

Democratic Watchman

Bellefonte, Pa., March 24, 1911.

FARM NOTES.

Your oats will not be so apt to rust if you get them in early.

It takes about 275,000 dozen eggs a week to supply consumers in the city of New York.

Every soil has a large quantity of both lime and potash in it, but they are not soluble in their usual form of carbonates in the soil, so it is that the caustic lime dissolves or makes soluble some of this potash, and so, besides supplying its own substance to the crop and help in gathering in nitrogen from the air, it helps in the gathering of this potash.

The clubbing method is not as likely to loosen the feathers as sticking through the mouth, and few pickers for market use the method. Much the commoner way after cutting to bleed as before is to stick the bird through the roof of the mouth, aiming to reach a point on the underside of the skull between or a trifle back of the eyes. When properly done the fowl gives a convulsive shudder, the muscles relax, the feathers drop down and their removal is a very easy matter. Getting the proper "stick" is a matter of practice.

The better appearance of dry-picked poultry, added to the fact that it keeps better both in and out of cold storage, has made the market pretty independent about scalded stuff. A good deal still comes to the New York market and in the commoner grades sells at about the same rate as the dry-picked. In the better grades, however, the demand for dry-picked fowls is imperative. There is practically no demand for scalded stuff on the Boston market in any grade.

HOMER W. JACKSON.

In the guinea family the cock is of the same size and plumage as the hen, and can hardly be distinguished from his mate. According to the history of the fowls, as given in poultry bulletins, in the males the wattles are longer, however, and point away from the lower mandible, and as his eye is larger and more alert, and the color of plumage on head and neck darker, he may be told fairly quickly in a flock. The hen only uses the well-known call interpreted by many as "Buckwheat, buckwheat," or "Come back, come back," while the cock makes the rasping rattle.

The poultryman who contemplates making a specialty of high-grade fowls for the city markets has to face the necessity for sending them dressed because it is not practicable to ship specially fattened fowls to market alive. But the still more discouraging thing to the beginner is the necessity for sending them dry-picked. The average poultryman who does not live near a city has little chance to learn dry-picking as it is practiced by experts. His first attempts at self-help are seldom reassuring. There is something uncanny about the way in which a fowl clings to life when one tries to kill it according to the directions that come along with one's new patent killing knife. You can reduce the entire inside of a fowl's head to pulp, seemingly, and yet have it kicking and struggling and casting mute glances of reproach at you after its entire coat of feathers is in the picking box. The expert, however, finds it a very simple matter. A couple of quick cuts with the knife, a shudder and a few convulsive struggles and it is all over and the feathers in the box. There is only one way for the beginner to win out in the matter, and that is to stick to it with courage and smothered sympathies until he has mastered the art.

Clubbing.—There are several methods of killing fowls for dry picking. Probably the simplest and the surest is to use a club. For this purpose any round, smooth stick of convenient size and weight will answer. A hatchet or hammer handle will do nicely. The fowl is usually hung by the feet and given a sharp whack on the head just back of the comb. It is then held by cutting the veins in the throat well back in the mouth. It is better for the beginner to secure a dead bird first or a picker's head and cut away the lower bill and as much of the throat as is necessary to expose the two large veins that come up on each side of the throat and enter the head at the base of the skull. Just back of the point at which they enter the skull is the place to cut them to bleed properly. A fowl poorly bled is spoiled for the high-priced market. Having cut the blood vessels at the proper place a small weight is attached to the lower bill by a sharp pointed hook and the picking proceeds as rapidly as possible, removing the tail and wing feathers first, then those on the breast and leaving the less easily torn parts for the last. The weight may be a can or a small bucket with a little bran or meal to absorb the blood, to be mixed later in the feed.

Of course they have a little different and better way in Boston. Through the kindness of Mr. Bauxbaum of Bachelor and Snyder, and W. P. McDermott of Austin and Son, I had an unusual opportunity to familiarize myself with the methods employed in preparing fowls for the Boston market. Here most of the bleeding is done with an outside cut, running the knife through the neck back of the ears and between the windpipe and the spinal column, and making a cross cut against the latter. This method is supposed to make the fowl bleed better. The operator usually strikes the bird's head against the picking box to stun it, as the State law requires that fowls shall be stunned before bleeding. He then takes it between his knees and holding the bill in his left hand rapidly makes the bleeding cut, and then "sticks it." Two methods of sticking are used. Some insert the point of the knife in the corner of the mouth and drive it up through the brain, aiming at the same point as before—the middle of the skull just above or slightly back of the eyes. Others stick from the outside, inserting the point of the knife just in front of or under the right eye and forcing it up to the skull as in the other method. This latter method seems the easier one for the beginner to learn, and is just as satisfactory. There is practically no bleeding from this cut and the wound will only be noticed with close inspection. The knife commonly used by the Boston pickers has a blade about three inches long, and less than half an inch wide, and has a long wooden handle. The Department of Agriculture at Washington recommends the use of a knife with a blade not over two inches long and a quarter of an inch wide, which is no doubt better for inside sticking.

The Pewter Disease.

A recent report from Berlin to the effect that a single pewter vessel, the "Bumper of Breslau," brought over eight thousand dollars at the sale of the famous Lanna collection very strikingly demonstrates the favor which antique and highly ornate objects of this material have regained with collectors and connoisseurs.

The collecting of old pewter is however, attended with a certain risk, for it is a strange, although little-known fact, that this metal is subject to an affection or disease which in German is very appropriately designated *zinnpest* (tin plague).

It is a well-known fact that some metals are subject to phenomena which, resembling in their effects the diseases that attack living organisms, cause them to decompose or decay. Especially is this the case with pewter, whether as a result of chemical changes consequent on its composition or not is not known. We do know, however, that if exposed to a low temperature it is liable to undergo a transformation under the influence of which it is ultimately reduced to powder. As long as the temperature does not go below sixty-eight degrees, Fahrenheit, there is no danger. Even at sixty-five degrees, Fahrenheit, the effects are barely noticeable; but to temperatures lower than this the metal is decidedly susceptible. This is the reason who so small a number of specimens remain to us from the period when tin or pewter was extensively used. Exposed to the vicissitudes of changing temperature, they have gone to pieces. Even a cold museum will work their destruction.

Collectors of old pewter who will carefully look over their specimens are likely to note the appearance of dull, grayish-looking spots, almost non-metallic, and of a crumbling dust-like character. This is the first symptom, and means that the process of disintegration has commenced and accounts for the more or less dilapidated condition that occurs in choice specimens of work in this metal, such as pewter medals, etc. To the same destructive influence the speedy corrosion of tin roofs may be ascribed. Where choice specimens of pewter-work, such, for instance, as the highly prized antique pieces by Briot or Enderlein, dating from the Renaissance period and superbly decorated in relief, are concerned, this would be a dire misfortune, and the affection should be promptly dealt with as soon as its occurrence is noted.

The most efficacious treatment, though useful only in the earliest stage, is found to be boiling for a prolonged period in pure water to which a little soda has been added and subsequent rubbing with a damp, soft cloth dipped in whiting. Moreover, as the disease appears to be contagious in character, the careful examination of all specimens from time to time and removal of any that show signs of infection is a wise precaution for owners to take.

Tin is a peculiar metal, and it is not surprising that its alloys should do strange things. It is so extremely ductile that it can be rolled, pressed, or beaten into thin sheets, as witness its use in the shape of tin-foil or the manufacture of the tubes in which paint, cosmetics, etc., are put up, which are pressed at a single stroke of a powerful press from a button-like blank. The metal flows into the narrow spaces and interstices of the mould almost as though fluid, which is all the more remarkable when its decidedly crystalline character is considered. When a piece of metallic tin is bent the crystals strike against one another with a peculiar and characteristic crackling sound. Tin itself is inodorous, but if it or its alloys be freely handled it imparts a peculiar odor to the hand. One of the most valuable characteristics of tin is its resistance to the effects of oxidation. It can be exposed to the air for a long time without showing any of the effects of oxidation, whereas its alloys—bronze, for instance—soon accumulate a patina by absorption of oxygen. A remarkable feature of the process of decomposition in pewter is that the product is not an oxide or any other combination of tin with other elements, but pure metallic tin, only in place of being crystalline it is amorphous.

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Medical.

A Corroboration

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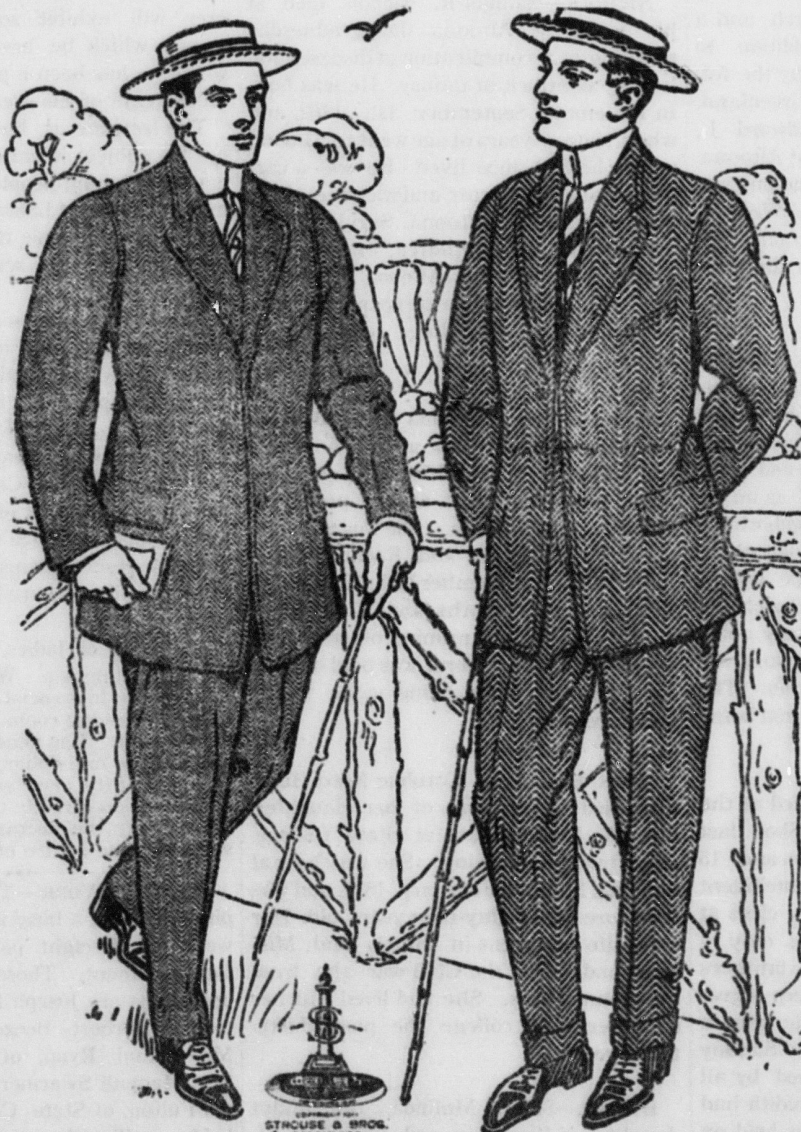
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