

which can now be easily secured, will be found very much to their liking. When the quarters are comfortable they do not require to crowd together for warmth, as they do when cold, and this crowding is another fruitful source of disease. While ventilation is necessary, it should never take the shape of draughts against the birds; all cracks should be closed and windows repaired at once. A day's labor about the poultry houses now may save months of trouble and vexation later in doctoring diseased stock.

### Washing Poultry for Exhibition.

There are two difficulties in washing fowls for exhibition:—1, Washing. 2, Drying. The first is easily overcome, the second not so easily.

1. One of the correspondents who asked for this article, observed that he found his birds looked rather dirtier after his washing than before, which brings us face to face with the first difficulty and its remedy. The difficulty itself all consists in the fact that people at first have no idea *how thoroughly the washing of a fowl for exhibition has to be*. They give their birds a very mild soap over with a sponge, rinse them, and think they are washed. Not a bit of it. Think a little, about washing, say a pair of hands. If they are tolerably clean, and you plunge them into a lot of black mud, they will come out black enough, but you can wash *this* dirt off with very little trouble. But suppose your hands have not been washed for a good while, and you have been in contact with a lot of things, including a little oil or grease—for a specimen, let us say an engine fitter's hands at the close of a day's work. Carefully wiped, they will show far less dirt than the muddy hands before mentioned; but *this kind* of dirt will take long and patient scrubbing to remove. Now the dirt on a fowl is more or less like the last sort. It is old; it is well-worked in; and it is incorporated with the oil of the plumage. And it takes downright *thorough* washing to get it off.

You must have a large tub, at least a foot deep and fill it half full of water at, say, 90°. Make this water into strong suds by rubbing a good large cake of soap into it till it lathers well. The suds must be good and strong, or it is no use. Then put your bird in, and with a good sponge drench it all over with the suds, and rub it thoroughly, taking an occasional rub of the sponge on another piece of soap. You must never rub *up* the feather; but otherwise rub away freely, not only down, but a little across in both directions; not furiously, of course, but still as if you meant to clean the bird down to the skin. For the head and legs you must take a brush, which brings out the freshness of the combs wonderfully, if there is

any in them. Remember this one simple thing; that your birds may look rough and untidy because you are inexperienced in drying, but that if, after washing, they will look dirty, it is for no other reason than that you did not wash them *enough*.

When washed, lift into another tub of clean warm water, and with a clean sponge rinse out as thoroughly as possible. Here, too, people often think the soap is out when it is not; and when you see fowls with the plumage appearing to hang in filaments, instead of webbing out smooth as before, the reason is that soap has been left in. The first rinsing in the warm water will not get all out as it should be, but should get all the strong suds out. A third tub will get the bird pretty clear of soap; and finally, we strongly recommend a thorough plunge—head, ears, and all—into a tub of clean *cold* water, or in default of that, to turn on cold water from a hose.

2. The drying is a more ticklish matter. Stand the miserable-looking object you have produced on a bench or on the top of an empty basket and with a sponge pass gently over the way of the feather, absorb all the water that a tightly-wrung out sponge will take up. Get off all you can this way when the fowl is ready for the fire. It must be taken pretty near, but not exposed to fierce heat which would blister the face and curl the feathers. Much depends on the room; but the object is to have the whole bird in a *very* warm but not fierce atmosphere. If attention can be given, the *best* plan is to carefully turn the bird round now and then so that no part is exposed to long to direct heat; and there should be a screen to keep off cold air. A large box with the opened side turned to the fire, and bedded with cleaned, well bruised oat straw, keeps the air warm round the fowls very well; and in such a hot chamber the fowls may be left with an occasional inspection; but to dry well, care *must* be taken to turn any especially damp place towards the heat when needed, the great thing here is to dry as fast as possible without violent heat, but to dry *equally*—otherwise the plumage is apt to get curled, or bent, or twisted in a very prejudicial way. Whilst drying, the wings should be several times opened to get the heat. When only a sort of damp seems to remain, most people think it best to place each bird in a clean lined basket, bedded in soft straw, like oat straw, and leave this near the fire. The lining of the basket keeps in a gentle steam, which assists the feathers in webbing together.

When fowls are about half dry, they are susceptible of certain "improvements," which some people are very clever at. Their strict fairness is, perhaps, doubtful; but they do not stand on the same level as dyeing, plucking, etc., and as few regular poultrymen hesitate to do all they can in this way,