

more to size and symmetry. I want no vailing accusation in general; and the "best" crest would still count *more* points than an inferior one, according to the usual methods of judging; but I should propose to *alter the judging* in a certain definite direction. It is perfectly practicable to do this, and is simply a matter of consent or general opinion whether it should be done or not. Personally I go so far with Sir Henry Thompson as to think it highly desirable it should be done, and so far am glad that his tirade should draw attention to the subject, and perhaps enable such a proposal to be considered with more chance of success. I need not multiply examples, but should be perfectly prepared to submit scales of points for all the breeds of the more useful class, which I think would, so far as practicable, more promote the desired objects.

It is only by altering definite detail, like this, and not by wholesale attacks, that good can be accomplished, and for years I have endeavored to preserve the original good qualities of the Brahma in this way. All fanciers of tolerably long standing in England are aware that for at least ten consecutive years I criticised in detail the Brahma classes and Brahma judging at the three or four largest annual shows. In the course of this task I had for several consecutive years to emphatically condemn the judging, first of the late Mr. Hewitt and Mr. Teebay, then of others who followed such weighty example, in three different respects. First, for sacrificing everything in both shape and size to penciling; for several years the winning pullets were shaped much like silver-grey Dorkings, and hardly so large, and hardly one ever grew into a decent hen. Secondly, for a gradual departure from the Brahma towards the Cochin model, which injured both breeds alike. And lastly, for an encouragement of excessive feather and vulture hocks. In all cases, besides the alteration in (then) accepted views, these criticisms were avowedly based on the fact that the fowls were thereby injured as useful fowls. They were made small and weedy, or the breast was diminished, or skin and flesh became coarser with the change. In this way I labored earnestly to preserve known and proved good qualities—I am sorry to say with little success. What, however, is very remarkable, several individuals—and one in particular—who have from time to time brought similar charges against "the fancy" to Sir Henry Thompson's, and have taken the recent opportunity to re-echo him, and who were also at the same time reporting shows, never gave any assistance in this practical, definite, detailed effort to preserve the useful qualities of our fowls. I was left alone; and the result of this false judging, against which no single individual could strive with effect, is that the Brahma in England is, undoubtedly, a much worse fowl than it was twelve years ago.

The Cochin is another example, and shows the ultimate issue of such struggles, unless they are decided in the right way. The early birds were very variable in type, with a 'preponderance of long legs perhaps, but with bodies of various shapes. At a very early period, unfortunately, a preference began to be marked for exaggerated sterns and a corresponding want of breast, which goes with that formation. There was not wanting warning against this of the most weighty character. Miss Watts, whose authority was second to none in those days, (she then edited the poultry department of *The Field*, which gave manifold the attention to poultry it does now), pointed out that Cochins were to be found with good breasts, and how far more desirable it was to seek such a model. But here also the struggle was fruitless, and it has been left for a similar stock, years later, to give us in the Langshan a good table fowl; at least I hope so, although the mania of some of its admirers for long legs is at present a serious danger.

I need not carry the matter further. What I have tried to show is the fact that while far the greater part of Sir Henry Thompson's charges are based upon ignorance rather than knowledge, our judging is not in some breeds all that it ought to be, if utility is an object to be sought. But on the other hand, so far from any "compromise" being "impossible," to a certain extent it is our standards themselves, based on actual judging, which are in fault. I hold that, if our standards can be altered in certain definite directions, good may be secured, without upsetting our methods of exhibiting and judging. The question thus becomes one for practical consideration; and it is solely because the wholesale attack upon the exhibition system by England's premier surgeon may possibly lead to this really practical part of the question being considered in a practical spirit, that I have made it the text for this exposition of my views upon it.

### Fowls Moulting.

BY W. COOK, IN "POULTRY."

There is no season of the year in which fowls require more generous treatment than the present, and perhaps no season in which poultry keepers are more undecided what birds to keep and which to weed out. There are, perhaps, a few favorite hens and some good pullets, and at times it is hard to decide which to keep. The decision is often on the wrong side, and too many are kept. Perhaps fifteen are kept in a house and run where only ten were kept previously. When a decision of this kind is arrived at, it is not always for the best. The owner will often find that he does not have so many eggs during the winter months from the fifteen as he had from the ten the previous year. This is frequently the case with poultry keepers, and yet it still remains a mystery to many why it is so. In many cases, if six fowls are