

## WHAT IS A TABLE FOWL?

BY H. S. BARCOCK, PROVIDENCE, R. I.

**A** TABLE fowl is one bred primarily for the meat that it produces. This meat must be abundant in quantity, fine in quality, admirably disposed, cheaply and economically produced and of the most desirable color.

1st. The meat must be abundant in quantity. This does not necessarily mean that the fowl must be an extraordinary large fowl, though a small fowl is not generally desirable for table purposes because it does not look so well as a large one, but it does mean that in proportion to the offal the meat must be abundant. A first-class table fowl should shrink as little as possible in dressing, and still further, when the dressed fowl is weighed, the bones should be as light as possible; the weight of the fowl should be in the meat it carries.

2nd. It must be of fine quality. With many a chicken is a chicken—one is as good as another if it is as large,—but those who have tried, as I have, some of the best table fowls on the platter by the side of breeds not specially adapted to table uses know that there is a difference in the grain of the meat, the juiciness thereof and the flavor, when rearing and cooking have been precisely alike. While any chicken is better than none, there is quite a marked difference between the poorest and the best.

3rd. The meat should be admirably disposed. The most meat on a chicken is found on the breast, the thighs and the second joints. Most people regard the breast as the most desirable meat, but be that as it may, the best table breeds will have full plump breasts, and heavy, meaty thighs and second joints. The keel bone will be

deep but the meat will not be so sparse as to make the breast of the fowl look like a wedge, but will lie so that long and numerous slices can be carved from it. Some breeds look plump on the breast, though carrying but a small amount of meat, owing to the fact that the keel is both short and narrow, but in a first-class table fowl length and depth of keel are demanded, about which the meat must be so disposed as to make the breast look plump and round.

4th. The meat must be economically produced. When one is rearing fowls for the table, the problem is how to get the most meat out of a given quantity of grain. It must be meat and not internal fat, too. Some breeds lay up a great store of fat, but produce a comparatively small amount of meat. They are the fowls for those who wish to manufacture hen's oil, but not the ones to grace a banquet to which your friends are invited. A fowl which has a good appetite, and has a keel adapted to carrying a large amount of meat, ordinarily will be found one that it is profitable to feed for the table. At least, it is true that the most profitable fowls to feed for the table have such a structure.

5th. The meat and the skin should be of the most desirable color. The color for the meat is white, the world over, but the color of the skin varies. Usually white or light yellow skinned fowls have the thinnest and tenderest skins, but when the fowls are intended to be sold, if any other color is preferred, it should be had. For home consumption it does not matter. In the United States, fowls with a yellow skin sell the best. It may be a mere prejudice on the part of the buyer, but that matters not. If you are raising fowls to sell, you will find it profitable to raise those which sell the best.

A fowl having these five characteristics will be a good table fowl. It

may and probably will be but a moderate layer, but it is meat, not eggs, you are after. It often will be found to be a clean legged and short feathered fowl, the surplus of the food, over that required to support life, going to the production of meat and not of feathers. Edward Brown, of the *Fanciers Gazette*, of London, has said that no really first-class table fowl has feathered legs, and while we may or may not agree with this opinion, we do know that the more feathering there is to be produced, the more grain must be consumed in its production, so that the smallest amount of feathering sufficient for the protection of the fowl is desirable in those breeds bred especially for table purposes. The Indian Game and the Malay are good examples of scanty feathering joined to fine table properties.

## THE LANGSHAN.

**W**E are enabled to reproduce, through the courtesy of Mr. Wallis, Hon. Sec. of the Langshan Society, the following standard as adopted by the Society:—

## THE STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE.

REMARKS APPLICABLE TO BOTH SEXES.

## SIZE.

In a breed of such value for table purposes size is an important consideration. A cock should weigh *at least* 9 lbs., and a hen *not less* than 7 lbs.

## COLOUR.

*Beak.*—Light to dark horn colour, the latter preferred.

*Comb, Face, Wattles and Deaf-ears.*—Brilliant red.

*Eye.*—Light brown to dark hazel (the latter preferred) with black pupil.

*Legs and Feet.*—Dark slate (turning lighter after the first year), with skin