

ever, is to be noticed, that the Helmetts shown at the present time differ from those described by the old writer Moore in having their flight feathers white, and not colored of the same hue as the crown and tail. At the present time, Helmetts are much more frequently seen in our competitive shows than Spots, and the German variety of the latter, with the spot white and the body colored, is still less frequently seen in England.—*Field.*

**DUCKS AS INSECT DESTROYERS.**—When at St. Louis last, we fell in with our worthy friend Charles Henkler, of Waterloo, Ill., and as he is an enthusiastic cultivator of the grape, our conversation turned, of course, upon that topic. We talked of insect depredations, and the best means to prevent them, when he remarked that they troubled him but little, and stated that he raised over one hundred ducks in his vineyard last season. He said it is truly wonderful with what diligence they dart after all kinds of bugs, thrips, flies, and snails, and he considers them among the best of insect exterminators. As they are also very useful birds, lay a good many eggs, and are "not hard to take," when roasted, we made a note of this for the benefit of our readers, whom we would advise to try it.—*The Grape Culturist.*

**TO PUT AN EGG INTO A PHIAL.**—Soak an egg in very strong vinegar, until the shell becomes soft. When quite soft it may be extended lengthwise without breaking it, and so put carefully through the neck of a small bottle, when, by pouring cold water upon it, it will resume its former shape and hardness. Though one of the simplest of tricks, this is really a curiosity, as to those who are not in the secret, the question, "How did the egg get into the phial?" is a complete puzzler.

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## Our Letter Box.

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**GAPES IN CHICKENS.**—(*J. D. F.*) writes: "I send you the mode by which I always treat this disease, and which I have always found to answer: on the first symptoms that I perceive in any of a brood, however young they may be, I at once have them all caught, and taking a wing feather, not too large, notch it on either side of the quill part to the fine end. I then dip this end in sweet or olive oil, and insert it into the windpipe of the chicken two or three times, turning it round each time, which

treatment either brings away the worms, or they are destroyed by the oil; and the feather being soft does not hurt the throat of the bird, as in the old brutal way to extract the worm with a piece of wire. This plan has been much approved of by many of my friends to whom I have recommended it."

**EGGS SMALL AND YOLKLESS.**—(*Fancier*) complains that his hens' eggs are frequently small and without yolks, sometimes ill-shaped and with a large yolk, another time soft-shelled; and wishes to know the reason. We think his fowls are out of condition. They have been kept too much in confinement, without sufficient green food or material for egg or shell making. There ought to be, in a corner of their yard, some gravel or old mortar, to which they could have ready access at all times. They ought also to have a plentiful supply of green food daily. Feed once a day, in the morning, on soft food, barley meal or shorts, mixed with water, and in the evening with barley or wheat screenings. It will be a good thing if you give every bird a tablespoonful of castor oil twice at twenty-four hours' interval.

**LEG-WEAKNESS IN FOWLS.**—(*J. J. S., Toronto.*)—We think you may safely attribute the cause of the weakness to overgrowth of the fowls. Mr. Tegetmeier disposes of this disease as follows: *Symptoms.* This disease usually occurs in young birds, and more frequently in cockerels than pullets. The bird affected is more or less unable to support itself, and sinks down on the hocks after standing for a short time, or in bad cases it is even unable to rise on the feet. In other respects, the health is good, the appetite being at first, before the bird is injured by want of exercise, very good, and the comb red. *Causes.* The cause of this troublesome complaint, which frequently attacks the finest and heaviest birds, is merely a rapid increase of weight which is out of proportion to the muscular development. It consequently is often present in the weightiest birds, and in cockerels more frequently than pullets; it is rarer in old birds, and is most common in the heaviest varieties, Cochins being more especially subject to it. Constitutional weakness may of course produce it without any rapid growth. *Treatment.* Local applications are perfectly useless; but the most rapid improvement follows from the administration of from three to eight grains of citrate of iron daily, and a due supply of nutritious food, care being taken to select such substances as are flesh-producing, and not fattening, wheat, barley, and a due supply of worms, or, in default, a little chopped meat, being preferable to rice or Indian corn.