

**MINER'S DOMESTIC POULTRY  
BOOK: A TREATISE ON THE  
HISTORY, BREEDING, AND  
GENERAL MANAGEMENT OF  
FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC FOWLS**

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MINER'S  
DOMESTIC POULTRY BOOK:

A TREATISE ON THE

HISTORY, BREEDING, AND GENERAL MANAGEMENT

OF

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC FOWLS,

BY

T. B. MINER,

Author of the "American Bee-keeper's Manual," & Editor of the "Northern Farmer."

EMBRACING

All the late Importations of Fowls, and being descriptions by the best Fowl Fan-  
cers in the United States, of all the most valuable breeds, with the Author's  
extensive experience as a breeder, together with selected matter of  
interest, comprising, as it is believed, the most complete  
and authentic work on the subject ever published.

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ILLUSTRATED BY NUMEROUS PORTRAITS FROM LIFE.

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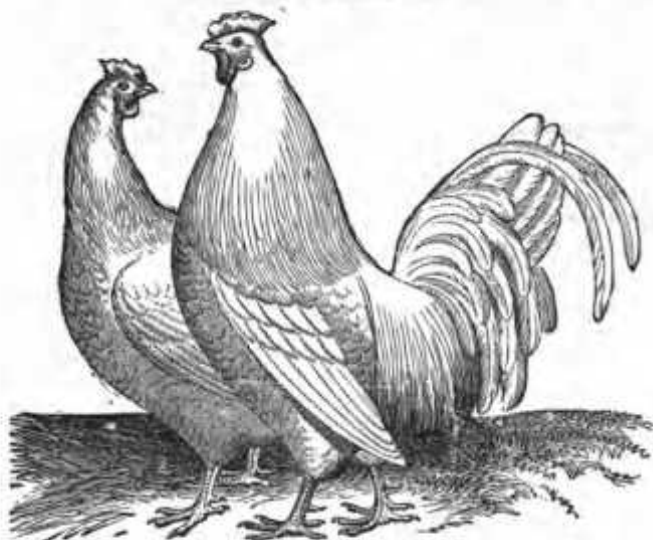
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## PART I.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE DIFFERENT BREEDS AND VARIETIES OF DOMESTIC FOWLS.



WHITE DORKINGS.

The Dorkings originated in Dorking, England, and were originally a pure white. Subsequently the colored Dorkings were produced in Surrey, England, from a cross with the Malay, as it is asserted, but without positive evidence of the alleged fact.

The pure Dorkings have a supernumerary toe; but the existence of the fifth toe is not always evidence of the fowl being of this breed.

The cuts here shown are portraits from life of fowls owned by Dr. Eben Wight, of Dedham, Mass., a gentleman well known



as an experienced importer and breeder of fowls. It is said that white Dorkings are nearly extinct in England, and that the colored varieties are highly esteemed. It is quite probable that this is true—not from the alleged fact, that the colored varieties are better, but from the positive fact that people are generally so careless, that they cannot, or will not keep any breed long in its purity.

Richardson, an English author, says:

"The color of the Dorking is generally pure white, spotted or spangled with black; these colors will sometimes merge into a grey or grizzel. The hens weigh from seven to nine pounds; stand low on their legs; and round, plump, and short in the body; wide on the breast, with abundance of white, juicy flesh. The hens are generally good layers, and their eggs, though smaller than the eggs of the Spanish and Polish breeds, are of good size, and well flavored. The price of pure speckled Dorkings is about 20s. the pair, (\$4.44.) These birds have been long prized, and it is now many years since their superiority over our ordinary domestic varieties was originally discovered and appreciated. In this, and all other varieties of fowl, fresh blood should be introduced from time to time, or the breed degenerates."

Mr. D. P. Newell, of Rochester, writes as follows:

"Dear Sir,—In complying with your request, I would say, that I have bred some of the choicest kinds of fowls, and have come to the conclusion that the pure white Dorking is the best breed we have. They have more good qualities than any other fowl. They are easily kept, hardy and easy to rear, have little waste of offal, mature young, and commence laying when from four to five months old. For the table, I believe, it is conceded by all discriminating epicures that they have not an equal. I have one white Dorking hen imported by Mr. Scott, of Victor, which has layed for nine months past. She commenced when four months old and is laying now. I believe it would be safe to say that she has laid at least *one hundred and fifty* eggs, and has not offered to set. I have kept during the last season, five different breeds, among which are the black and golden Polands; but my pure white Dorkings have laid better than any breed. The fawn-colored Dorking is doubtless a cross between the white Dorking and Malay. I have raised the speckled and fawn-colored Dorkings this season from the above crosses. The speckled Dorking is also a cross between the golden Poland, and the white Dorking. My chickens have the fifth toe, and other usual marks of the Dorking fowl. I have Dr. Eben Wight's and Mr. Scott's importations, and shall breed them with great care, selecting a cock from one importation, and a hen from the other; and I have yet to be convinced that the world can produce any thing superior to the *White Surrey Dorkings*."

Maine, a foreign writer, says:

"The most valuable variety for the table at present is the Dorking breed. This is pure white; and highly esteemed for whiteness and

delicacy of flesh when served at table. They also fetch a high price at market. Among breeders, real Dorking cocks sell for from five to ten shillings (sterling) each. This breed makes an excellent stock for the farm or market. They fat well, lay well, and rear well; are handsome alive, and show delicately white and advantageous when plucked and dressed for market. Their feathers also being fine and of good color, can be substituted many of them for geese feathers, consequently they bring a higher price."

In all the writings that have appeared in this country on poultry, the Dorkings have, I believe, never been spoken of but in terms of high commendation. George P. Burnham, Esq., of Boston, in the *New England Cultivator*, says:

"The origin of the Dorking fowl is generally conceded to the town of Dorking, Surrey County, England, where for a century and a half, this variety has been kept and bred in great purity. The best fowls known there, are *purely white* in color—with rose combs, flesh-colored legs and bills, and five toes. There are other fowls in England, as well as in this country, which are called Dorkings—for the reason that the white fowl has become so deservedly popular, and so saleable; but these last named are generally a mixture of the white fowl with the native breeds, or a cross of the noble white Dorking with the old 'Surrey' fowl (so called,) or some other mongrel.

"The best authorities on poultry give the name of 'Dorking' to the *white* variety—that these are a *large* fowl, however, we believe, is not claimed for the Dorking, generally. We have never seen a pair of them that would weigh over eight to eight and a half pounds for the cock, and five to six pounds for the hen. They possess remarkable good qualities, however, in other respects; and have their advocates, very decidedly, among fanciers and breeders. Dr. Wight, we believe, was one of the first who imported these fowls from England into the United States.

"In form, the Dorking is compact, short-legged, possessing very little offal, and is a handsome modeled bird. The hens are excellent layers, and the very best of mothers, always. They are moderate feeders, and for the table are very choice—the meat of this fowl being short-grained, juicy and daintily flavored.

"There has been an attempt, with one or two breeders in this region, to palm off upon the unsophisticated, a cross between the white Dorking or the 'Surrey' fowl, with the Great Malay, or other Chinese bird—a mongrel, which has been denominated for the time being, the '*speckled Dorking*' or the '*grey Dorking*,' but with very indifferent success. The fanciers who tried this experiment, have given it up; and so we will only quote the following authorities in regard to the *color* of the Dorkings, and leave the speculators in '*grey Dorkings*' to get out of their permanent investments as best they may!

"A correspondent of Dr. Kerr, in his late '*Domestic Poultry*,' thinks the only color which is thrown by the thorough-bred Dorking, is *white*; with white legs and bills, and a fifth toe. He adds that the white Dorkings have been largely bred "*in-and-in*," and have never

varied in color. Mowbray, Dickson, Maine, and other known authors, contend that white is the true color for the purely-bred Dorking.

"Mr. Nolan, of Dublin, in his recent work, speaking of the Chittagong fowl, says that 'their plumage is speckled grey, and there is no doubt of their being crossed on the Dorking, which fowl they resemble in shape, and then produce what is denominated the grey Dorking.' Here we have Mr. Nolan's assertion, who is considered one of the very best informed men on poultry in the world, that the 'grey' or 'speckled Dorking' is nothing but a cross of the white Dorking with the Malay or Chittagong.

"A few so called 'speckled' Dorkings have been imported from England, latterly, by enthusiastic fanciers, but we are informed that they give very little satisfaction, upon a more intimate acquaintance, and that these gentlemen are ready to fall back upon their original fowls, the white variety, after giving the others a fair trial.

"There are very few varieties so highly prized as are these, and none excel them for all the good qualities desired in a domestic fowl."

The following is from Mr. H. V. N. Dimmick, a breeder of experience at Hubbard's Corners, Madison Co., N. Y. He refers to colored Dorkings in his allusion to Mr. Rotch's stock :

"I was very much gratified to see a true description of the 'Dorking fowl' in the January number of the Northern Farmer; so that those who are anxious to obtain that very valuable fowl, may be the better able to judge of what they are about to purchase. I have raised the 'Dorkings' some three or four years. I have them from both Mr. Rotch and Dr. Wight's stock; and in regard to flesh, I think they cannot be surpassed, nor even equaled, although I think they are not as good as many other fowls in regard to laying properties alone, but both combined, they are truly a valuable fowl."