

Slight changes are suggested for Polish other than to simplify and more carefully and definitely describe all these standard requirements.

The color for all buff breeds is recommended to be the same no color disqualifications for buff breeds.

The committee has recommended the admission of a number of new breeds. Others were rejected and recommended to come under the new rule that it is hoped will be made at the next meeting of the American Poultry Association.

The glossary has been carefully revised and some additions suggested.

In "Instructions to Judges" quite a thorough revision is suggested, and a number of defects described on which definite cuts are to be made. This will enable poultry judges to cut alike for the same defects as well as inform breeders how much such defects will be punished.

There were twelve members of the committee present, as follows: Arthur R. Sharp, Philander Williams, George O. Brown, H. S. Babcock, J. V. Bicknell, B. N. Pierce, J. H. Drenstedt, F. B. Zimmer, A. F. Pierce, Theo. Hewes, T. F. McGrew, and J. F. Crangle. Those absent were James Forsyth, Sharp Butterfield, and H. A. Bridge. The visitors present were H. V. Crawford, Henry Hales, E. B. Thompson, and George E. Howard. Miss Anna E. Brennen, Baltimore, Md., was also present, accompanied by Miss Brown, daughter of ex-President George O. Brown.

CAPONS, AND CAPON-REARING IN FRANCE.

BY EDWARD CONNER, LONDON, ENGLAND.

THE cutting, or castration of poultry, is not a modern custom. It has existed since time immemorial, and the name of "capon" comes from the Greek, and signifies to cut. It is an economic and very rapid means to produce much fat, and to secure firmness of flesh, as in the case of bullocks, hogs, and wethers. In the matter of poultry or fowls, a male bird when cut, is called a *capon*, and when a hen is operated upon, it is known as a *poularde*. No poultry ought to be used for food till fat, in a lean bird the proportion of flesh to bone, is five-sixths, in a fattened bird, it is eleven-twelfths; hence, the importance of fattening, and the advantage in point of flavour. Hens are cut to remove the ovaries; the process is not of late much resorted to; the pullets being reared and fattened before lay-

ing. In a word, they are virgin hens. A skilful operator is necessary to cut the male bird, and which is generally effected between the age of three and four months.

The operator places the bird between his knees, plucks off some of the feathers, to lay the skin of the left flank bare, with a sharp pair of scissors an incision is made, when the intestines show, beneath the latter he passes his finger which has previously been rubbed over with oil, till the testicles—that in size and shape resemble a kidney bean, and that are attached by membranes to the back—are reached; he removes them one after the other without injuring the intestines. The skin is then stitched together with a waxed thread; the wound rubbed with oil, wine or camphorated brandy, the bird placed in an isolated place, and dark if possible for some hours, when it is given grain steeped in wine; by the third day, the patient is quite recovered. Not more than three to six per cent of birds die from the operation. The latter will be known to have failed, when the bird refuses after a few hours to eat. Nothing remains then, but to kill it, and put it on the spit. For 24 hours before being cut, the bird ought not to receive food, in order that the empty intestines may not interfere with the operation. On recovery, the bird is a little wild at first, when rejoining the poultry yard, it will soon commence to put up flesh. The *capon* makes a capital nurse for a brood that may have lost its mother; it will take care of the chicks and actually fight wickedly to protect them. Birds of common breeds are not cut till between twelve and fourteen weeks old; for the larger races, within the moiety of that period. In some districts, following the usages of the market, the combs of cocks are cut at the same time. *Capon* and *poularde* rearing is a general industry in Normandy, Le Maine, and Le Bresse. Poulardes are peculiar to La Flèche, and Le Mans, on market days they can be seen by the hundred in heaps. It is a curious industry; it is the peasant farmer, or the allotment holder, who fattens the hens; they buy the young birds most likely to fatten, from the breeders.

Poultry to fatten ought to be put up between five, six, or seven months old; if younger, they will not be fully developed; if older, the fattening will take longer, and the flesh tend to become leathery. The mode of fattening varies with the locality. The birds can be fattened either in full liberty, when the flesh according to many is considered to be finer—not a ball of fat; but the process is longer and of course more expensive. The *epinette* is the favourite plan, it is merely rows of cages, with a separate compartment for each bird; generally, the size is cube twenty