

PHEASANT CULTURE.

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(Continued from last week.)

CLIPPING WINGS.

We hope to be pardoned for saying, that if there is a marked stupidity among the fraternity, it is the usual way we find fanciers clipping birds' wings, including poultry. This stupidity is not confined to the novice alone, but we find it in old poultry fanciers. The old instruction solemnly spoken was, "Clip only one wing, so that the bird cannot balance. If you clip the two it can fly." This advice has gone from mouth to ear for generations given by wisecrackers whose information is all founded on antiquated hearsay, and who never investigate for themselves. The average fancier clips the wing while it is closed. In this way one cannot help not only disfiguring the bird, but the heavy warm feathers which grow on the half of the wing next the body, and which nature intends more as a coverlet to keep the bird warm than to assist in flight, are removed. Right under this warm coverlet of feathers is the lung, and when this part of the wing has been removed, there is nothing to protect the lung, and it may be noticed that there is almost a bare spot so far as body feathers are concerned. The sleet and wet falling on the unprotected lung causes pneumonia, which is followed by a lingering death or a delicate bird.

Experience and experiments prove that birds after a little practice fly higher and farther with only one wing clipped than with two. When only one is clipped they are apt to injure themselves by going with great force against the weakened side.

HOW TO CLIP.

Extend the wing fully. Then cut each *pinion* feather between the shaft and quill from the middle of the wing to the top. Do the same with the other wing, and all is right. The bird cannot fly—he is not disfigured (in fact when walking round you could not tell that the wings were clipped)—and his lungs are still protected by nature's coverlets.

HOW TO PINION.

It is generally recommended to pinion pheasants at two months old. We have performed the little operation at all ages, and never had one die from the effect.

The operation requires no skill. It means to take a pair of scissors and clip the wings off at the first joint. The birds never seem to mind it and in less than a week it is all healed over. This, of course, would not do for birds that were intended to be let loose in a game preserve, as they can never fly again. But for breeding stock to be fenced in fields it is much better than running the risk of watching and clipping their wings when necessary.

Pheasants should either be pinioned or have their wings clipped, even when in aviaries that are covered overhead with wire, as, if this is not done, they are continually injuring themselves by flying with great force against the wire.

FENCING.

Pheasants do best when not kept on the one ground too long. Therefore

it is better to have a movable fence made in sections 12 feet long by 7 feet high, and fastened together by hooks and staples. These may be put in any shape and moved to new ground when the old becomes soiled. The sections should have 12 feet of the common chicken netting wire, which is two yards wide, a footboard on the bottom, and two scantlings 2 inches square and 7 feet long for ends, and one scantling 12 feet long for top. This gives 1 foot of board and 6 feet of wire, making 7 feet high and 12 feet long. This can be duplicated as many times as desired. Four sections will make a pen 12 feet square, in which a pair of pheasants may be kept, and by adding sections, can be extended to any size.

WINTERING PHEASANTS.

So far as the care during winter is concerned we need say but little. We have already mentioned that it was best to have their roosting places sheltered from rain. They can stand any cold, and the more they are allowed to "rough it" the better they seem to thrive. The greatest danger is killing them with kindness. We have known fanciers who complained of heavy losses during winter, but they had used artificial heat, and we suppose heat and want of fresh air caused disease.

Feed a little corn or wheat with turnips, carrots and lots of clover hay that has been cut green and well saved. The hay should be run through a straw cutter and scalded before given to the pheasants. This is very cheap feed, and the birds are kept in healthy and fine condition for laying fertile eggs in abundance when spring comes.

BREEDING.

Pheasants adhere to monogamy in their natural wild state; but when domesticated most varieties degenerate into bigamists, and the males will then mate with more than one female. The Amherst, Golden, Reeves, Versicolor, Mongolian and English will all mate with four or five hens, while the Silver and Swinhoe are fairly true to one mate.

FEMALE MATERS.

Among pheasants, as well as among men, we occasionally find a "female hater." When we find a cock pheasant of this disposition he is very troublesome in breeding season, just when it is necessary that he should be with the hen. They are found in all varieties, but probably more frequently in the Amherst and Socimmerring. They pick the hen on the head and sometimes kill her. When one is so unfortunate as to own one of these birds, and has no other bird of the same variety from which he can breed, the following is the remedy. When the winter has passed and breeding season has arrived, the weather is then so mild that the chances of clipping every feather right to the flesh from the top of both the cock's wings may be taken. He should be kept in for a few days, lest he may take cold on the lungs. Then put him in an aviary with a hen, with a wire fence four and a half feet high across, dividing it in two halves, and whenever her lord and master takes one of his "tantrums" the hen will just fly the fence. He cannot follow, and she can wait and watch him through the wire until he comes to his

senses and is willing to behave before she will agree to "play in his back yard again."

Another way is to have round holes in the board large enough for the hen to run her head, neck, and breast through when the cock gets angry and wants to pick her on the head.

LAYING HENS.

Hen pheasants begin to lay about the last week of March, and, if not allowed to sit, may lay till the middle of July, and sometimes to the middle of August. Before laying time arrives, they should be all arranged in their aviaries, and the cocks put with the hens. The hens should not be disturbed during laying season by visitors, who too frequently will bring with them dogs. If they are timid and shy, the manager of them should always wear the same clothes when the eggs are being collected. The aviaries should be kept clean and well supplied with lots of clean water and an abundant supply of green food (lettuce is the best) if in small quarters where they cannot get grass. A heap of fine sand should be in one corner of every aviary for the birds to dust in. A broad board leaned against the side of the aviary with a nest behind it and an artificial egg in the nest should be provided for the hen to lay in. This should not be too easy for the male to get at, nor should there be too much light, lest they may learn to eat their eggs—a habit they are never guilty of if they have a large run. The artificial eggs sold in the stores are of no use. The birds know them, and if they have become egg eaters they can soon select the genuine from the bogus egg.

To make proper artificial nest eggs for pheasants, take bantam or guinea hens' eggs, make a small hole in both ends and blow the egg out, leaving the shell. Put a piece of mucilage paper over one hole, and fill the shell with newly mixed plaster of paris. Allow it to dry, then break the shell off, and with a real pheasant's egg as a sample, it may be colored so that the pheasant cannot tell it from a genuine egg. They are quickly and easily made, and with a free use of them before the pheasants begin to lay there is little fear of them learning to eat eggs. One or two should be kept around the aviary as well as in the nests. There are many other ways suggested, such as burning and cutting the points of the birds' bills, filling the eggs with coal oil, mustard, and pepper, and giving them to the birds to eat, etc., which we will pass over as being useless, and come to the only other plan we have found of any use in saving eggs from egg eating pheasants. It is to feed the pheasants all they can eat of common hens' eggs. This is not so very expensive, as hens' eggs are cheap at that season of the year.

If the pheasants are properly managed there will be no egg eaters, and all the drawbacks to pheasant culture may be avoided, and experience teaches with regard to pheasants that the "ounce of prevention is better than the pound of cure."

We started with eggs and their management until they produced birds, then continuing with the management of the birds until they have themselves produced eggs, which gives us one round year of pheasant culture—from egg to egg.

THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE FARMER'S WIFE.

By Mrs. L. H. BURNHILL, in *The Iowa Homestead*.

No good reason appears why husband and wife should not be equal partners in the home making business. Remember, however, that partnership implies equal responsibility for debts and expenses, outside as well as in the house. Women are sometimes inclined to think household expenses are the most important part of the business, forgetting that repairs, machinery and stock are legitimate expenses, necessary to insure an income, and that taxes must be paid, even if the same bonnet does duty a second season. If we wish to be partners we should inform ourselves as to farm affairs outside the house, and be reasonable in our demands.

If a woman is possessed of a reasonable degree of common sense, she will be willing to practise necessary economy and make the most of her resources, but she certainly ought to be permitted to buy what she considers necessary and proper for the household. If she makes a few mistakes while learning, they will hardly cost any more than the mistakes made by the average man. I have known men, who could not trust their wives to buy fifty cents' worth of sugar, lose several head of stock every year through their own carelessness. I have seen but few homes, however, where this was the case, and no amount of money would tempt me, were I a man, to have my wife feel toward me as those women felt toward the husbands they had promised to love and honor.

Here is a chance to mount a very old hobby of mine, and insist, in the strongest manner, that boys and girls learn the use of money while under parental control. Give them a chance to earn and spend for themselves, kindly pointing out their mistakes, and they will soon use judgment and self-control in money matters. We have known young people who earned their own living, who yet were not deemed capable of selecting the smallest article of clothing for themselves. It is small wonder if it took years of married life to teach them how to average their expenses fairly with their income. I read a pitiful story, a short time ago, of a farmer's wife who was made a slave to her husband's desire for more land, and who received a good scolding for taking a dollar of the butter money to buy herself a hat. She landed in the insane asylum, was cured, and went home to her mother. I suppose she loved her husband, but it strikes me that she might better have shown her love by insisting on proper treatment than by giving up to his mistaken idea and ruining their home. I have known women to cry when their husbands failed to bring needful articles from town, and then to do without. No wonder the men thought it didn't matter much. Why didn't they say, pleasantly, "I'm sorry you didn't get the things, for now I shall be obliged to go after them myself"? And by the time a few extra trips had been made his majesty would probably improve in memory. The moral of all this is that, with rare exceptions, the woman who is abused is herself to blame. If she will calmly and kindly insist upon her rights, she will probably get them.

Under no circumstances should a