

## On a Preference for White or Yellow Legs and Skins in Poultry.

BY JOHN GABE, M.R.C.S., BEWDLEY.

Kindly allow me to suggest to your valuable publication, the probable reason why white legs and skins are preferred in England in poultry, while a yellow color is looked upon with most favor in America by the greater number of Americans. The preference for white or a yellow color is not peculiar to the inhabitants of these two countries, as such, without reason—the preference for the one or the other—is a natural consequence of climate—natural selection, in fact—a result of the “survival of the fittest” in each instance. It will be found in all temperate regions, where the white man is most in vigor, that any yellowness of skin has a sickly aspect—in man a bilious appearance, and in other animals an unhealthy look—the reverse being the case where the sun asserts his most powerful influence: the pale or white in the tropics being the unnatural or unhealthy, while the colored is the most vigorous in man, or beast, or bird. Hence the preference for white in England and yellow in America, where man has a tendency to become colored, is the result of natural selection, or a choice of the most healthy in each case. All the breeds of domestic poultry that have been brought to this country, having a tropical zone for their natural habitat, have yellow legs and skins.

Take the Cochins for instance, which is no doubt a natural product of such a climate as Cochinchina possesses. The Malay, the Asseel, the Dominique, the Leghorn, the Brahma—though the Brahma is a made breed, as the Leghorn is too, and the Wyandotte and others are; and in the climate of England and Scotland it will be found that the yellow of the legs and skins of these birds has a tendency to fade—a tendency to whiteness in fact, and a more rapid tendency in the less fixed or less pure breeds.

I remember having seen, a few years ago, a letter from some one in one of the poultry journals, who had noticed a whitening of the legs of his poultry, which he ascribed to the effect of a chalk soil. A more extended experience would have shown this writer that climate has much more to do with such a change than soil. The Cochins has, according to my own observation, a much less tendency to change its color of legs and skin than the Brahma, in consequence, no doubt, of its being, as before mentioned, a more fixed or a purer breed. The name Cochinchina indicates pretty accurately the natural habitat of this breed of fowls. In the course of trade it must have travelled northwards to the district from whence it came to this country. The Chinese are fanciers like ourselves, and were fanciers long before we were, and the pure Cochinchina fowl is no doubt with them, as it is with us, a fancy breed, as distinguished from the useful. The first imported into this country, according to all descriptions of them, were anything but pure

Cochins; they were, for all practical purposes, more useful than the Cochins of to-day. Probably breeding to fancy types has this to answer for. The Cochins has been mentioned as affording a sample of the color of skin and legs to be expected in poultry in hot climates. On leaving the tropical regions and going northwards—in China, for instance—we should expect to find, as we find in reality, the yellow color of the legs and skins of the poultry disappearing, and the fair or white and delicate skins appearing instead. Intensity of color and coarseness of skin go together. If specimens of two breeds of poultry were placed before me without any information as to the countries from whence they came—such as Cochins and Langshans, for instance—it would be manifest at once, from the texture and color of their skins, that the two breeds could not be the natural productions of the same region. If they were both said to be Chinese, I should place the one at home, in the equatorial, the other in the temperate provinces of the empire. I know not the spot from whence the Langshan came, but it might have its home in a region the climate of which would be at least temperate, if not colder than temperate; it might have come from Corea into China for certainly the bird suggests countries as far apart as Corea and Cochinchina, with their different climates as the natural homes of the two breeds.

I regret very much to see the tendency to muddle these two breeds, or to Cochinish the Langshan, for there would be reason in attempting to Langshanise the Cochins; this would be improving the latter for all purposes, while it can only spoil the former to Cochinish it.

## Shall it be Scoring?

*Editor Review.*

In view of the importance of this subject, I shall, with your permission, offer a few additional remarks upon the “situation,” or “shall we have scoring?”

To come right to the point, let me ask, What is scoring? It must be something beyond any other system yet originated by man, when it seems to be taken for granted that all that is needed is to adopt scoring, no matter who shall apply the method. But let it be noted, and carefully noted too, that “scoring” is but a system or way of doing work, and is not a “self-actor.” We hear a great deal about “scoring at Guelph—shall we have it?” but not a word about who shall apply it. To those in power, permit me to say, Gentlemen, if you are in earnest about this “uneasiness,” if you honestly desire to give this system a fair, square trial on its merits, then engage such a man as I. K. Felch to do the work. Yes, let it be I. K. himself. Our own men have tried it, and voted their own work a failure; then why go through the farce of repeating this thing?

The big shame is in holding or maintaining that our judges are as good as any foreign judges. No error is so dangerous as that in which a good deal of truth is mingled. Our judges are as honest, as intelligent, as well qualified to judge by the old method as any foreigner, but not as well qualified to score as some of the American judges. If such is not the case how is the success of the system to be accounted for at Montreal, at New York and other places—yes, a host of other places? And further, it is only the most outrageous egotism that will let a man claim equal ability to work a system which he has never tried and always opposed as inefficient as those who have perfected a system by long and careful application. And was this success achieved in a day or a