

ON TRIMMING.

No. II.

In continuation of this subject we shall first allude to the Black Poland, a class in which a very forcible illustration of trimming is almost universally prevalent. The anterior feathers of the crests are removed to prevent a prominence of black feathers at the front of the top-knot. If the suspected fowls are taken in hand and carefully examined, a bare space would be discovered midway between the base of the bill and the commencement of the white feathers of the crest. In the more artfully divided instances of Poland "trimming," however, the "trickster practice" was applied some months or so previously to the competition at which they were to be entered; the removed feathers in the latter case having been partially restored, the means of detection became far more difficult, and the proprietor, as a rule, laid the whole blame on "the hens pecking each other."

Again, both in Buff Cochin classes and those for both varieties of Pencilled Hamburgs, purely clear ground colored hackles (without any markings whatever), were the main desideratum. These feathers, if objectionable, were frequently plucked away, or, still more artistically, "pumicestoned" at the edges, to remove the unpermitted stain that stood between them and success. Still, though the conviction that fraudulent practices had been adopted took firm possession of the arbitrator's mind, if such opinion was mooted, the fringed character of the hackle feathers was at once attributed to "nothing but wear, from the poultry pulling their heads backwards and forwards through the wire meshes of the aviary in which they had been recently confined." The "docking" of the tails of Cochins (more particularly the male birds) was a comparatively easily discovered practice; the original plan was simply to remove

the amount of both shaft and beard feathers from the end of the principal tail feathers. The pumicestone here was again called into requisition, and the shaft (or quill portion of the feather) rendered sufficiently pliable by weakening carefully from the under side with a sharp penknife, and afterwards darkening the newly cut part of the surface with nitrate of silver. But to proficient judges, this artifice rarely availed to fulfil the deceptive purpose intended, and is now looked upon as rather a "bungling" fraud. The "modern improvement" is to cut off the too lengthy feathers closely to the rump of the fowl operated upon; shorten them from the bottom end (to the extent deemed advisable), and after sharpening the shafts to fit tightly the hollow of the quill still remaining in the bird, again affix each in its original position with a kind of varnish that dyes instantaneously. Instances have occurred where all the principal feathers of a Cochin cock's tail have been scientifically shortened, and the outward appearances so preserved, to detect the imposition, was far more than a difficulty.

In Sebright Bantams, the sickle feathers were oftentimes "broken" off midway of their length, to carry the appearance of accidental injury, a feature that was even passed over at a former Birmingham Show without comment.

Other attempts to improve for exhibition purposes, such as laying down the feathers on the heads of game-cocks with soap or like adhesives, might be alluded to, but enough has been said to show to what extent exhibitors have gone to obtain first class prizes at exhibitions.

AUCTION SALE OF POULTRY

We are now in a position to authoritatively announce that the auction sale of poultry alluded to in our last number, will take place during Exhibition week. The sale will commence on