

Preparing Poultry for Market.

Before being killed, all fowls should be fasted for at least fourteen hours. Among the methods of killing usually had recourse to, M. Soyer recommends breaking the neck; which is done by taking the head in the right hand, with the thumb against the back of it; seizing the neck with the left, the same arm supporting the fowl; then a quick jerk with the right hand, turning the thumb downwards at the same time, separating the vertebrae—but it takes a rather a strong arm to do it. Countrymen and many others attain the same object by taking the head in the right hand and swinging the fowl round by it. One swing, properly done, will dislocate the spine. Another method is to strike a sharp blow on the back of the neck with a stick. But any of these methods may cause much needless suffering in unskilful hands. It is true there is no "instantaneous" method of killing a fowl, the tenacity of life being very great; but the actual operation should be only momentary; and we strongly advise all inexperienced amateurs to make sure of the matter by laying the neck on a block and chopping off the head at a blow. What we have said as to the tenacity of life may be illustrated by saying that even after this capital operation, the bird, if left to itself, will struggle violently all over the yard; but this can, perhaps, hardly be called life in the true sense, and we may hope there is little or no conscious pain. The fowl should of course be first bandaged, to prevent struggling; and, indeed, this ought to be done in all cases where the knife is employed, afterwards hanging up by the feet to bleed freely. When the head is cut off, the skin should afterwards be drawn nearly over the stump and tied.

Poultry should be plucked or picked whilst warm, when the feathers will be removed with much less difficulty. Fowls are generally picked quite clean, but it looks better in the case of young chickens to leave a few feathers about the tail. They will eat best if nothing further is done to them; but it improves the appearance greatly for market to plunge the carcass, immediately after plucking, into a vessel of boiling water for a few moments which will "plump" it a great deal, and make the skin look bright and clean. After scalding, turkeys and fowls should be hung by the legs, and waterfowls by the neck. For sending to market wholesale, they should not be drawn, as they will keep much better without, and this is the proper business of the retailer; but in selling for consumption, the bird should be properly prepared for table. It may not be out of place to remark, that if after drawing, the cavity be filled with charcoal broken in small pieces, the fowl may be kept sweet a considerable time.—*Wright's Illustrated Book of Poultry.*

Feeding Different Breeds of Fowls.

The feeding qualities of different breeds of fowls, as compared with each other have been but little experimented upon. There is, undoubtedly, as much difference in poultry in this respect as in farm animals. *Field and Factory* contains an article on poultry raising, in which we find the results of feeding several different breeds, the experiment having been instituted last year:

Ten pullets each, of five breeds, each within a week of being six months old, were placed in yards forty feet square, with comfortable houses. For the next six months an account was kept of their food, and eggs produced, with the following results:

The Dark Brahmas ate 369 1-2 quarts of corn, oats, and wheat screenings, laid 605 eggs, and weighed 70 pounds; feed cost \$5 77; eggs sold for \$10 68; profit \$1 31. The Buff Cochins ate 406 quarts, laid 591 eggs, and weighed 73 pounds; feed, \$6 34; eggs, \$9 54; profit, \$3 51. The Gray Dorkings, ate 300 quarts, laid 424 eggs, and weighed 59 1-2 pounds; feed, \$4 87; eggs, \$3 73; profit, \$3 86. The Houdans, ate 214 quarts, laid 783 eggs, and weighed 45 1 1/4 pounds; feed, \$3 35; eggs, \$13 05; profit, \$9 70. The Leghorns ate 231 1-2 quarts, laid 807 eggs, and weighed 36 1-2 pounds; feed, \$3 62; eggs, \$13 55; profit, \$9 83.

The reader can easily figure for himself the relative value of the different breeds in this case from the results obtained.

The Carrier Pigeon.

Under the name of Carrier pigeons, several very distinct varieties are commonly confounded together. The Carrier, as applied to pigeons, evidently was first employed to signify those breeds that were used to convey or carry messages to their own homes from distant places. In the process of time it has been used by English fanciers to signify a very artificial or high-class breed, the birds of which are never employed for carrying messages, but are valued solely in proportion to the perfection of certain "properties" that they possess. This is an unfortunate circumstance, for by the public at large the term Carrier is always taken to express the fact that the birds to which it is applied are really those employed to "carry" messages; whereas the long distance-flying birds, those known more correctly as "Homing" birds, are totally distinct. The Carrier of which we now treat, is a cultivated specimen, raised to its present standard of excellence solely and specially for the show pen. Its homing faculties, powers of flight, or aerial performances, are quite ignored in the desire and endeavor to obtain properties more gratifying to the eye of the breeders, than merely to satisfy the speculative object of our fellow fanciers of the flying fraternity. It is well known that the nearer the Carriers approach to perfection, as exhibition birds, the more useless do they become as flyers; in fact, for the transmission of news, they are worthless. The Carrier of our day is not a flyer, and are rarely ever allowed to go beyond the prescribed boundary of their loft or aviary.



The members of the National Columbarian Society of England drew up a most elaborate and valuable paper on the properties of the Carrier, and Mr. Tegetmeir in his pigeon book, quoting from it thus describes them. 1, "THE SKULL. It should be long, straight, narrow between the eyes, and flat at the top, where it is sometimes dented. 2, THE BEAK. The upper and lower mandibles should be long, straight, thick, and boxed, that is to say, the upper should close on the lower like the lid of a box. The color of the beak is not regarded as material. 3, THE BEAK WATTLE. The wattle of the beak should be distinct from that of the eye, soft in texture, short from back to front, broad, tilting forwards from the forehead, and pointed at its termination towards the tip of the beak on the top. It should not present a flattened appearance, but stand out like the surface of a cauliflower, and its fissures should curve somewhat regularly towards the point; this upper wattle should be met by a corresponding one (sometimes called the jawing) on the lower jaw. 4, THE EYE. The eye-wattle should be large, fleshy, soft, round, regular, and should rise above the skull; the ball of the eye should be prominent, like a well set jewel, its iris fiery red, or it may be pearl-colored in dun-colored birds. In white Carriers the eye should be black, dark. 5, THE CARRIAGE. The beak and head should form nearly a right angle with

the neck; the shoulders should be broad, the chest full, the limbs long, so as to keep the body well raised from the ground; the bird should show his carriage without requiring much rousing, holding the neck slightly curved over the back, so that the eye is directly over the toes. The body should present a graceful line from the shoulder to the end of the flight, the back being flat, and the tail and flight-feathers touching, so as to render the line continuous. The neck should be long and thin from its commencement at the shoulders upwards, the head being well undercut at the junction of the lower jaw with the neck. 6, THE PLUMAGE. The feathers should be dense and closely set, a Carrier in perfect condition appearing as if cut out of stone; the colors should be a deep black, a dark dun, a good bright blue, with well defined black bars across the wings and tail, or a pure white."

To breed Carriers to a high degree of perfection, great care must be taken in pairing the birds, so that the deficiency of one parent may be counteracted by the good properties of the other; and two birds showing a tendency to the same defect should never be mated together. Never pair two Duns, and seldom two Blacks, if it can be helped. Blues, as a rule, are always mated with blues or silvers. Two Duns will often throw birds very light in color. A Dun should be a sound, even colored dark, but in this climate the sun plays sad havoc with plumage. To keep the Dun color, dark Duns and Black should be paired and you thus get good Blacks and good Duns. A Black should be a satiny black, not with a blue, dull tinge but like a raven. Carriers are good breeders and moderately good feeders, but in order to make the most of them, plenty of space must be at their disposal, and (where practicable) a separate pen for each pair should be given so as to secure success in breeding, and also to prevent spoliation of the birds through fighting. A dry and moderate warm room or loft, sheltered from the north and north-east winds is suitable, and may (according to its dimensions) be arranged into fair divisions to suit the number of birds to be placed therein, giving to each pair a flying range of five or six feet high from the floor. A shelf in the interior, and free access besides to the common outer airing-pen, where clean fresh water and a hopper well supplied with food should be always kept for them. If especial care is not begrudged, and ample space is at command (should the birds be unusually pugnacious), it would be better for a separate "hopper" and water fountain, etc., to be placed within the pen for the sole use of each pair. Arrange a bath for their occasional use, and when filled guard against a battle royal therein. A sprinkling of salt occasionally is advisable, but care must be exercised as to where it is placed, or an encounter will take place over the coveted relish. In all fittings and arrangements it is necessary that great precaution against a struggle should be taken, for it is essential that peace should reign within the castle of the "King of Pigeons."

For the rearing of young Carriers there should be kept a sufficient number of big, strong, hardy long-headed common birds, as foster parents; short faced birds won't do for in feeding they are apt to crook or bend the pliable beak of the young, entrusted to them. Upon these foster parents should devolve the raising of the Carrier from say nine days to a fortnight old. These feeders should have entire liberty and also a full hopper and pure water at disposal. By this system of transferring young from valuable common stock, immense advantages will be derived. More young will be raised thereby without injury to the parent stock, which may thus be kept throughout the breeding season moderately free from vermin, and from dirt, and in perfect showing condition.

The entries for the forthcoming show of poultry, pigeons, and dogs, at Wolverhampton, England, are as follows:—Poultry, 670; pigeons, 120; dogs, 360; total, 1150. Those in the poultry classes show a falling off of 100 birds when compared with last year. The dogs will constitute the chief feature, and in it there are 80 more entries than in 1872.