

### BELGIAN GAME FOWL

Judging from the close proximity of Belgium and France, their old friendship and common interests, one would believe that their game fowls were alike. To a certain degree this is the case, but there is evidence that originally, at last, their fowls are entirely distinct. Such an authority as Monsieur Henri Cliquennois enforces this statement.

There are different varieties of pit fowl in Belgium, which, though they may hail from the same original source, developed along different lines.

**THE FLEMISH.** Referring to the Combattant Flaman, M. Cliquennois, states verbally the following:

"About a century, or even more, ago, the Belgians had a breed of games different from ours (French). The Flemish had cocks, larger, stronger but slower than ours which were at that time called 'Pheasant cocks.' Our cocks were, and still are, in their great majority very brilliant in colour; they have the characteristics of the Old English, but almost double as strong. The Flemish, Belgian cocks, were, as they still mostly are, of very dull colour, light or pale gray, dark-red, blue, mottled or 'millefleurs,' small rose-comb (crete courte a fraise); legs black, dark slate or dirty white. Those cocks are colder in blood, less fast, than ours.

"At the shows, 'coqs de Bruge' as well as 'Liegeois' are indistinctly registered as "Coqs Belges." The standard, excepting that for the "Bleus de Bruge," is vague enough, and tolerates everything that is Belgian game, without having a definite type.

"The proximity of the North of France with Flanders and the Wallon country has encouraged cross-breeding, in many places, our French breed and the Belgians, especially the Flemish, which, like ours, are fought in steel. The cocks so-called Liegeois (from Liege) found

commonly in the provinces of Charleroi, Namur, Hasselt and Liege, fight in natural heels or with horn spurs applied over the natural stubs, like we do with steel gaffs. It is more than 60 years that I fight cocks and I always preferred the Nord game to any other."

The Flemish averages fully one pound heavier than the French Nord, and as M. Cliquennois states, is less active and alert than the latter. It is strange that though the smaller Nord is single-combed, the Belgians Flaman and Liegeois are generally, though not always, rose-combed. As is the case with the Nord, Flemish and Liege game are not suitable to be bred elsewhere and after a few generations lose their most precious qualities.



**BELGIAN GAME.**  
Flemish Game cock. The largest steel-fighting cock of the world.

**THE LIEGEOIS.** This breed, again, is larger than the Flemish and consequently heavier. Somewhat sluggish, they are too slow for anything but naked heels, and it is this way that the sport is carried out in his abodes.

The Liegeois is a true game variety and though many fanciers tried to create an interest for them at the shows, the customers rather prefer either the giant Bruge blue or the sprightlier Flaman. But in the realms of naked-heel fighting the cog Liegeois holds its own against all comers. One pound or two heavier than the steelfighting Flemish, the Liege or "coq du pays" has many ad-

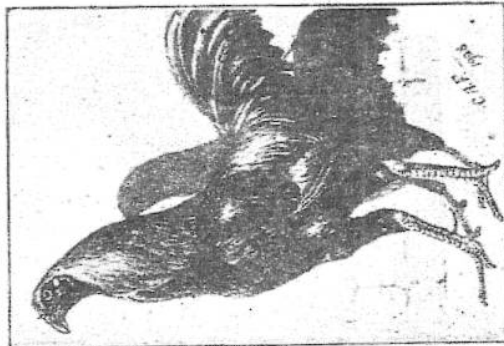
mirers and as cock-fighting is prohibited he serves his place well, being fought without long preparation in any improvised pit. Such giant shakes have been fought in the States, Canada and South America and seldom fail to knock their opponents down and out unless matched with some tough Oriental of about equal weight. The

Liegeois are exceedingly interesting fowls and many times better value than many of the so-called standard varieties. We fail to grasp why the hunters of sensational breeds have not taken up the breed to satisfy eccentric tastes in the show coop. Their size alone would be an attraction, and besides they are quite easy to keep and rear.

THE BRUGES. This is not anymore a game variety, being probably a Malay cross of the Liegeois. They are now recognized as "Bruge Blues," according to their colour which is Andalusian blue, slate or any shade of gray. They are preferably bred blue, very heavy and large and though profusely feathered are fairly Oriental in features.

No doubt that this breed, like the Cornish Indian of England, was originally produced for the pit, but following that old curse on the Oriental crosses,—reversion towards mediocrity,—became dunghills in the long run, and now are not anymore used for the pit.

They are, however, cherished in many quarters, largely



BELGIAN GAME.  
Bieu de Bruges.—The heaviest European fowl.

for exhibition, and as the blue colour throws many wasters, the latter are fattened and constitute a most excellent table fowl which many Belgian "Gourmands" consider insuperable. So far as our experience goes, we can strongly endorse the latter statement.

Besides the Bruges there are many barn-door varieties, giant and small in Belgium, which all serve the purpose of exhibition and the more substantial one of culinary satisfaction. We just touch the subject of the latter, as well as that of the Bruges, to show that *there is* or was Oriental blood infusion in Belgium. As in France, the fowl show a tendency to grow large, apparently also *without* Oriental blood. Many American varieties that have been crossed with either Flemish or Nord,—Trans-Atlantics, Hoosier Beauties and others,—have grown progeny of standard pit size (French) and so have Malays and Asils also. Of course those Americans, except the Hoosier Beauties, had some Oriental blood, so that measure of comparison rather limps.

Authorities that know French and Flemish breeds from A to Z, emphatically state that the Nord and Flemish are perfectly pure Bankivoids. Bowing to this recognition from people who know things infinitely better than we do, we want to state that this gigantic growth is a mystery, apparently accomplished by climate, soil, food and selection.