

THE DORKING.

BY GOSHEN

THE Dorking is not a bird to stand confinement like the Asiatic nor is it a hardy fowl in American climates, yet it possesses such intrinsic value that it seems strange that greater efforts are not put forth by American breeders to so adapt them to our conditions that they will become more generally bred. It seems to me that a diligent effort in this direction would give excellent results. The method would be to select each year only the hardiest and thriftiest for breeding purposes and avoid close inbreeding. Such a system would soon put the Dorking in the place it should enjoy on this side of the pond. The Dorking is one of the very oldest of birds and in general characteristics has been left practically as it was fifty years ago. In form they are ideal from the market standpoint being massively built with great breast development. A Dorking with a yellow leg and skin would take the American market by storm. The solid breasts of great depth, the broad bodies, the short legs, the small bones, and the quality of flesh possessed by the Dorking combined with the ever popular yellow skin and legs would be a sure winner on the American market. Besides possessing the table qualities the Dorking is a long-lived breed, an excellent layer and of the very best size and temper to make an excellent setter and mother.

A DAY IN ENGLAND AMONG THE DORKINGS.

BY JNO. DICKENSON, BARRIE.

AS a short account of a very delightful day in the County of Essex, England, might interest your readers, I jot down some notes made of that excursion. My object in visiting Essex was to see the very best specimens of colored Dorkings to be found in England, having received a commission from my son, who is breeding them, to purchase for him, if possible, some of the best representative birds.

I duly arrived on a lovely day last August, at the historical town of Chelmsford, and after a pleasant stroll through lanes shaded on either side with thorn hedges bright in color from myriads of wild flowers, and fragrant with honeysuckle, I came to Sandford Mill, the property of J. & J. C. Smith, who are noted for their successful colored Dorking

strains throughout that part of England. I had to wait a little while for Mr. Smith's return, and during his absence I wandered about. The Mill was very old, upwards of 150 years, I was subsequently told, it was a water power and beside the mill-race, which drove the old wheel, was an exceedingly beautiful English garden, indeed, the entire scenery was typically and distinctly English; the red brick arch spanning an adjacent canal, the lazy horses hauling the barges along it, the fat cattle standing up to their knees in luxuriant pasture under the shade of majestic elms, in the distance, on an neighboring hill stood a dismantled windmill, the relic of a superseded industry, and foreshadowing the doom that will surely overtake the picturesque old Sandford water-mill before the advance of steam. The tranquil peacefulness of the scene was entrancing, all was bathed in a glorious sunlight, the silence unbroken save by the clacking of the water-wheel and the hum of the drowsy bees at work in the adjoining garden.

Shortly after Mr. Smith appeared and I visited his poultry farm. His colored Dorkings are exquisite birds, and tame as possible, he has many colonies of them out in the stubble fields with homes on wheels for them to stay at night and shelter in. Some of his cockerels weighed nearly 10 lbs., the hens and pullets not quite so large. He has used the same strain for many years, and when he introduces fresh blood he gets it sometimes from Faiman Mann of Norfolk or Muzzeen of Yorkshire, the latter being a very large breeder and well-known successful exhibitor in the North of England, so Mr. Smith can very justly claim that his strain is among, if not actually the foremost in England. Mr. Smith supplies the London market with large quantities of poultry, he breeds his Dorking hens to light Brahma cocks; he says the first of this cross is highly prized by poulterers; he prefers crossing with Brahma cocks rather than with colored Dorkings, as the Brahmas do not fight so much and consequently more of them can be kept in a given area at one time. There is also less liability of their progeny having yellow legs, (? Ed.) which would at once exclude them from the London market, for if they had no poulterer would look at them. I was fortunate in being able to select a splendid cockerel and three pullets, about the best Mr. Smith had. I am glad to say they reached my son's poultry yards in perfect health and condition, and have been laying uninterruptedly since their arrival.

The colored Dorking is admitted in England to be the best table fowl raised; the breast is larger, the flesh more tender, and it comes to maturity faster than any other breed, the only question being whether it was hardy enough