

die in their early youth. I have kept a number of exceedingly beautiful breeds of fowls, so much more beautiful to me, and I think to the majority of mankind than the Brahma, that in comparison, it is positively plain, but have failed to derive from them a proportionate degree of pleasure, because of the great delicacy of the chickens. It seemed almost impossible to rear fifty per cent of those hatched, even with the best care that could be given, and because of this delicacy, though in other respects the fowls were admirable, I felt constrained to give them up for hardier breeds and varieties. I know that to me, and I am, I suppose, very much like other men, hardiness is an important quality. And I have always found the light Brahma hardy. Some will die, of course, especially among over-fattened adult fowls, but I know of no hardier breed than the light Brahma. A man who cannot, under favorable circumstances, rear a fair percentage of the light Brahma chickens he hatches, would better go out of the poultry business. He evidently is not adapted to it. So it seems to me the hardiness of the fowl is properly reckoned as an element in its popularity.

The light Brahma, when hatched early, makes an excellent winter layer. Its abundant clothing keeps it warm and its pea-comb—the most serviceable and at the same time handsome comb we know of—is not liable to get frost-bitten. And when other, *i.e.*, some other—breeds are not laying at all, the light Brahma continues the work of production. As winter eggs sell for thirty-five to fifty cents per dozen, the light Brahma does not need to produce so many eggs to produce an equal money value. And then, too, the eggs are very large. No breed I think, lays a larger. The good old black Spanish used to have the reputation of laying the largest egg of any fowl, but I really think the egg of the Brahma is quite as large, and as Brahmas and Spanish average in these days I think the Brahma egg is the larger of the two. A fowl that lays a very large egg, perhaps the largest that is laid, and lays these eggs freely in the coldest months of the year, possesses one element of great popularity.

Other elements occur to me, such as the value of the heavy carcass when killing, the color of the legs and skin, the color of the fine feathers and the like, but these three, the great size, the hardiness and the winter laying of large eggs seem to me to account in a large measure for the great popularity of the light Brahma. And, indeed, these are elements of real worth, the first alone perhaps excepted. I cannot see that great size is of so much practical importance as the other elements, though I have given it first place in the making of popularity, but of the other two elements there can be no doubt of their great practical importance. And

so, to a considerable extent at least, the perennial popularity of the light Brahma depends upon its practical and useful qualities, it is after all a question of merit.

BLACK AND WHITE POULTRY.

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Concluded.

TO my mind, however, there is as much honour in breeding such white Cochins as were shown in the early seventies of this nineteenth century, or such Spanish as Messrs. Howard and Nicholls (the late) used to exhibit, or white Dorkings, 9 lb. or 10 lb. in weight each—as is now frequently done—as ever there is in producing a buff Cochins cockerel, gorgeous undoubtedly in his perfectly-coloured buff plumage, but who probably has to leave his black tail at home—or, anyhow, a part of it—or a light Brahma pullet, which to obtain the now fashionable fan-shaped foot feathering, has to wear, or to be deprived of a pair of hocks which sweep the very flooring of the pen.

In some black varieties, such as Minorcas, Langshans and Orpingtons, I am, of course, fully aware that there is a present boom, and that under some judges great classes are obtained in these breeds as far as numbers of entries are concerned, but I maintain that even for them—in this their heyday of popularity—only ordinary prices are given, save for a few birds in very isolated instances, and that they fail to obtain the money which some fanciers of the older varieties pay without a murmur for their specimens, yet Minorcas and Langshans cannot, I suppose, be bred to perfection without an immensity of labour, skill and experience.

Returning, then, to the difficulties of breeding black and white poultry, which I consider to be great ones, and beginning at the varieties, now, perhaps, in the zenith of their power, I will commence with Minorcas. Do the breeders of birds of pencillings and lacings and spangles believe that every Minorca which is hatched is fit for exhibition because it is black or white? How about squirrel tails, white faces, loose combs, pale legs, and birds failing in lustre? Surely these points require skill and labour to produce, and I wonder how many scores of Minorcas are bred before perfection is arrived at. Why, then, should not an ideal Minorca be of the same value as an ideal partridge Cochins or dark Brahma? Again, in Langshans: Is the perfect bloom and iridescent colour so easily obtainable, the exact amount of leg and toe feathering, the color of the legs and feet, the