

POULTRY

BLACK INDIAN GAMES.

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

ARHODE ISLAND breeder has produced a black variety of the Indian Game. The birds have been exhibited at one or two shows and, according to the reports, awakened considerable interest. They had the size and general shape of the Cornish Indian Game, differing from that only in plumage and the color of the shanks. Where the ordinary variety has a richly variegated plumage, this new variety has a solid but lustrous black. The yellow legs of the older variety are supplanted by dark legs in the newer one.

Concerning the origin of the new variety I am informed that it is strictly of Indian Game blood, the darkest specimens having produced a few black chickens. I am also informed that the females are the purest black, while the males are not, as a rule, entirely free from a tendency to show a little tinge of red, especially in the hackle. I have not seen the birds and can speak only from hearsay, but my informant, who has seen them, I regard as strictly reliable. I believe that this is the way they were produced, for in the large number of Cornish Indians which I have bred, I have myself had three pullets that were solid black on the surface, but showed a little brown penciling on the primaries. And I have little doubt that there is black blood in the Indian Game. Indeed, Mr. John Frayne distinctly says there is, if he is correctly reported. The *Fanciers Gazette*, of London, speaking of Mr. Frayne and his breed said: "In his early days it was a short, squatty fowl, ginger in color. The great change which has come over the breed is due to crossing with the *rich-plumaged black Indian Game*, and not to Malay blood, as many aver." Italics are mine. Commenting on this article I have elsewhere said, (see "The Indian Game" page 16), "I find that there is a tendency in the breed to now and then produce a black chicken, or an off-colored one suggestive of the old ginger color, a tendency not at all marked but which really does exist." And this tendency—whether it be reversion to a black ancestor, or melanism which causes black "sports," or a mere deepening and extension of the ground color in the male and the lacing in the female,—is sufficient to account for the origin of a black variety of the Cornish Indian Game,—without the gratuitous suggestion of crossing with some other black breed, like

the Java, the Sumatra or the Langshan. Within the breed itself are elements out of which a black variety can be formed.

Whether it is desirable to form such a variety is another story. There is no denying that black, when pure and lustrous, is a very beautiful color. And, as the Indian Game is one of the most lustrous varieties I have ever seen, there is good reason to suppose that a pure black specimen would shimmer in the sun like changeable silk. But there is also, no denying the fact that among black varieties there is but a single one which, up to the present time, has succeeded in winning and retaining a wide popularity. I need not say that that black fowl is the Langshan. It may be, perhaps is, an unreasonable prejudice, but American people are prejudiced against black feathers and dark legs, and this prejudice, I fear, may handicap the black Indian Game.

There is no chance to successfully argue on the question of relative beauty. I have a feeling, however, that the majority of mankind prefers a variegated plumage to one of a single color. If there is any exception to this rule it will probably be found in the case of buff. And I feel therefore, that the majority will prefer the lustrous black with its crimson and bay contrasting lines and the exquisite arrangement of these colors, to a solid black plumage, in a fowl like the Indian Game. Still there will doubtless be found some who will fancy the solid black plumage, preferring it to the greater variety that is presented in the original variety of the Indian Game. In this matter, I say every man to his own taste. I prefer the original variety, but if you, my brother, prefer the solid black, my advice to you is to have what you prefer, if you can get it. I think, however, no birds of this variety are yet for sale, the originator preferring to keep the stock in his own hands for the present. As he is a liberal advertiser he will probably announce through his advertisements when he has stock for sale.

PRACTICAL POINTS.

BY BLACK WYANDOT.

VERY heavy Asiatics are better off bedded down with straw or leaves than given a roost. At most a roost for such birds should not exceed one foot in height.

A scratching pen is now a necessity in a well arranged poultry house. It should be under one roof with the roosting room and should be boarded up tight on three sides the south side being open.