare the deadliest form that foe can take, but from its shape, color and economic qualities.

Its friends claim for it great economic qualities—good laying and superb table properties. These qualities can be safely taken for granted, though it is not at all likely that the laying will compare favorably with the most prolific breeds. The eggs, too, are rather small, but they are of unsurpassable quality. An eminent lawyer friend of mine keeps a few game hens for the sole purpose of supplying eggs for his table, and declares they are worth twice as much per dozen to eat as those laid by other fowls. Concerning the table qualities there is no chance for a difference of opinion, for the right to be regarded as first-class has been so long demonstrated as to become an axiom. The fowls, however, lack the color desired in the markets of the United States, which interferes to a considerable extent with their general breeding for table poultry.

But what are we to say of their fancy qualities, we, who perhaps have been educated to consider the Exhibition Game the ideal of the fancy, who have been trained to consider reachiness, long-heads, short and hard feathering, and low carried whip-tails absolutely essential for beauty in a Game cock? The old English Game cock is certainly the reverse of all this. His limbs are of moderate length, his head comparatively short, his hackle full and flowing, his tail well-spread, amply furnished and carried high, and his plumage of fair length and moderately soft. Can we consider such a Game cock beautiful?

I cannot speak for others, but for myself must answer yes. I was trained to admire the Exhibition Game, I admire it now. Nothing in the way of fowls seems to me more worthy of admiration. And yet, when judging in the South and seeing the large, well-formed specimens of Old English Games—black-reds, black-breasted reds, brown-reds and greys—specimens graceful in shape, vigorous in move-

ment, strong in bone, rich in coloring, I was not able to withhold a hearty and sincere admiration for them, I suppose I admired them just as I could admire a Malay and a Dorking or an Exhibition Game and a Leghorn. Whatever the early relationship between the Old English and the Exhibition Game, the two fowls are now so widely separated as to be properly classed as two very distinct breeds.

But to win hearty admiration from a fancier the Old English Game should be bred with reference to color as well as other characteristics. The cocker, who cares only to produce fowls that can win a main, pays little or no attention to color, and the result is the indiscriminate crossing of colors that will not harmoniously blend and the production of offspring most distractingly colored, violating every canon of good taste. To keep up the stamina and the courage such indiscriminate crossing is not necessary; due regard can be paid to color, as was the case in the celebrated cocks of Lord Derby. And certainly this must be done if the Old English Game is ever to become widely popular among fanciers. Whatever the cocker may desire, we wish the fowl to be beautiful, and rich and harmonious coloring is a very important element in beauty. Neglect this, and part of the beauty of the fowl at once is lost.

Were it not for the use to which the Old English Game is put, the chances of its gaining among fanciers a great popularity would be greatly improved, but so long as the suspicion of fighting cocks attaches to a breeder of the fowl, so long will sensitive men forego their desire to possess the breed. But there are some here and abroad who breed the Old English Game for the beauty and the economic properties it possesses, who would under no circumstances allow their birds to participate in a main, and who regret, but are not deterred from the keeping of their choice by the suspicions which it may cause. This number seems to be on the increase and in time, perhaps, may become sufficiently numerous to dissipate the suspicion that handicaps the popularity of the Old English Game.

## A LITTLE THEORY.

**F**AIR Customer (President of the Women's Equal Rights Club)—“What under the sun makes eggs so high?”

Dealer—“Scarcity, mum.”

“But why are they scarce?”

“I don't know, for sure, mum; but they do say that hens nowadays is actin' very queer—struttin' around an' growin' big combs and spurs, an' tryin' to learn to crow, mum.”—*Street & Smith's Good News.*