

Poultry and Pigeons.

VULTURE HOCKS IN BRAHMAS AND COCHINS.

I cannot see that vulture hocks are now regarded as in the slightest degree objectionable by most of the judges, or that they make the slightest difference unless when a judge has wanted an excuse when challenged after judging, for leaving some bird out, and has had nothing else to say. As to the result, Mr. Comyns himself may state it: he says "about half" the good birds in the country would be found to be "hocked." But he is assuredly wrong as to the cause of this. He says that "until recently we were striving for heavy feather without hock," and the abundance of hocked birds is the fruit of this. I do not think it is any such thing. While breeders strove for feather without hock, they were quite able to get it, with a few hocks of course, but not such as we now see. In the still earlier days, when judges rejected even a nicely covered hock, there was, of course, no hope of getting feather; but as soon as this was altered, there was no lack of feather, with only a moderate proportion of hocks. But by degrees there has ceased to be any motive for discarding, or even discouraging, hocked birds; all check has been taken away; and it is the result of this we now see around us, to my exceeding disgust.

Two more practical points. In regard to the want of breast I have noticed as often accompany vulture hocks, the friend who first drew my attention to it had his first attracted to it by the fowls as they appeared on his dining-table. There was little scope for imagination there; and I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that, since hocks came in, the deep full breast of the Brahma has largely gone out. I do not affirm that the one fault of necessity, or in every case, accompanies the other; but every naturalist knows that by some strange law certain features in a given animal are "apt" to go together, though with no apparent reason. This is such a case, and it is a practical reason for objecting to this modern hock craze.

The other point is, that vulture-hocks are contrary to the whole character of fowls. An Asiatic is not simply a big bird with feathered legs; other breeds have feathered legs, and there are other points which far more distinguish the Cochins and Brahma tribe. Among these—among the most marked of all—is shortness and softness of feather, or absence of quill throughout. The very wings are shorter in proportion, and the quills weaker; and the tail shows the same modification. The grand characteristic is plenty of soft fluffy feather, with an absence of quill-feather. Suppose this rule violated in the tail; what would any one say to a Cochins or Brahma with long quill feathers in his tail, like a Dorking? Yet this would be a less wide departure from the very "idea" of the fowl than are these immense quills upon the thighs. I object to them, then, as contrary to the fundamental basis or notion of the fowl.

I might add other objections in plenty; as, for instance, that this hock craze is destroying the American market. American fanciers will not have it; and though I know of some birds which have been sold over there from here, I could also tell of letters written to me by the indignant purchasers, complaining of the way they have been "windled," and averring that it will be a long time ere the sellers see any more of the same money. I know another breeder, on the other hand, who preserves a steady American market because his Cochins are kept free from the taint. Or I might, again, urge that the new fashion leaves the true fancier nothing to breed for as regards one main point of his breed. Any jackass can breed heavy feather, so long as hocks are indifferent—the point, as a point, is gone. But we used to have to breed feather without hocks; and we did it, with no more difficulty than we found in other points. But

I stop this line of argument, because I feel the danger of enforcing my view at all. It ought not to be so; but, as I have before remarked, professional judges are absolutely incapable of pursuing any steady middle course in these things. It such protests as I am making now are effectual, there is real danger enough that the judges will rush back to the other extreme, and disqualify—first hocks, and next every fowl with a decent pair of breeches. I do not wish that, and I should object to it as strongly as possible. I think a bird of conspicuous merit ought to win, in spite of vulture hocks. But then I would not let him win *without* such conspicuous merit; and when Mr. Comyns says that the points I calculated from the judging of the period 1872-4 amount to disqualification "in high competition," I should reply that this is just what they ought to do. High competition means other birds nearly on the same high level; and I certainly do hold that where there are such other birds nearly equal, vulture-hocks ought to lose.

I object, then, equally to the former utter disqualification, and to the present utter indifference. Who share my views are not capricious, or hard to please; there was a time when the usual judging in this matter did satisfy us; when judges deemed hocks a fault—a serious fault—and "cut" for it more or less fairly, but did not cast a bird out of court for it as they have done before. If protest against the present brings us back to a more extreme past, it is not my fault, and I protest against that in turn. I hope, however, that I have made some points in the history of this matter, and my own views upon it, sufficiently clear.—*Lewis Wright in Live Stock Journal.*

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., SHOW.

An advance proof of the premium list for the New England Pigeon and Bantam Society show to be held at Springfield, Mass. next December, has been received. This year the show will be confined to pigeons and bantams, the large breeds of fowls not being catered for this time. It is just as well that it should be so seeing that the field for this society is quite large enough without dabbling outside of its legitimate sphere. The pigeons are divided into 15 classes by named breeds. In addition to these there are four "miscellaneous" classes, one for Archangels and the others for Pigmy Pouters, Suabians and Ice Pigeons. Finally on "Any other variety." Bantams are shown as single birds each breed being divided into cocks, hens, cockerels and pullets, and are classified as follows:—Black red, Brown red, Duckwing (silver and yellow compete together), Pile (red and white compete together), silver laced Sebright, gold laced Sebright, Rose comb (black and white compete together), and any other variety.

Quite a novelty has been introduced to make a valuable first premium by having a special of \$6, \$5 and \$4, as the case may be, added to the first premium of \$2. This will make a difference between the first and second prizes, for the latter are only one dollar all the way through. The competition is sure to be very keen, and doubtless our American friends will strive their utmost to prevent Mr. Way, of this city, repeating his victories at the last show.

All of these special prizes are to be individual donations, the giver of the prize to be stated on the list.

We are informed that a prominent Toronto fancier will owing to ill health decline exhibiting in future and will dispose of his entire exhibiting and breeding stock. This will be an excellent opportunity to get birds for the ensuing show-season and doubtless we will be in a position to give farther particulars next week.

A newspaper up the Hudson solemnly announces that "Rev. Mr. Greenville and Rev. Mr. Staats will exchange pullets next Sunday." Hens there was considerable merit. — *St. Albans Advertiser.* Ish Staats no? Lay preachers, perhaps. Yawcob Strauss.

THE INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION SHOW.

We have received a copy of the premium list for the above exhibition, which will be held in this city from the 6th to the 18th September next. Poultry and pigeons will be on exhibition during the second week, and must be delivered not later than Monday, the 13th. Class 33, Fowls, comprises 14 sections, two of which are for varieties not specially classified, and all the sections are for single birds, cocks and hens being shown separately, and each section has the same prizes, \$3, \$2 and \$1, for first, second and third. The breeds are as follows, it being understood that there are two sections for each, viz., for cocks and hens.

Brahmas, dark and light. Cochins, buff, partridge, white and black. Dorkings, colored, silver greys and white. Plymouth Rocks. Game, black red, brown red, yellow duckwing, silver duckwing and pile. Hamburgs, black, golden pencilled, golden spangled, silver pencilled and silver spangled. Leg horns, white and brown. French, any variety. Spanish. Polands, whitecrested, black, white, silver and golden. Bantams, black red, brown red, yellow duckwing, silver duckwing, pile, black African, golden Sebright and silver Sebright. Any variety not mentioned.

Chickens are divided into twenty-two sections, cockerels and pullets being shown separately as follows: Bantams, game any color, any other variety. Spanish, Brahmas, Cochins, Dorkings, Game, Hamburgs, Leghorns, Poland, and Plymouth Rocks. The prizes for chickens are \$2, \$1, and 50 cents.

Class 35 is for Turkeys, Geese and Ducks. In each breed male and females are shown separately. Turkeys, bronze and white. Geese—Bremen, Toulouse, white and brown China, and English grey. Ducks—Rouen, Aylesbury, Cayuga and Pekia. Any other variety.

Then follows what is classified as "ornamental," and embraces guinea fowls, pheasants, fancy ducks, quail, swans, ferrets, guinea pigs, rats, mice, squirrels and rabbits, altogether making up 33 sections.

In looking over this most excellent premium list we fancy we detect an oversight in the announcement, or rather the non announcement, of diplomas in the classes for fowls and chickens. In class 35 diplomas are offered for the best turkey, goose and duck, and nine diplomas are also offered for pigeons, but not a word is said about diplomas for fowls or chickens. It certainly seems to be an accidental omission which it would be well to rectify at once. Then again the giving of "a silver medal for the best collection of poultry (fowls, chickens, turkeys, geese and ducks), and a bronze medal for the second best collection," is rather a vague announcement, and exhibitors would like to know how the judges are to decide between an exhibitor making a better average with a dozen pens than the man with twenty pens. Doubtless some large exhibitors will show fifty or more pens and not make anything like the same average as the smaller exhibitor, and as it now stands we can see nothing but a lot of grumbling in store for the judges no matter who gets these medals.

PIGEONS.

Class 37 is devoted to pigeons, no less than 75 sections being included in the class exclusive of another complicated "best collection" for silver and bronze medals. The prizes are of the same amounts as in the chicken class, viz.: \$2, \$1 and 50 cents, but we cannot so fully endorse the sub-division of the breeds. In some breeds most unlooked for varieties are put in while in others scant justice is done to exhibitors of special varieties. Five sub-divisions for Owls and long faced Antwerps, and four for Dragoons seem strange by the side of three for carriers, and two for short faced tumbler.