

months. They would rather see a bird suffer every day, enjoy seeing the fight, than to have their sensitive system shocked by the exhibition of a second's pain the effect of which would be to cause the bird to have a peaceful life thereafter, free from the interruption of fights and quarrels. To one of these writers I wrote asking him if he ever saw the operation of castrating an animal performed. He replied that he had not. Why did he write such stuff then? Well he supposed it must be terrible. I invited him to be present and see me caponize a cockerel, and then he would be able to write more intelligently. He came, I asked him to tell me just when he thought the bird suffered any very severe pain, after I had caponized him, and had given him his liberty, not before. This is promised, and would watch every movement carefully. In three minutes the operation was completed, and this was his verdict: "Mr. Dow, your bird did suffer." "Well, tell me when." "At two different times; one when you caught him in his pen to carry to your table, and again when you lifted him off the table to put back in his pen. He 'squawked' and struggled awfully at each of these times, and really gasped for breath." I thanked the gentleman and asked him to do me one favor, when he ever wrote anything about the suffering the bird experienced in being caponized, that he would qualify the same, by giving the result of his observations, and tell the public just at what period he witnessed the exhibition. He promised he would, and we went to look at the pigs.

Let every poultryman caponize the cockerel he has that he does not wish to preserve for breeders. He will gain in two ways. The bird will gain 40 per cent. in weight, of any breed, and if for sale he will bring 40 per cent. more in price. These two features make together a very handsome profit.

Beyond the gain in weight and price, a capon is a bird that is seldom if ever sick or ailing. They are always strong and well. I never yet saw a sick capon. They become docile, quite easily handled and cared for, and consume less food than any other fowl.

Two years ago I made the claim that by removing the proper testicle I could control the sex of fowl. Later experiments only confirm these previously made, and I fully believe it can be done. Since I advanced this idea, other people have taken it up, and in the Fanciers' Review of March 1st I see that a person of St. Louis is of the same opinion. He states that by removing the right testicle he succeeded in obtaining 300 pullets and no cocks. In removing the left testicle he hatched forty cocks and no pullets.

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#### TREATMENT FOR EGG EATING

I have found that the beginning of this troublesome condition in the poultry-yard is frequently due to overfatness in the hens. From this cause comes soft-shelled eggs, which are easily broken under the layer. When once a hen has had a taste of the contents of the soft-shelled package her appetite for a similar diet is not easily satisfied. The best treatment is to reduce the flesh as quickly as possible, not by withdrawing the feed, as many unwisely do, but by feeding solely such egg-producing foods as cut clover steamed and mixed with oat meal or middlings and bran, whole oats, lean meat or ground meat and ground fish (which has most of the oil extracted), together with an occasional feed of vegetables, omitting potatoes. In this way the number of eggs will not be

diminished, but rather increased, for a hen will not lay well when fat, and at the same time the shells will resume their normal thickness. In the meantime take a stout pair of scissors, and clip off the horny tip of the upper mandible. Clip it back nearly, but not quite to the quick. It is simply horn, and will cause no more pain than cutting the finger-nails. It is the sharp point that the hen uses in breaking into the egg, and though it will soon grow out again after clipping, yet in the meantime the habit will have been somewhat broken up, and the shells made thicker. The nests should also be arranged so as to be in semi-darkness. Let them be entered by the hen from the rear in such a manner that no direct light can fall into them, and never have them so that the hen will have to jump down upon the nest. Eggs are frequently broken in this way, even when not soft-shelled, and the habit thus acquired.

I know of no better treatment than the foregoing, when the trouble has once begun, as it is but a few moments' work to cut the bills of a hundred fowls, and this can be done every two weeks if the habit is not broken. The latter will rarely be acquired, however, if the two precautions in regard to nests and non-fattening feed are carefully observed. Corn has no place whatever in the feed of laying fowls. It is difficult to keep them from becoming too fat, even when forced for eggs with the non-fattening foods already mentioned, and it must be plain to any one who has given any observation to the matter that a soft-shelled egg is never laid unless the author of it is either fat, or out of condition in some other way.

Another point to be born in mind is the keeping of the fowls busy scratching from morning till night, for the satanic majesty of evil finds some mischief for idle hens to do, as well as for human bipeds.

WEBB DONNELL.

Lincoln County, Me

#### FROM WESTERN NEW-YORK.

VALUE OF RECORDS—MISTAKES IN EARLY SOWING AND PLANTING—BURDOOR FOR THE MAGGOT—TURPENTINE FOR THE FLEA BEETLE.

EDR. COUNTRY GENTLEMAN—One great advantage to be derived from keeping notes of your farm or garden operations, year by year, is that you are enabled to refresh your memory from an annually increasing stock of memoranda as to mistakes made or successes scored; by making good use of them, after a series of years' trials, a farm or garden can be made to yield its utmost and become thoroughly tractable in the hands of its owner. For instance, a recent perusal of my own notes has led me to the conclusion that sowing or planting at the earliest possible moment the soil can be worked is of no advantage—in fact, is a mistake. The late Peter Henderson advised that the hardier vegetable seeds be sown in his latitude (41°)—a rule which would apply here in latitude 43°—when the thermometer averaged 45° in the shade, the time given being from the middle of March to the end of April. Allowing the season in the vicinity of New-York city to be two weeks in advance of that in Monroe county, and taking the mean temperature of April for the last four years here, we find the average to be scarcely 40°, the highest being in 1886, when it was 43°, and the lowest in 1888, when it was 36°; last year, when we had a very favorable spring, it was 42°, the soil temperature on March 30 being only 33° at four, and 36° at twelve inches; the mean of April, however,