

our metropolitan market. Probably we import as many as 700 millions of eggs every year. Good layers, then, are worth having, as well as good nurses and heavy weighers. The influence of the poultry shows may be seen in any district in the truer and more valuable sorts now superseding the coarse-legged and diminutive old-fashioned barn-door birds. At Bingley-hall we witness the poultry in all their best winter plumage; accurately classified; their points of excellence or demerit reduced to a system; the most minute points as to high condition, quality, beauty of plumage, purity of race, and uniformity in the markings, combs, and other characteristics, all determined by the highest authority. Hence, notwithstanding the vast number of exhibitors from all parts of the kingdom, every cage contains almost perfect birds. Still, we find continual progress—exhibitors every year successfully following out the suggestions of the judges, and establishing higher criteria of excellence, transforming breeds, indeed, in a most remarkable manner, by dint of attentive cultivation and selection. Thus, the Spanish cocks formerly had drooping combs; the judges pronounced an upright comb the standard, and, accordingly, at the present exhibition not a drooping comb is to be found. In silver-spangled Hamburgs and Polands clear tails were insisted on, and these are now the rule. Again, while the prescribed formula is for Aylesbury and Rouen ducks to be large, Buenos Ayres and East Indian ducks are to be small, and the result is that these are shown very little larger than widgeon—so extraordinary is the power of the skillful breeder to produce almost any characteristic or quality that may be desirable in greatest excess. The silver-gray Dorking fowls, also, used to have separate classes in many exhibitions because of their small size; but this year they enter into general and equal competition with the darker birds. The greatest advance, however, is in the early maturity of the young birds shown: so that we have chickens of 1859 equal in size and weight to their parents. The developments of increase in weight brought out by this show are really extraordinary. A few years ago, a Dorking hen of 7lb. was a large bird; this year there are 10lb. hens. A Dorking cock was formerly marvellous at 9lb.; now the cocks weigh 11lb. each, and the average weight is 2½lb. per bird heavier than a few years since. A 12lb. goose was once a marvel; at the present show three birds in one pen weigh 74lb, the gander by himself weighing no less than 30lb.—2lb. heavier than the celebrated white gander of the Rev. John

Robinson, a few years since. The average weight of the geese is 9lb. per bird, an improvement of fully 1lb. upon a few years back. There is a pen of four Aylesbury ducks, weighing 32lb. Six pound ducks are common, whereas 4lb. was the average weight formerly. Even Rouen ducks at this show weigh 27lb. the four birds. And Christmas caterers will be glad to learn that turkeys of 17lb. and 18lb. each are quite common, while three turkeys in one pen weigh no less than 68lb. Such an advance in size alone, besides the improvement and aptitude to make flesh, must have added immensely to our capability of supplying the poultry markets. To show that legitimate trade in first class fowls for breeding purposes is still carried on at high prices, apart from the mere fancy and factitious dealing created by the late poultry-keeping mania, take the last two years' sales in Bingley-hall.—In 1857 were sold 201 pens for £800 14s., an average of nearly £4 per pen; a Dorking cock and three hens were sold for £31 10s.; a pen of Polish at 15 guineas, and several pens at 10 guineas each. Last year 206 were sold for £850 13s. averaging £4 2s. 6d. per pen. Three pens of Cochins fetched 15 guineas each; a pen of turkeys, 15 guineas; a pen of geese, 15 guineas; and several pens 10 guineas each. So that the birds in that exhibition are probably worth as much as all the fact stock put together. The largest number of entries we find in the Dorking classes—as many as 218 pens, with Captain Hornby and Mr. Wakefield as successful as usual. The single Dorking cocks are a marvellous fine class, and so, indeed, are all the single cocks exhibited. The Spanish fowls are very numerous and perfect, showing that a breed with special egg-laying properties is becoming duly valued. The Bramahpootras are also beautiful, testifying also to the attention which is directed to fowls most profitable for their eggs, articles of consumption that we might ourselves supply to our home market without being “dependant on foreigners.” The Cochin Chinas are recovering from the unmerited neglect of latter years, and, after having been run up to fantastic prices, and then as extravagantly ridiculed, are now taking the position which their really valuable properties demand. In Hamburg fowl classes it is to be observed that the golden are very superior to the silver feathered; and the spangled Hamburgs comprise many perfect birds. The old English game fowl shows well, as usual, the entries showing that in many counties he is still exclusively the favourite with a large class of poultry-keepers. No fowls are ex-