

from the front edge. The handle should be fairly stout, so that it can be grasped readily.

It takes but a fraction of a second to suspend the bird for killing, and when all is ready the head of the fowl is taken in the left hand and the killing-knife in the right hand. With the thumb and forefinger of the left hand the mouth is forced open by pressure and the knife is inserted into the mouth with the blade pointing toward the back of the head. The knife is then forced up to the juncture of the head and neck where the arteries come down on each side of the neck; these are severed, which causes the fowl to bleed freely.

Immediately after the fowl has been bled, the knife is forced into the roof of the mouth. This is done by withdrawing the knife from the juncture of the head and neck, turning it over so that the back of the knife now passes along the upper beak into the groove in the roof of the mouth. It is immediately forced into the brain cavity, so that the brain is pierced. If the brain has been pierced properly the bird will squawk and it will also make a convulsive movement which tends to loosen the feathers in the feather muscles. Proper piercing of the brain makes plucking much easier, whereas if the brain has not been properly pierced the feathers are hard to pluck and the skin frequently turns badly.

Just as soon as the bird has been bled and the brain pierced, a blood can, which is weighted in the bottom, is hooked on to the lower mandible to catch the blood. It also prevents the bird from moving its body too much.

PLUCKING.—The sooner the bird is plucked the better. Experts can pluck a fowl in less than one minute. The birds are always plucked dry; it gives them a much nicer appearance and they will keep longer.

In dry plucking, rapidity of movement is necessary. Different pluckers have different ways of plucking, but we have found the following order to be convenient and rapid: neck, wings, tail, breast, legs, back and body.

As soon as the blood-can has been hooked on the beak, a squeezing motion with the fingers round the neck from the base toward the head removes the feathers of the neck.

The soft feathers covering the breast are removed readily by a sort of rubbing motion, rubbing the opposite way the feathers normally lie. Then the wings are held firmly in the left hand and the main wing feathers are removed with one jerk by the right hand and the main tail feathers are given a slight twist which should remove them with ease. The thighs and legs are easily plucked in much the same manner as the neck; then finally the back and body of the bird are plucked. After plucking has been completed, pin feathers may be removed by using a dull, round-bladed knife. Care should be exercised not to tear the skin. Even small blemishes lower the market value of the dressed bird.

CLEANING.—After the bird has been dressed the head and feet should be washed with a stiff brush. The vent should be squeezed,