

Finally, I have not examined a sufficient number of skeletons to say whether any of the foregoing differences, except in the skull, are characteristic of the several breeds. Apparently some differences are more common in certain breeds than in others,—as an additional rib to the fourteenth cervical vertebra in Hamburgs and Games, and the breadth of the end of the pubic bone in Cochins. Both skeletons of the Sultan fowl had eight dorsal vertebræ, and the end of the scapula in both was somewhat attenuated. In the skull, the deep medial furrow in the frontal bones and the vertically elongated occipital foramen seem to be characteristic of Cochins; as is the great breadth of the frontal bones in Dorkings; the separation and open spaces between the tips of the ascending branches of the premaxillaries and nasal bones, as well as the front part of the skull being but little depressed, characterise Hamburgs; the globular shape of the posterior part of the skull seems to be characteristic of laced Bantams; and lastly, the protuberance of the skull with the ascending branches of the premaxillaries partially aborted, together with the other differences before specified, are eminently characteristic of Polish and other Crested fowls.

But the most striking result of my examination of the skeleton is the great variability of all the bones except those of the extremities. To a certain extent we can understand why the skeleton fluctuates so much in structure; fowls have been exposed to unnatural conditions of life, and their whole organization has thus been rendered variable; but the breeder is quite indifferent to, and never intentionally selects, any modification in the skeleton. External characters, if not attended to by man,—such as the number of the tail and wing feathers and their relative lengths, which in wild birds are generally constant,—fluctuate in our domestic fowls in the same manner as the several parts of the skeleton. An additional toe is a “point” in Dorkings, and has become a fixed character, but is variable in Cochins and Silk fowls. The colour of the plumage and the form of the comb are in most breeds, or even sub-breeds, eminently fixed characters; but in Dorkings these points have not been attended to, and are variable. When any modification in the skeleton is