GAME COCKS AND COCK-FIGHTING

This is not an apology for cock-fighting, a so-called amusement which has fallen from the high estate it held for ages among our ancestors, and is now threatened with legal extinction in two of its strongholds, the Philippines and Cuba, in consequence of the occupation of those countries by our imperialistic forces. It is not too much to say that the action of the United States in preventing farther indulgence in this sport, will naturally tend to delay the peaceful settlement of our differences with these people. There is no amusement “more hallowed by the rust of time” than that of cock-fighting. The first records of China note it. In Persia and India it was early practised in connection with hawking and it was during an invasion of Persia by the Greeks that Themistocles halted his army, about to deliver battle, to witness a chance contest between two cocks, and drew from the sight a moral lesson for his soldiers, by which he wrought them up to such a state of valor that they fell on the Persians so fiercely as to defeat them shortly and utterly. Owing to this victory cock-fighting was thereafter by decree annually practised at Athens.

The spectacle of the combats between these birds was supposed to implant and foster the seeds of valor in the breasts of the Athenian youth. The custom gradually spread among the islands of the Grecian Archipelago, and after a time it became a pastime and amusement, losing the religious and political character with which it started. In Rome cock-fighting was known to have been practised 450 years before the Christian era, but there, as in Athens, it degenerated into a simple amusement, losing its moral features.∗

In “Notes and Queries” it is stated that there is no record of the introduction of cock-fighting into England before 1191, though others believe that the practice was coexistent with the Roman conquest and flourished during the centuries of Roman occupation of Britain. The habit of school children fighting cocks on Shrove Tuesday in the school and under the auspices and control of the master was carried on for centuries in various parts of Britain, and instances of it are said to have occurred in Scotland within the memory of men now living. During the reign of Edward III. cock-fighting became a fashionable amusement, but it was after a time prohibited by public proclamation as an idle and unlawful pastime. However it still flourished, and Henry VIII. not only devoted himself to it in his seasons of leisure from marriage and uxoricide, but added a cock-pit to the other conveniences of Whitehall Palace. James I. was so addicted to the amusement that he took his pleasure at it twice a week. While Queen Elizabeth, probably by reason of her sex, is said not to have shown the same active interest in the sport as her royal father, neither did she oppose it, but left her subjects to follow their own choice in the matter. The learned Roger Ascham, who was tutor to the Princess Elizabeth, and Latin lecturer and reader of the learned languages to her after she ascended the throne, was, according to Fuller, “an honest man and a good shooter. Archery was his pastime in youth, which in old age he exchanged for cock-fighting.”

In Blaine’s Encyclopædia of Rural Sport, he speaks of “Roger Ascham’s well known treatise on the subject,” but “Johnson’s Life” says that though Ascham himself refers to what he calls his “Book of the Cock-pit,” if it ever existed in more than his contemplation it has not been preserved. The literature of this period and later treated cock-fighting as a well known and laudable amusement. Not only did royalty and the nobility and gentry of the kingdom set the seal of approval on the cock-pit but the clergy, as is now the case with their brethren of the elder communion in the present and late Spanish possessions, looked on the sport with a benevolent and sympathetic eye. Indeed the Rev. Dr. Robert Wild, rector of Aynho in Northamptonshire, who was equally distinguished as a preacher, wit and poet, published a very clever poem on the subject, called “Verses on Cock-fighting;” beginning thus:

“No sooner were the doubtful people set,
The match made up, and all that would had bet,
But straight the skilful judges of the fray
Brought forth the sharp-heel'd warriors, and they

∗Blaine’s Encyclopædia and Johnson’s Sporting Dictionary.
From an old English print.

READY FOR THE BATTLE.
Were both in linen bags, as if 'twere meet
Before they died to have their winding sheet.
Into the pit they're brought, and being there
Upon the stage, the Norfolk chanticleer
Look'd stoutly at his ne'er before seen foe,
And, like a challenger, began to crow.

In a work entitled “The Whole Art of Husbandry Contained in Foure Bookes,” etc., written by Gervase Markham and published in 1631, he says in the Booke containing “Entreating of Poultrie”: “I will now proceed to a creature of a much more excellent and heroyicall nature, and such an one as the Ancients for his height of spirit and greatnesse of minde, made the only companion of the god of Warre, and that is the fighting Cocke or Cocke for Battale. And the rather I undertake this labour because I see the great height whereunto this Pastime or Recreation ascendeth, the many judicall and most expert knowledges which are pregnant with all the mysteries hidden in the art. * * * First to speake something of the nature and dignity of the fighting Cocke, ye Ancients, as Pliny Columella, Varro and others, affirme that of all sensible creatures they are the most valiant, of the highest spirit, and the most constant and uncontrollable in all their actions, for their valour is so infinite that they end their battailes onely in certaine death, and though the conqueror sound his own triumph in clapping his wings and crowing, yet the conquered, even to the last gaspe, will shew all the characters of resistance shewing that however his body may be subject to Fortune, yet his minde can acknowledge no such deity. * * * Now for the antiquity of this pastime or recreation (for I can give it no greater epitheton), some would have it as ancient as the Olimpick games and that from the imitation of these Birdes, the Gladiators or Fencers first invented and put in practice the art of Sworde play, and sure it is not unlikely, for the first two Cockes that ever were bred would give notice of their nature so that the sonsnes of Noah could not chuse but make use of their enmity; but, leaving Conjectures, I find both by Pliny and others that in the Infancie of the Roman commonwealth there was yearly held at Pergamus a solemne triumph or meeting only to behold a Cocke-fight, which continued for divers dayes having the resort of all the nations that dwelled about them, and hence it came to be dispersed farre and neare into other Countries; and for my owne part I doe not finde (in this Kingdom of ours) any monument of pleasure what-ever more ancient than the Cocke-pit.”

In an earlier work by the same author entitled “Country Contentments” Chapter XIX. “of the Choyce, Ordering, Breeding, and Dyeting of the fighting Cocke for battell” he begins thus: “Since there is no pleasure more Noble, Delightsome, or void of Couzenage and deceite than this pleasure of Cocking is; and since many of the best wisdomes of our Nation have been pleased to participate with the delights therein, I think it not amiss, as well for the instruction of those which are unexperienced, as fortifying of them which have some knowledge therein, to declare in a few lines the Election, Breeding, and Secrets of dyeting the fighting Cocke, which having bin hitherto concealed and unwritten of is (for our Pleasure’s Sake) as worthy a general knowledge as any delight whatsoever.”

In “The Pleasures of Princes or Good-men’s Recreations” 1614—and “The English Husbandman”, 1613—both by Gervase Markham, are long chapters on the “fighting Cocke”—the contents of one being: “The Choyce of the Cocke for battell—The Breeding of the Battell Cocke—The dyeting of Cockes for battell—Of taking up Cockes—Of the Cocke-penne—Of his dyet—Of Sparring of Cockes—The Stowing of Cockes—Of the best dyet-bread—Of the best Scouring—The Matching of Cockes—The preparing Cockes to the fights—The ordering of Cockes after the battall and the curing them.”

Fairfax: Complete Sportsman, 1764—and The Country Gentleman’s Companion, 1753, contain long treatises on this subject, and in fact scarcely any of the few English books published in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries on country life, sport, or recreation, fail to give, as a matter of course, full and definite instructions as to the breeding and fighting of game fowls.

The origin of the game cock is lost in the mists of antiquity, but the breed is doubtless older than any other known one of our domestic fowls, though none of the many theories of its derivation is satisfactory. The jungle cock of India has been by some considered the progenitor of the breed, but modern attempts at crossing it or the pheasant with any kind of domestic fowl
have been disappointing. It is quite possible that the first created cock which crew in the Garden of Eden was a game one, though, if such is the case how all the degenerate families of the present day could have descended from him is almost inconceivable, though not more so than that he should have sprung from any of them. However this may be, he cannot be kept up to the high standard desirable without being permitted to indulge his natural instinct for fighting, and by breeding from those individuals which have developed this instinct in its best form. The extent of this development cannot be known unless cocks are fought, any more than can the excellencies of a football player or of a race horse except they be shown on the field or on the course. Were game fowls not bred and fought by those who believe that spirit and courage to do or die is the most essential of their characteristics, it is safe to say the breed would be extinct in twenty-five years. It is also safe to say that not one in ten of the so-called game fowls exhibited in poultry shows and advertised for sale, especially in the North, is the genuine article, the embodiment of valor to a greater degree than any living creature, which no odds can terrify, which shows as much willingness to meet a fresh foe when beaten and helpless as when in full force and vigor and dies fighting if unable to do more than raise his head to meet his adversary. To quote Blaine once more: "Philanthropists are in the habit of declaiming much against the practice of cock-pit battles but on reflection the cruelty of that sport will be found among the least wherein the feelings of animals are concerned, since fighting, in the game cock, is a natural and irresistible
passion and can never take place against his will; and since those engaged in regular combat upon the arena would do so voluntarily and with equal ardor did they meet in a desert. Another similar mistake is the supposed additional cruelty of arming the heel of the cock with steel spurs, which on the contrary, conduces to shorten the period of their suffering." The concluding sentence is undoubtedly true and the comparatively short quick battles waged by cocks trained into condition and armed with the gaffs or their own spurs sharpened to needle like points, as is the custom in Cuba, are far less painful than the bloody combats between cocks meeting in barnyards and battering each other into death or insensibility after long and tedious struggles.

The British Isles, until the last half century, have for a long period been the theater wherein the finest breeds of cocks have had the most skilful preparation and handling, and have ended their gallant lives in the carpeted pit before the best in the land. Cromwell's attempt by proclamation in 1654, to stop the sport was only temporarily successful, and with the Restoration it was resumed openly throughout the kingdom. Mains and matches were decided at most of the principal race meetings and for many years one or more mains constituted an essential feature of the great annual race meeting at Chester and York. Cock-pits were established in all the principal towns, and London had many of them, the most prominent being the Cock-pit, Royal Tufton street, Westminster. One of the devotees of the amusement, Col. Mordaunt, widely known as a kind-hearted, generous man, who spent much time and money in wise attempts to benefit the condition of the poor, being anxious to compare the English game fowl with those of India, made the slow and uncomfortable voyage to that remote country with a number of cocks, to test the matter, and returned defeated. What cocker of the present degenerate age would devote a year or more to such a purpose with no hope of reward save that of his own conscience, leaving his native land, his family, and his philanthropic duties without his countenance and fostering care?

The popularity of the sport has not languished until the last few years, and at the present day many a match and main is fought during the winter and spring in the British Isles. Among the famous veterans of the pit, Joseph Gilliver stands at the head by reason of his long series of successes as a breeder and handler. He died in 1833, full of years and honors, and in the enjoyment of a competence earned in his vocation. He won several mains against the cocks of the then Earl of Derby, whose breed of birds is famous to the present day, but the crowning effort, of his career was his victory in the greatest main ever fought, which was for 1000 guineas a battle and 5,000 guineas the main. In this seven cocks on a side contested, and Gilliver won five of the battles. His grandson, William Gilliver, was lately pursuing the ancestral occupation in Warwickshire and the descendants of some of the fowls used by his distinguished forbear are now in this country.

In the United States it is doubtful if cock-fighting flourished among the early New England settlers and in these parts it has always been conducted somewhat under the rose. Still the characteristic Yankee enterprise has been the means of bringing out and introducing to the South a strain of game cocks second to none, of which hereafter. Under the less austere conditions which obtained as the English-speaking settlement grew to the West and South the sport likewise grew. In New York and the Jerseys it was considered a pardonable diversion, and by the time the colony of Virginia was reached it was regarded as one of the proper pastimes of a gentleman. Thackeray realized this in "The Virginians," and speaks of cock-fighting as something common to the region and one of the usual entertainments at the country taverns. While at the present day some of the southern States forbid it by statutory enactment, others have no laws against it and cock-fights are advertised and carried on openly in the presence of large crowds of spectators. Many of these performances are held in the day time in the open air, and in the capital of one State where most of the lawyers' offices were built about an open green in the shadow of the temple of justice their occupants were wont to while away the tedium of idle afternoons by making this space the theater of fights which could be witnessed from the surrounding windows.

There are now several flourishing periodicals in the South published in the interests
THE FAMOUS COCK-FIGHT AT LUCKNOW, INDIA, ON THE VISIT ON COL. MORDAUNT.
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of cock-fighters and full of accounts of mains, challenges from different breeders and advertisements of all the various paraphernalia appertaining to the art. Men in these papers offer for sale cocks of the various fashionable breeds—"Warhorses," "Fannie Carters," "Eslin Red Quills," "Arkansas Travelers," "Gordons," "Cotton Bolls," "Trans-Atlantics," said to be "Hustlers from the jump and always good for one more kick," and many more. One gentleman has such confidence in his strain that he offers to furnish cocks for $12 each paying his own expenses and "conditioning them for mains, great or small, in the Carolinas, Virginia or Georgia," no charge to be made for any cock losing his battle. This certainly is a liberal and sportsmanlike proposition and the maker of it concludes, in capitals, "Try me once and you will want me again." The Warhorse strain is generally admitted to be equal if not superior to the best of the many others, though the "Claiborne's," the "Eslin Red Quills" and the "Gordons" are very highly esteemed. The South owes the Warhorse game fowls, as it does the cotton gin, to New England enterprise. The story is as follows. A gentleman of Marblehead, Mass., who, rising superior to the New England prejudices against this form of sport, fought his cocks wherever victories were to be won and honor gained throughout the Eastern and Middle States, finally penetrated the South, making the Carolinas and Georgia the theaters of his mains. Having met defeat several times in these parts he finally produced some brown and black reds he had procured from the Emerald Isle (as famous for its cocks as for its men), called the Irish Gilders. With these birds he marched through Georgia conquering, as did Sherman, and winning fame and money galore. After several years of conquest, thinking his fowls needed a cross, their owner dispatched an ancient sport named Dolan across the ocean to his native sod in search of the proper birds. Dolan returned from his quest bringing some dark grays, which crossed with the "Gilders," produced offspring considered unbeatable. These invaded the Sunny South with glowing success, and Shawnecks, Baltimore top knots, Dominiques and other famous strains succumbed before the quick fighting, hard hitting, clean cutting foreigners. At a main in Charleston, S. C., where one of these birds won by sheer gameness, and after a long struggle, an Irish spectator enthusiastically shouted, "Bedad but thim's the warhorses," The name stuck, and one Hopkinson of Atlanta, who obtained some of the breed has since perpetuated it with loving care, and its unsullied reputation has extended over the broad plains of Texas and to the distant capital of the Mexican Republic. Some of the cocks of this strain are gray in color and these are generally thought preferable to the red ones, even when full brothers—the hens are nearly all jet black.

So long as the sport maintains its present prosperous state in the South there is no danger of the breed of game fowls dying out, though the extinction of the valiant bird is certain to ensue if he is left to the mercies of the philanthropist and such as only admire him for his good looks. It is rather strange that there is no absolutely distinctive type of game fowls, but that they vary more in outward appearance than any of the other breeds. They may be very small, or very large, of any color or combination of colors from pure white to pure black, loose or hard feathered and with plain or rose combs. Some have large tassels or top knots and others heavy bunches of feathers on their cheeks called muffs. Blaine speaks of a variety of tailless or "rumpless" games. So greatly do they differ in shape, plumage, color and other details that it is hard to believe they sprang at no very remote period in the life of the world from one parent stock though they probably did so, as there is no peculiarity in the makeup of a game cock that is not found in some of the dunghill tribe. It also seems improbable that any number of generations of selection, natural or artificial, could give to any other families of fowls the dauntless and persistent courage and the fighting ability that come instinctively to game fowls. It will probably never be established that the first created cock was game, though it is far more likely that he should have been made perfect and beautiful to begin with than that he was evolved from any of the thousands of the vastly inferior families of fowls now known: Still the dunghill cock has valorous characteristics which would be highly esteemed but for the more striking ones of his game relation. It is unquestionably one of the former strain which has become the emblem of France, probably by reason of the inhabitants of that country not having, knowledge of game fowls.
The game cock needs no education or experience to teach him war—one which has never struck a blow will fight his first opponent with as much skill and vigor as any succeeding ones, and one drop of admixture of dunghill blood, while it may not impair his fighting qualities, will be sure to assert itself when the supreme test of gameness is applied to him or to his descendants. There are breeds of fowls known to have this strain which have proved very successful in the pit on account of their strength, fastness and fighting powers, over such as are undoubtedly game. Such a strain was one known as the "Gipseys," which held their own for years as the house birds at the old Harlem Lane pit where the genial and obese Luff presided twice a week over the sports. These Gipseys were so fast and strong that they would beat the majority of game cocks pitted against them, yet they would run with great uniformity after a real hard cutting.

A famous New York pit was for years operated in the Bowery near Broome street. There the veterans Giles, Clacker, Moss, Hawkes, Mulholland, and others now departed, were wont to assemble semi-weekly so enjoy the entertainments of those meetings. Sickels of Brooklyn was also a regular attendant, and always appeared dressed as if for church, and looking not unlike the parson Pierce Egan describes in a visit to the Cock-pit Royal in London, and feeding and fighting for his own money as good cocks as ever flew. The glories of these and other resorts of the like character have departed and it is probable that very little cock-fighting is now carried on in Greater New York. The hardy pioneers who won the West for this country carried along their game fowls with their axes and rifles and the shrill crow of the gallant bird was often the first civilized sound to break the silence of the primeval forest. This was especially the case in those parts settled from Virginia and the descendants of those immigrants retain to this day their fondness for a game cock. A Dr. Clarke, of Indianapolis, who besides being an M.D. is also an A.M., has written several treatises on the game cock. A few years since, following, on an easier plan, the example of Col. Mordaunt above mentioned, he took a lot of his cocks abroad and met and conquered the fowls of the leading cockers of France, England and Belgium with a famous strain called the Trans-Atlantic, winning according to his statement thirty-four out of fifty-nine battles. Dr. Clarke relieves the tedium of his professional duties by dealing in game fowls, gaffs, etc., and fighting mains with all comers.

The qualities to be desired in game fowls are:

1st. Cutting, i.e., the ability to hit with their heels about every time they rise and to rise every time their opponents do and in every bill hold.

2d. Hard hitting—the blows of the heels being driven home by the force of the wings applied to them as the cocks rise.

3d. Rapidity in fighting—cocks may be good cutters which are not hard hitters, but disable or kill their antagonists without apparently striking any heavy blows. Others are what are called "wing fighters" from making a great noise and shuffling with their wings but hardly using their legs at all. These are practically worthless. Then there are some which fight with the head low thus exposing unduly that vulnerable point. So a "high stationed cock," one standing upright and keeping his head up when fighting, is desirable. Some cocks fight for the head and others aim their blows at the body. It is a vexed question which of these methods is more to be desired. Certain strains of blood have characteristic modes of fighting and it is the aim of the scientific breeders to intensify by careful selection and crossing the traits he most wishes to preserve and obliterate those which are undesirable. In breeding game fowls more care has to be exercised than with those of inferior varieties. The highest bred animals of any kind are the most difficult to rear. The race-horse which when matured is the strongest and most enduring of his kind is subject to ailments and infirmities, especially in youth, that are hardly known to the coarser breeds. The game cock should not be mated with more than six or eight hens and a smaller number than eight is preferable. The cock and hens should be in perfect health and old cocks should not be put with old hens. They should have as large a run as practicable as they approximate wild birds in their habits and desire to ramble and do better on a good range, than when cooped up. Markham says "the best season to breed is from the increase of the moon in February to the increase of the moon in
March, for a March bird is of far greater esteem than those bred at other times." This is the belief to the present day and a current superstition, especially amongst those of the Irish nation, that the egg laid by a game hen after she clucks and wants to sit, will produce a cock likely to run away if fought. It is well to let the game hens set on their own eggs, thirteen being the most popular number notwithstanding the current belief of its unluckiness.

Game hens are good layers, good sitters, and as mothers far ahead of any other breed. If they can be turned loose with their broods in a garden containing plenty of young vegetables and fruits and insects and left to get their own living, that is the ideal home for them and under such conditions they are much less liable to the various diseases which decimate the ranks of future champions of the pit. Should the garden prove impracticable the young things should have what is next best in the way of a good run and natural food. A frequent change of diet and cleanliness in the coops where they are housed and fed is very important until they get well along to their first moulting. All of the old masters agree that "if chickens begin to crow at about six months old clear and loud, or at unseasonable times it is a sign of cowardice and falsehood, for the true cock is very long before he can get his voice and then he observes his hours." Early crowing is now considered a suspicious accomplishment. Game chickens, like others, have fights amongst themselves and sometimes quite severe ones at eight or ten weeks of age.

By these fights the mastery is settled and remains settled until after the moulting when the chickens begin paying attention to the pullets. Then, if left together with hens, they will ere long fall out and the ensuing battles are dangerous. If a cock runs with a lot of chickens at this season they are kept under better control, but any number of game chickens may live peacefully in fellowship if put in an enclosure, before they get their courage, and kept there without any female companionship whatever. Under such conditions they agree perfectly and dwell together in the greatest amity with no more idea of fighting than so many doves. The introduction of one hen, however, will destroy for ever the harmony of the happy family. At six months of age, especially if they are to be fought that winter all the cock chickens should have good walks and the refining and encouraging influences of female society. Some experts say that no game chicken gets his full courage without being on a walk with hens for six weeks and he may still be game and fly the pit if tested at the end of a shorter period of independence. Markham and other old masters assert that a cock should not be fought earlier than at two years of age,* but stags, i.e., cock chickens which have passed their first Christmas and have been well walked are about as good, especially by springtime, as they ever are. By general concensus of opinion in the North the New England festival of Thanksgiving and the anniversary of the birth of Ireland's favorite saint mark the beginning and end of the cock-fighting season, though Fairfax speaking for Britain says: "The best time to take up your cocks is the latter end of August (for from that time till the latter end of May, cocking is in request)." As this would include the season of moulting, when the best of game cocks are so weak and depressed that they will sometimes be unwilling to face another cock, it is probable that Mr. Fairfax has put his date too early.

Now if the owner of some game chickens wishes to fight them, in violation of the law, and knows or thinks he does, some sure method of evading the penalties he is to incur, and can learn of some surreptitious pit where his battles may be fought with one similarly circumstanced, what is he to do to get his birds into action in a condition fit for them to show their full powers? It was unanimously agreed by all the princes, clergy, literati, and gentry to whom we have aforetime alluded that cocks to be fit to do battle should be judiciously "ordered and dyeted" and the "Country Gentleman's Companion", 1753, voices the public sentiment of England when it states, under the head of "Dieting of Cocks for Battle": "In it only consisteth all the ground and substance of the pleasure, the best cock undieted not being able to encounter with the worst cock that is dieted." In the old days the time occupied in "dieting" was from four to eight weeks with a preponderance of authority in favor of six weeks, and a short synopsis of one of these methods which the author says

*At two years old you may put a cock to the battle as not being before perfect and complete in every member.—Fairfax Sportsman, 1764.
has never before (1750) been divulged may prove instructive. It is only fair to say regarding this claim that every other writer of this period pretends to equal virtues for his recipes on the subject. The cock to be treated is put in a pen at least three feet in hight and two feet square every way, and fed for three or four days on the finest, coolest and softest spring water you can get, and thrice a day, at "sunrise, high noon and sunset, a good handful of 'old Manchit' without crust, cut into little square bits. After four days take him and another cock and putting a pair of hots upon each of their heels, which hots are soft bombasted rolls of leather covering their spurs so that they cannot hurt or bruise one another, and so, setting them down on the green grass let them fight and buffet one another a good space." After this exercise "you shall take butter and rosemary finely chopped and white sugar candy, all mixed together and give him a lump thereof as much as your thumb." When this is done the cock is to be put in a "deep straw-basket, with soft sweet straw in the middle, then covered with sweet straw up to the top, and then lay on the lid close and let your cock stow and sweat until the evening." In the evening at four, "you may take your cock out of the stow and licking his head and eyes all over with your tongue, put him into his pen" and give him some bread moistened with a saline solution "to cleanse, his head and body." From this time to the end of his "dieting" the cock shall be fed with bread made as follows: "You shall take of wheat meal half a peck, and a like quantity of fine oatmeal flour, mixing them together knead them into a stiff paste with ale, the white of a dozen eggs, and half a pound of butter; and, having wrought the dough exceedingly well make it into broad thin cakes; being three or four days old and the blistering of the outside cut away, cut it into little square bits and give it to the cock." Every other day to the end of the first fortnight the cock is to be sparsed or "chased" which is done by "showing him a dunghill cock in your arms and run away from him enticing him to follow for half an hour at least, suffering him now and then to have a stroke at the dunghill cock." After each of these diversions the cock is to be "stowed" in a basket as before. After the first fortnight he shall be fed in the same manner, but shall only be sparsed and stowed twice a week. The third fortnight the cock shall be fed in the same way, but not sparsed at all, but "twice or thrice let him run and chase up and down, and now and then cuff a cock which you shall hold to him in your hands, then give him his Scouring well rolled in the powder of sugar candy."

"At the end of six weeks feeding, finding your cock in lust and breath you may fight him at your pleasure, observing that he have at least three days rest before he fight, and well emptied of his meat before you bring him into the pit." After this follow several pages on "The Matching of Cocks," showing how you may outwit your adversary or he do the same by you—"Of Preparing Cocks to the Fight" and "The Ordering of Cocks after Battle and the Curing them." The final paragraph of this monition is as follows: "After you have put forth your wounded cocks to their walks and come to visit them a month or two after, if you find about their heads any swelled bunches, hard and blackish at one end, you may know that in such bunches are unsound cores; therefore presently with your knife you shall open the same and squeeze out the cores with your thumbs; then with your mouth suck out all the corruption and fill the holes full of fresh butter which will cure them. And thus much for the nature of the cock and how to keep him for his best use."

This is a rather long digression from the instruction to the amateur anxious to embark properly equipped on his career of cock-fighting. The modern methods of feeding, which he would be likely to prefer to that which has just been described are quite different from it and probably preferable. The time now used in feeding is eight to ten days for chickens and stags, and ten to fourteen days for cocks. The following is a synopsis of the rules of a distinguished southern feeder. They differ chiefly from the northern rules in not prescribing cock-bread or sugar candy. First day the cocks when empty are given five grains of asafœtida each, with plenty of water and no food or exercise; second day, in the morning, give the cocks a table-spoonful each of scalded wheat and the same of scalded cracked corn mixed, half the amount at noon and evening, with a little water, no exercise. Third day, in early
morning, fly them five or six times, and after half an hour rest give each cock three tablespoonfuls of oats, cracked corn, and wheat scalded, no dinner, and before feeding at night in the same, give them five or six flys each. Fourth, fly eight or ten times in morning and again in afternoon, increase feed and exercise a little if cocks are doing well. Fifth day, increase work and feed a little (the flying is done by tossing the cocks in the air two or three feet so they will alight on a stuffed cushion in a box or barrel in front of you). This day begin feeding the white of one boiled egg to each cock morning and night mixed with crushed oats and cracked corn, scalded. Sixth day, spar the cocks of equal weight until they are blown and get to billing, of course putting muffs on their heels, same work and feed as yesterday. Seventh day, work the cocks well in the morning and very little at night, feed twice on white of egg and cracked corn. Eighth day, muff your cocks and spar them until they come to billing, feed as before. Ninth day, give cocks tablespoonful of warm mush made of sweet milk and crushed oats and two swallows of water. They are then ready for battle that night or the tenth day. If cock-refuses to fight the handler of the other can count ten aloud five times and at the end of the fifth time the cocks are placed breast to breast in the center of the pit. If the cock still refuses, the handler can count ten aloud five times more and if the bird does not then fight he loses the battle. If he makes so much as a peck, however, during the counting the other cock gets no advantage.

A curious custom prevails at the present day taken from an old English one, which reads as follows: “If during a battle any person offers to bet ten pounds to a crown, or throws his hat, glove or handkerchief into the pit which is so understood though not a word is spoken, the teller immediately begins to tell forty in a deliberate manner, which being done he proclaims ‘ten pounds to a crown is offered, will anybody take it? will anybody take it?’ No reply being made the battle is won by the cock upon whom the odds were offered. A handkerchief, hat or glove thrown in the pit indicates acceptance of the ‘pound’ for so it is called in England, and also here where a pound is $20 against $1, and any article thrown in the pit as in England, indicates that a cock is ‘pounded.’” Another custom which formerly prevailed in England has not crossed the Atlantic. “Persons making bets in a pit which they were afterwards unable or unwilling to pay were drawn up in a basket over the pit by pulleys where they remained suspended during the play.”

There is a long article in Pierce Eagan’s “Book of Sports,” in which is detailed in a very interesting manner, a night’s visit to the Cock-pit Royal. The erudite Dr. Maginn in “John Manesty” has a chapter on cock-fighting well worth reading. Any one, no matter how virtuous, if he wants game fowls to ornament his estate, and no domestic bird is so handsome as a full plumaged game cock, would prefer to have such as he knows to be highly bred, and free from dunghill strain. Let such reflect that if cock-fighting were abolished throughout the world his immediate descendants would probably be unable to procure game fowls anywhere and the breed would inevitably become extinct.