

CAPONS.

The first, and in many ways the best of the early works on agriculture was Fitzherbert's *Book of Husbandry*, printed in 1534. The book was the result of more than forty years of actual experience and was extremely practical. He treated on all departments of agriculture in such a clear and concise way as to make his work of great value even at the present day. In speaking of marketing he says "They ride to the market to sel butter, chese, mylke, egges, chokyns, CAPONS, hennes, pygges, gese and all manner of cornes." This places the age of capons as early as 1494. The earliest reference to them that the writer has even come across although doubtless they were known before that. Shakespeare the immortal bard refers to them as follows: "And then the Justice in fair round belly with good Capon lin'd"—thus showing his appreciation of this rich table delicacy. In this country, particularly in the east, the matter of caponizing has received much attention of late and each year notes considerable advance. In British Columbia not much has been done so far. Mr. F. J. Harding of Victoria is perhaps the most successful caponizer in the Province and the following is some of his experience: "I am," said Mr. Harding, rather new at the business but have done quite a few birds and am making experiments with a view to finding what breeds are the best for the purpose. In pure breeds I tried Leghorns and Plymouth Rocks, the former were of no value being too small, while the latter were fairly good, yet I considered the breast bone too large. I am now trying the following crosses: Plymouth Rock on Dorking, Duck Wing Game and Plymouth Rock, Leghorn and Plymouth. The first named thus far seem to be the most desirable but do not reach my ideal and I am still at work on the question. I intend to try the Dorking-Brahma cross as there are several very desirable qualities in the two breeds that combined would surely make good capons. I perform the operation when the birds are about two months old and weigh about two pounds. They are well fed at night then penned up and kept for about thirty-six hours with no food, at the end of which time the intestines are pretty well emptied and will not present any obstacle to successful work. The bird is securely fastened upon its side on the operating board, a few feathers are plucked off directly over the spot where you desire to make the cut, which is be-

tween the last two ribs and just front of the thigh joint. The cut, made with a sharp lancet should not be over an inch long. The skin should be pushed as far back as possible before you cut this should also draw back the thin flap of flesh that lies just over the ribs, here if this is done there will be no flow of blood, but even if the cut should bleed no harm will be done, as it will soon clot and this can be removed. The cut or rather the ribs must then be spread with the instrument prepared for the purpose. A thin tissue of skin will now be seen, this must be torn gently with a hook provided. The testicle can now be seen. They vary in size and color but can be located without much difficulty. A thin covering is over them which must come away with the testicle or you will have a "slip" not a capon. The delicate part of the operation has now to be performed and is done with the wire or horse hair holder. The hair or wire is formed into a loop which is carefully slipped over the testicle and the tube is brought down close to it. A sawing motion combined with a gentle pulling will generally accomplish the desired result. Sometimes they are removed easily and at other times it is quite hard. See that no foreign substances have slipped into the wound and then remove the spreader, and the skin will slip back into its place and soon heals. The other side will be operated on in the same way. If the bird dies it will be at once and it can then be dressed and served up for dinner, so there is no actual loss in any case. The task is not hard but requires care and a little "nerve." Don't be afraid. After the operation the bird is shut up and fed on soft feed for a week and then let run with the others. I had one Plymouth Rock-Brahma capon that weighed 11½ lbs. when killed. The price paid for capons is usually twenty cents per lb. hence the advantage is easily seen. Their disposition is also improved and they are far less care, minor advantages that count in the end. When dressing them for the market I leave on a part of the saddle feathers and neck hackle to show what they are. Any poultry breeder will find it greatly to his advantage to caponize all his spare cockerels. I intend to do more next year.

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The Buff Leghorn, "Bro. Johnathan," has been purchased lately from, A. D. Arnold by Drs. Wiant and Herringer. The price paid was something over \$100.

SHOW CIRCUIT.

The system of co-operation has become well established and is recognized as a legitimate means of helping one another and at the same time reaping a direct benefit for one's own self. There will be at least six poultry shows held upon this coast during the coming season. To be successful they must be carefully arranged in every detail one of the most important matters to be decided is the "Judge." Poultrymen are particular about the selection of this all important official. They have spent many months of hard work and possibly many a dollar to secure good birds and they want to be sure of a competent and thoroughly reliable man to pass upon their respective merits when they appear in the show room. Most of the societies recognize the necessity of having a good man but at the same time they find it difficult with the funds at their disposal to provide for him. For some little time the question of a show circuit has been agitated, Nanaimo, Vancouver, Tacoma and San Francisco have all been in correspondence and it looks now as though something tangible would be the result. The idea will be to arrange for a certain number of judges, who are well known and as to whose ability there is no question, they will be started at a certain point and take whatever shows have been arranged for. This will mutually be a big saving. There is only one travelling expense from the east and a man can afford to judge a dozen shows in succession much cheaper than a single one. In this way first class men can be provided at a nominal figure and all by a little union of forces. Let us unite and so give the poultry industry a boom that shall have its effect in better breeding next year.

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Again we are nearing the show season and the fancier begins to eye his birds with careful glance and there comes a fond hope that when they make their bow to the public from the show pen they will not be found wanting. From the time he mated his breeding pen until now there has been much care and hard work spent on them and the question is, what will be the result? Some are unmistakably culls, others are only fair, while a few may be counted as the very cream of the lot and upon them all his hopes are centered. From now until the day of the exhibition they will be the objects of his special care and every known art will be used to bring these