

two months old, and when she is removed they can all run together for another two months at least before the sexes are separated. The cockerels being generally of a quiet disposition, will seldom disagree, the only danger being the possible chance that the pernicious habit of crest-picking may begin. When the crest is full of young juicy-looking quills such a tit-bit is hard to resist, and they generally fall into the temptation, and one may enter the pen some morning to find them in a sad state. In this, as in all cases, prevention is better than cure, and an eye should be kept on them as much as possible, and by careful watching the founder of the mischief may be detected and at once removed to a separate pen ere the others follow suit. Allowing six months as ample time in which to decide which are required for exhibition as young birds, and which are wanted for breeding purposes, the remaining ones should be disposed of as quickly as possible, to give the others a better chance.

Those not required for exhibition should be subjected to a close acquaintance with a pair of scissors, that is to say, they should be deprived of their crests. This is certainly the best thing to do, as they gain more vigor, can see to pick quite easily, whilst the crest is stronger the ensuing moult. But by all means do not clip the crest unless fairly grown, as, if clipped when the quills contain blood the bird takes cold, and the undue flow of blood to the head may cause it to stagger shortly afterward as if stricken with vertigo, to say nothing of the glaring temptation for the ever-ready crest-picker. Those that have by very present good points escaped the scissors, will need a little attention—their crests will require to be washed occasionally, which will assist growth and prevent the inroads of insects. A peculiar and very minute insect infests the heads of crested birds, and unless exterminated they ruin the crest, which will present a jagged appearance. The best way, I find, is to dust the crest and neck well with Keating's, and wash the crest a few hours afterwards. If only the head is treated with the powder the pests often escape down the neck, only to return when the powder has lost its strength. The washing process clears away the dead and dazed insects.

As regards washing for exhibition little need be said. The silvers will require washing bodily, but the golds and white crested will be all right if the crest

only is washed. In washing the crest I get well down to the roots of the feathers, then the feathers 'fluff' better; and when drying always wipe the face carefully.

If a rather long period elapses between the times of exhibiting it is advisable to let the birds have full liberty on a grass run, if possible, whilst their crests should be tied up, which will enable them to see to pick and forage much better. To do this, take a piece of broad tape about an inch and a-half or two inches in width and about six inches long. Take a pair of scissors and taper off the ends to about half an inch in width, leaving about two inches in the centre of the original width. Now place the bird between the knees, and gather the crest carefully together, keeping the feathers in proper position, then fix the tape with the broadest part just above the beak, and tie behind under the overhanging skin of the skull. Not only will this keep the feathers clear of the eyes, but will assist in keeping the front of the crest a good shape, and the tape, being broad and soft, will not cut the skin. This should, however, be untied about once a week, and the crest allowed to fall apart of its own accord. In case the crest is not properly grown it is very dangerous to tie it up thus, as the feathers may get twisted into quite a different shape to what is desired and grow in that position.

Sometimes with heavy-crested birds a kind of matter may form about the eyes, and emit a very offensive odor, but if the face is carefully washed, about once a fortnight with a weak solution of Condy's Fluid this difficulty is overcome easily. Their spurs and beaks seem to grow very fast, and will need paring now and again.

One of the worst things to deal with, however, is when a bird begins to lose control of its head, this being very noticeable with very heavy crested ones. If the system gets run down either by too frequent showing or slow moulting, they begin to swing the head about, which gradually drops between the feet and seems too heavy for the bird to lift up, and it often turns a complete somersault. When this happens the best thing to do is to cut off the topknot, no matter how much you would like to keep it on, and give very nourishing food.]

A very valuable hen which was entrusted to my care