

induce them to remain at home. They come in season for the table from Christmas to March, the poulterers have little difficulty in disposing of them to their customers. Like game, they do not require fattening, but, similar to pheasants, they should be well hung previously to cooking.

There are but few shows in the country that provide classes for Guinea fowls; they are generally exhibited in pairs. To prepare them for exhibition, they simply require to be penned for a fortnight or three weeks, to tame them, and their heads and legs washed, and rubbed over with a tiny piece of vaseline.

The following is thrown out as a suggested *Standard for Judging* :—

#### THE SPECKLED, OR PEARL VARIETY.

*Head*—Broad, surmounted with a horny crest; wattles, a thick red, the freer from white patches the better.

*Beak*—Strong, curved; well-set in head; in colour, pinkish horn.

*Eyes*—Bright, clear, colour, steel gray.

(To be Continued.)

#### THE BLACK HAMBURGH FOWL.

BY E. HUTTON IN THE ENGLISH *Fanciers' Gazette*.

TWENTY years ago the black Spanish fowl was at the zenith of its fame, and the prices realised for the best specimens ran very high, which induced so high and excessive a cultivation of its fancy points that its more practical virtues were to a great degree lost, while up to that time no variety had done so much to add to the size and laying qualities of the ordinary poultry, of the North of England especially; but its decadence as a productive bird caused an opening for a bird fit especially for urban purposes, that was quickly fixed upon by the breeders of black Hamburgs, that they may now be fairly considered as the leading black fowl of the country, and no bird of the family has attained to so great a degree of popularity, and that for the obvious reason that in it a strong, hardy black fowl was found combining beauty of plumage with utility, and it is at once the most hardy of all Hamburgs—if, perhaps, we except the silver spangle—it is most easily reared, and is the most profitable in a productive point of view, laying eggs in immense numbers, which are pure white, and weigh eight to the pound in the case of hens, and nine in the case of pullets,

while it is, at the same time, an excellent plump table fowl, with a good proportion of breast meat, two points seldom attained in one variety of poultry, and it makes a most excellent cross with many other varieties, the crosses from the Asiatic breeds, as the Cochin and Brahma, being unsurpassed as winter layers. As a rule, they are non-sitters, though as is the case with most Hamburgs, a bird here and there harks back to the original nature, takes to the nest, when it may be trusted for faithfulness to its duties, and makes the most assiduous of nurses; in fact, I never yet knew a case of desertion of a brood by a black Hamburg hen.

The cause of the extraordinary hardiness and productiveness of this variety of fowl is not far to seek, as the bird is the most recently manufactured of all Hamburgs, being the result of crosses of other varieties, and no one will dispute the fact that in addition to its usefulness it is one of the most beautiful of fowls, its brilliancy of plumage, pretty red face, the opaqueness and purity of white of its ear-lobes, standing out in striking contrast to the body colour of the bird, and no one will dispute the fact that it is the greatest achievement of the progress of the Fancy within the last twenty-five years. The murkiness of the atmosphere does not seem to dim the splendour of its plumage, so that it is the fowl of all others for use in or near towns.

When the Fancy was young, say forty years ago, we had no black Hamburgs like those seen at the present day.

There were certainly plenty of black fowls at that time, and these were known as black pheasants, but a yard of these possessed every variety of comb, varying from the chubby rose to the cup or single comb, and many were also lark-breasted, the color of the plumage ruling as the most important point, and there were not wanting those who took to their cultivation, and it is yet a pleasure to recall the enthusiasm of some who possessed yards of these at that time, and their pride in showing their yard of "black 'uns." The eggs were eagerly purchased at one penny each for sitting, so that in Yorkshire, at least, they became the common fowl, and yet it will be seen that the practical was the leading point at that time, though the first black Hamburgs seen in the show-pen were the choice specimens of these yards, and they formed the basis of the grand fowl that is now known as the black Hamburg.

At the time to which I refer, or thirty years ago, the price of black Hamburgs was a little different from what it is now, and I recollect winning about that time on three different occasions, at three shows—at Devizes, the Palace and some Scottish show, the name of which I have