



Poultry Farming & Keeping

Owen



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W. Powell Owen



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INTRODUCTION.

ALTHOUGH I must have written over thirty books on poultry subjects, I have always fought shy of a volume on diseases, or one on the internal organs of the fowl. I have not wished to write a "loser" (to be my first), and yet I have been conscious all the time of the real need for the *two* volumes. Diseases and the make-up of the laying hen form the weakest links in poultry-keeping; and it is because I think that poultry-owners are becoming broad-minded, and are showing an earnest desire to learn the deeper subjects, that I issue this work.

When I was Editor of a well-known poultry journal, we almost had to give away our book on the hen's anatomy. It always reminded me of the man who owns a car, and buys books giving instructions on how to drive, but steers clear of any works on the internal mechanism. Surely the repair work should stand before the actual driving of the little machine?

In like manner I always picture the poultry-keeper sufficiently interested in a work on diseases when a favourite hen is limping, but with the departure of the limp goes the desire to own the volume about ailments of poultry. The only practical way out of the difficulty would be to place a book on diseases in his reference library—ready for any emergency.

At last, then, I have decided to go ahead along a road I have previously feared to tread, and will endeavour to serve up the internal organs of the laying hen in a simple and interesting way. Many tell me that they are never tired of hearing me lecture on "The Hen from Within," and I remember a poultry-keeper getting up in the audience to say that he had heard the lecture nearly a dozen times, and every one had

been different. This lecture originated in an interesting way. As many are aware I am President of the Tottenham Branch of the National Utility Poultry Society, and we are progressive enough to arrange for our members a good lecture monthly throughout the year. One evening the audience were kept waiting by a certain lecturer who was to entertain members with a talk on rabbit-keeping. We waited for a long time, but he did not put in an appearance, and those present became restless. On the spur of the moment, Mr. H. A. Hussey, the popular go-ahead secretary of the society, announced that I would lecture on "The Hen from Within." It was his choice, and a very appropriate title, but it has sent me on journeys all over the country. Not having a hen, I made the most of it with chalk and a blackboard, and everybody seemed pleased. Trouble began to brew, however, and during the following week members called upon Mr. Hussey to complain that they had had no notice of the lecture, but had been told the subject was rabbit-keeping, in which they were not interested, and had stopped away. The next month I had to repeat the lecture, and this time I killed a hen and dealt with her as a demonstration. I had thought that the killing of the bird would prove a helpful "curtain-raiser" for the lecture, but I was mistaken, as two lady members fainted. Ever since I have cut that part out.

The sequence was complimentary, perhaps, but kept me busy all over the place. I had dozens of requests for the lecture from all branches of the N.U.P.S., and have given it several times to the same society. Poultry-keepers began to ask where I was giving the lecture again, as they wanted to hear it once more. And societies called for it so often that I began to think people might consider it to be my only lecture. Even to-day I have several societies to visit in the next twelve months for this lecture—always "by request." Each January—the first monthly meeting of the year—I am supposed to give the lecture and demonstration to Tottenham society for the benefit of new members and beginners, and those who have not heard

it the year before. Last January when I was "billed" for it, I had an attendance of over 250, so that poultry-keepers must enjoy it and the lessons therefrom. The one advantage is that I demonstrate on different birds, which varies the lecture each time.

I am not unmindful of the fact that the interest shown in the internal workings of the laying hen at these lectures has done much to show me that the desire for knowledge on the subject is greater than it was. Such interest has in fact tempted me to alter my views of years ago, and to attempt this volume, hoping that it will supply the need.

Another aim is to teach observation on the part of every poultry-keeper, and to prevent him from being automatic. Being connected officially with so many societies, I know fully well that observation and a sound understanding of the little hen are other very weak links. It is to teach observation and to encourage the personal side in poultry-keeping that I practise my score-card system. For the same reasons I have been pioneer in Utility Shows, which are of a great educational value to backyarders. They bring out the personal side of the man, making him keen and a student of detail. As a result the hens receive better treatment, and poultry-keeping becomes profitable and pleasurable instead of a nuisance.

In conclusion, this volume has been made possible by the support of my friends—especially those who have taken advertising space herein. If you enjoy the book, you may show appreciation by supporting them. My thanks, too, to those who have ordered copies in advance, and have generously promised to recommend the volume to their friends. Two editions are being published—one for breeders, and a less costly issue for backyarders and small poultry-keepers.

W. POWELL-OWEN.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
I.—THE HEN FROM WITHIN	I
II.—THE LAYING ORGANS	6
III.—OVARIAN DISORDERS	11
IV.—WHEN EGG-MAKING IS CHECKED	19
V.—DIGESTIVE DISORDERS	24
VI.—COCK-HENS, AND HENS THAT NEVER LAY	32
VII.—CATCHING AND HANDLING FOWLS	51
VIII.—THE "POWELL-OWEN" SCORE-CARD	61
IX.—WHAT CAPACITY REALLY IS	68
X.—WHAT CAPABILITY REALLY MEANS	74
XI.—RAW MATERIAL AND FINISHED ARTICLES	79
XII.—THE EGG TO INCUBATE	88
XIII.—CARE OF THE BREEDERS	93
XIV.—THE CHICK TO REAR	103
XV.—CROSS-CHECKING ON THE "POWELL-OWEN" SYSTEM	111
XVI.—GRADING FOR LAYING TESTS AND TRAP-NESTING	128
XVII.—DISPATCHING THE PULLETS TO THE LAYING TESTS	148
XVIII.—GRADING OUT DEFORMITIES	152
XIX.—SELECTING THE MALE BIRDS	163
XX.—SIZE OF EGG AND INFLUENCES THEREON	172
XXI.—GRADING IN DIFFERENT SEASONS	178
XXII.—HAND-GRADING OF DUCKS AND BANTAMS	196
XXIII.—FOR THE DEFENDANT	208
XXIV.—WITNESSES FOR THE DEFENCE	234
XXV.—THE "POWELL-OWEN" SCORE-CARD AS AN INTERNATIONAL CARD	258
XXVI.—ON THE FARMS AND AT THE SHOWS	267

INDEX.

Abdomen, dropped, 3, 120, 122, 125, 158, 161, 190, 205, 311; empty, 150; full, 52, 60, 70, 76, 77, 126, 132, 143, 172, 185; handling at, 48, 49, 50, 51, 60, 122, 191, 193; obstacles in, 46, 54, 81, 120, 125, 191-3, 273, 303-5; that exhausts, 191.
 Abdominal, capacity, 68, 69, 122-3, 143, 144, 147, 161, 163, 164; dropsy, 81, 120, 125, 193; dropsy, test for, 35; fluff, stained, 48, 157, 158; muscles, 120.
 Absorption of yolks, 17, 19, 37, 49, 88, 129, 270-1, 304.
 Activity, 112-3.
 Addled eggs, 105-6.
 Age of stock, 194-5.
 Aged stock and quality, 47, 74, 98, 186, 195, 281, 307-9.
 Ailing birds, locating, 27, 56, 103, 139, 150, 157-9, 181, 191-2, 195.
 Albumen, 82, 88, 223, 320.
 Ancona's head, model, 75.
 Appetites, size of egg, 172, 177.
 Artificial methods, 88.
 Australorps, 115, 153, 221.
 Aylesbury ducks, 205.
 Back, 51, 66, 70-3, 124, 126, 143, 145, 152-4, 156, 158, 161, 166, 172; tilted, 157.
 Backyard conditions, 64.
 Backyarder, 211, 273, 285.
 Balance, 180.
 Bantams, utility, 196, 197, 202, 280; bantamisation, 86, 92.
 Barnevelders, 113.
 Beak, 74-6, 112, 143-4, 160, 166, 180.
 Blisters, 152.
 Blood, new, 156; disorders, 91.
 Bone, 76, 87, 112, 115, 126, 143-4, 166, 180; enlarged, 152; setting in, 132, 144, 157, 175, 178.
 Brain, 47.
 Breast, 75, 112-3.
 Breast-bones, 112; crooked, 121, 123, 160-1, 191; hen with two, 273; to pelvis, 122, 147, 161, 164, 178; type in, 120-1, 123, 125, 144, 147, 160-1; well-fleshed, 77, 132, 134, 145, 148-9, 183.

Breeder-layers, 70, 79, 81, 85, 87, 92, 94, 113, 140, 143, 149, 180, 182, 187, 193; test of, 315.
 Breeding, age, 98; close, 155; hen, 80-1, 85, 87, 92, 94-5, 113, 115, 174, 187, 193; pullets for, 93.
 Breeding stock, care of, 93, 96, 98; upsetting, 24, 60, 100.
 Bronchial troubles, 25, 124, 150, 158-9, 166, 192.
 Broods, early, 105.
 Broodiness, curing, 13, 21, 59; coops for broodies, 14; advantages of, 14, 94; recording, 184; types of broodies, 67, 75, 176.
 Buff Orpington ducks, 205-6.
 Bumble foot, 30, 152.
 Buttercups, Sicilian, 118.

Canker of vent, 158.
 Capability, meaning of, 66, 74, 120, 140, 145, 187-8, 303; v. capacity, 85, 92, 123, 164-5, 175, 208; in males, 164, 166.
 Capacity, abdominal v. general, 61, 64-6, 69, 165; meaning of, 66, 68, 113, 121, 174-5, 188; measuring, 122-4, 126-7.
 Carriage, 112, 145, 157, 159, 166, 180, 204.
 Carry a fowl, to, 52, 58.
 Catarrh, 124.
 Catch a fowl, to, 51, 56, 59, 143; catching-box, 54, 143; net, 54.
 Chicks, feeding, 129; grading, 110; handling, 49; robust, 26, 105-6, 110, 124, 132, 145, 180; to dispatch day-old, 129; to kill weakly, 128; weakly, 26, 105-6, 110, 128, 140, 145, 166; yolk absorption, 49.
 Cloaca, prolapse of, 28, 53.
 Cloacitis, 157-8, 181.
 Coarseness, 114-5.
 Cock-hen, the, 32, 37, 38; Westminster or *Daily Mail*, 32, 296, 306, 307.
 Cockerel-box, 102, 107.
 Cockerel-breeders, 44, 86, 92, 115, 186.
 Cockerels, early hatched, 100.
 Colds, 45, 55-6, 124, 135-6, 139, 147-8, 150; egg-production and, 22.

Colour, breeding for, 167.
Combs, 43-4, 67, 74, 103, 159, 162, 168-9, 192.
Commercial egg-farming, 85.
Conditioning, breeders, 99, 100-3, 108, 159; layers, 1, 22, 59, 70, 74, 77, 101, 132, 134, 139, 145, 149, 177, 273.
Constipation, 158.
Corns, 152.
Critics, 40-1, 111, 124, 165, 208, 267.
Crop-compaction, 27, 44.
Crossbreds, 142, 168.
Cross-checking on P.O. system, 111.
Crowing, 167.
Cyst, 11, 17, 48, 54.

Dead-in-shell, 105-6.
Deformities, 66, 80, 120, 131, 145, 148-9, 152-4, 180, 188.
Denmark, methods in, 262.
Depth of body, frontal, 124, 166, 175, 180.
Diarrhoea, 48, 122, 158, 181.
Digestion, capacity for, 70, 76; disorders of, 24, 50, 138.
Disinfectants, Izal, 101, 137, 138, 149.
Docility, 25-6, 46-7, 52, 57, 63, 74, 100, 116, 118-9, 145-6, 167, 199, 204.
Drakes, selecting, 169, 199, 205, 207; v. ducks, 81.
Draughts, 136-7.
Drinking-water, 93, 173, 177.
Dropsy, abdominal, 81, 130; test for, 35.
Ducks, ailments, 150, 157, 181, 192; catching, 59; handling, 125, 198; ponds, 30; trapping, 59, 200; utility, 108; visits at night, 59; white eggs, 169.
Dummy eggs, 137.

Early layers, 133, 143, 173.
Egg-eating, 29, 47, 137; tests for, 137.
Egg-production, stopping, 21.
Egg-strains, so-called, 79.
Eggs, blood on, 158; colour, 91; care of hatching, 104; expulsion, 120; feeling for, 13, 29, 50, 191; germs in, 12; hatching, 82, 88-9, 92-3, 96, 173; in abdomen, 16-8, 46, 54, 81, 120, 193; in oviduct, 15, 48, 59, 72, 121, 193, 269, 270; minus yolks, 222, 320; size of, 66, 70, 77, 79, 83, 89, 114, 143, 172, 175, 177, 207; soft, 29, 47, 40, 70, 90-1, 120, 137-8, 158; stale, 12, 120, 269, 270; tainted, 137; testing, 12; white ducks, 169.
Environment, ducks, 59, 207; hens, 63-4, 82, 98, 113, 173, 192.
Epidemics, 66.
Excrement, retention of, 7, 28, 120.

Externals from male, 44, 66, 167-8.
Eye, 46-7, 74, 145, 159, 162, 166, 192; cold in, 137, 150; litter in, 56; reading the, 191.
Eyesight, test for, 137.

Face, 74, 166, 281.
Farm, buying a, 31, 191; conditions on, 64.
Fat, internal, 3, 6, 16, 24, 26, 38, 54, 70, 74, 77, 91, 99, 100-1, 122, 139, 149, 159, 173, 177, 190-1, 271; in diet, 102; v. yolks, 38, 139, 271.
Feather, 69, 75-6, 86, 103, 115, 126, 145, 154, 158, 166, 171; backward in, 99, 102.
Feeding, breeders, 92-4, 99; maturing pullets, 132, 137-8, 147, 177; methods, 15, 63, 129; size of egg, 172, 177; types altered by, 42, 82, 140, 190-1, 205, 312.
Fertility and infertility, 71, 99, 100, 103, 105, 108, 120, 123, 164, 166, 171.
Fight, pullets that, 117; males, 107-8.
Finger-measurements, 68, 72-3.
Finished articles, 71, 77, 81, 92, 112, 113, 140, 144, 175, 183, 188; in males, 163, 170, 188.
First egg, 158.
Flock-averages, 30, 63, 89, 128, 189, 192.
Flying over, 58.
Foster-mothers, 129.
Frame, loss of, 173, 175, 177, 182, 187-9, 191, 193-4, 199, 207.

Gases in system, 138.
Gizzards, 70, 161; hen with two, 273.
Grading, August, 179, 182, 184-6; breeders, 24; December, 194; experiences, 80; February, 1, 139, 183; foodstuffs, 63; June, 45, 47; maturing pullets, 133; moulters, 184-5, passengers, 189, 190, 192; seasons, 178; second year, 190; spring, 91; stock, 134-5; when to do, 195; young stock, 131.
Grain feeding, 13, 28, 138, 177.
Grass, long wet, 48, 130, 158.
Green food and size of egg, 173, 177.
Grit, size of, 27.
Growths, 152, 157.
Guernsey, methods in, 318.

Handling, at abdomen, 48-51, 122; chicks, 49; colds, 45, 222; deformities, 152; egg-types, 40, 42, 48, 61, 63; lessons, 111-2, 176, 274, 283; light, 22, 25, 45, 135, 139, 148, 158, 180, 182, 222; mating by, 302, 312; out of lay, 178; poor laying, 48; sale, 44; times for, 55, 58-60, 134; v. trap-nests, 38, 63, 88, 93, 155, 158, 174, 188-9, 213-5, 271.

Hatchability, 66, 83, 92-3, 95, 105-6.
Hatching, early, 105; late, 173.
Head-carriage, peculiar, 159.
Head points, 37, 46, 66, 74, 115, 162, 166, 168-9, 191.
Heart, 3, 56, 71-2, 121, 124, 127, 158, 161.
Heart-shaped, 113, 145, 166, 171, 179.
Hemorrhage, internal, 28.
Hen-hospital, 56, 139, 181.
Hens from pullets, telling, 194.
Hens per male, 100, 108.
Hogan and egg-types, 61, 65, 77.
Hold a fowl, how to, 51, 58, 68, 72-3, 113, 122, 126, 179.
Hoppers, position of, 159.
House, advantages of double, 97, 185.
House, catching hens in, 53.
Housing and egg-production, 88, 107, 135-6; breeders, 96, 102; maturing pullets, 135-6.

Incubate, eggs to, 82, 88, 92-3, 96, 173.
Incubators, troublesome, 104, 129.
Indian Game, 126.
Indian Runner ducks, 202.
Indigestion, chronic, 129.
Internal laying, 17, 36-7, 43, 46, 48-9, 270-1, 304, 317, 320.
International use of P.O. score-card, 258.
Intestinal disorders, 103, 120-1, 128, 138, 158, 161.
Iris, 74, 145, 159.
Irritating food, 48.
Isolation hospital, 58, 139.

Jaundice, 189.
Judging, consistency in, 179, 288, 291, 294; hints when, 292-3.
June, grading in, 45, 47.

Keel, deformity at, 161-2.
Khaki Campbell ducks, 199, 200.
Knock-kneed, 126, 145.

Labour, 90.
Large-flock matings, 108, 117.
Lay, handling for commencement to, 20, 49, 77, 132, 135-8, 143-5, 147, 149, 158, 173, 175, 177-8, 193.
Lay, handling for end of, 20, 69.
Lay, handling for in, 35-6.
Lay, scoring out of, 178.
Layers, the, 70, 77, 81, 92, 193; low-grade, 75.
Laying, internal, 17, 36, 43, 46, 48-9, 270-1, 304, 317, 320; maintenance of, 66, 82, 89, 156, 170, 173, 177, 187, 189; organs, 6, 19, 51.
Leghorns, measurements of, 147.

Legs, catching by, 51, 58-9; length of, 48, 52, 72, 76, 103, 112, 126, 143, 145, 158, 166, 171, 180; loss of, 7; width between, 51, 71, 126, 143, 145, 166, 176.
Lice, 101, 140.
Light, handling, 22, 25, 45, 135, 139, 148, 158, 180, 182, 222.
Litter, 130, 137.
Liver, disorder, 158-9; rupture of, 28; scrofulous, 161.
Longevity, 114, 120-1, 123, 185-7, 195, 254, 281, 295, 307.
Lung action, 124.

Maggie ducks, 293.
Male and externals, 44, 66, 167-8; care of, 99, 100-3, 107, 149, 158-9; grading, 163-4, 178; hens per, 100, 108; precocious 163; selection of, 60, 71, 74-5, 80-1, 84, 86-7, 103, 106, 117, 123, 127, 131, 152-4, 159, 160, 163, 166-7, 169, 171, 175-6, 187, 194; spiteful, 60; yellow-topped, 167.
Masculine characters, 32, 37-8, 152.
Mash, for tea, 13, 28, 138; wet v. dry, 138.
Mating, 25, 100, 103, 105-6, 152, 181, 186-8; and observation, 81; beef males, 194; by handling, 186-8, 302, 312; large-flock, 108, 117; males at, 60, 100.
Maturing pullets, 132, 134, 136-8, 143-4, 149, 150, 158, 173, 178, 183.
Measurements, 122-4, 134, 143-4, 147, 161, 178; for size of egg, 172.
Medium hens, 80-2, 113-4, 174, 187.
Milk for crop-compaction, 27.
Mineral salts, 93.
Mopish hens, 191, 195.
Moulters, 69, 76, 119, 139; early v. late, 35, 95, 184, 186; grading, 46, 47, 184-5, 191; management, 96, 99, 101, 185.

Neck, 74; catch ducks by, 59.
Nest-boxes, position of, 48, 137; types, 56-7.
Nesting material, 90, 137.
"Never-layers," 17, 36, 43, 46, 48-9, 270-1, 304, 317, 320.
Night, handling hens at, 58, 116, 118.
Non-laying, visits to nests, 36, 270-1, 304, 317, 320.
Nostrils, 150, 159.
Number of eggs, 66, 74, 83, 92.

Observation of fanciers, 94.
Onions, 137.
Ovarian organs, 7, 17, 19, 132, 161; disorders, 11, 46, 51, 161.
Ovary, dormant, 19, 20.
Overcrowding, 45.

Overfat condition, 16, 70, 74, 91, 99, 100-1, 138, 149, 159, 173, 177, 190.
Oviduct, dormant, 19; hen with dual, 320; prolapse of, 28, 53.

Parson's nose, 157, 159.
Pedigree breeding, 88, 91.
Pelvis arch, width of, 70, 77, 127, 143-4, 166, 170, 172, 174-7.
Pelvis bones, 77, 138, 144-5, 185; egg-types, 42, 61, 64-5, 77; handling at, 193; space between, 123, 144, 172, 174, 267; type in, 157, 161-2, 170, 172, 174.
Pens, training, 170.
Perches, 136, 152, 161; high, 28, 30.
Personal side, 42, 57, 82, 135, 205.
Pigment test, 183-6, 194.
Poisoning, internal, 24, 120.
Post-mortem, to make, 2.
Powell-Owen score-card, 61-2, 111, 209, 258, 267, 273.
Production *v.* reproduction, 92-3, 96, 188, 315, 318.
Prolapse, 28, 53.
Pullets, handling of, 49; for stock, 97; for Tests, 102, 138; wintering of, 21-2, 101, 107, 119, 130, 132, 136-8, 143-5, 147, 158, 173, 175, 177-8, 193; as early breeders, 93.
Pullet breeders, 44.
Pullet-year records, 42, 63, 185.
Pupil, 74, 145, 159, 166.
Purchasing stock, when, 22, 45, 84, 106, 109, 138, 156, 186, 191, 194.

Quality *v.* quantity, 39, 79, 82, 88, 90, 97, 109, 175.
Quill-bound, 102.

Rearability, 66, 83, 92-3, 97, 105-6.
Receptacles for dispatch, 151.
Recording, home and Test, 151; visits to nests, 13, 270-1, 304, 317, 320; without trap-nests, 13, 29, 183-4.
Rejected pens at Tests, 150.
Removing stock, 137, 195, 222.
Reproduction *v.* production, 92-3, 96, 188, 315, 318.
Rings and grading, 56-9, 143, 179, 181, 183-5, 195, 201.
Roach-backed, 152, 154, 156, 161.
Roup, 55, 80-1, 124, 136, 150, 181, 222.
Rumpless, 150.
Runs, catching hens in, 58-9.
Runs, material for, 31.

Sale, handling and care for, 44, 109, 127, 138, 149, 151, 157-9.
Salts, Glauber's, 138.
Schedules for incubation, 105; for winter laying, 133, 143, 179.

Score-card, the Powell-Owen, 61-2, 111, 209, 258, 267, 273.
"Score-card Marvel," 244-5.
Score-card Shows, Danish, 262.
Score-carded birds, 75, chaps. 23-26.
Score-carding of males, 178.
Sexes, separating, 47, 130.
Shanks, 76, 112, 143, 145, 166, 180, 183-5; deformities, 160.
Shell, texture of, 70.
Shelters, 130.
Show-pen, removing birds from, 52, 54, 57.
Showing utility birds, 268, 288.
Sinews, 76.
Single-combed Wyandottes, 110.
Single-pen testing, 63, 118.
Sittings, dispatch of, 104.
Size of egg, 172.
Size on hen's side, 84, 86.
Skull, 74, 145.
Soft eggs, 29, 47, 49, 70, 90-1, 120, 158.
Specialising, 155.
Spiteful males, 60.
Spreading disease, 181-2.
Spurs on hens, 17, 38, 43, 191.
Spurs, to remove, 108.
Squirrel tail, 152-3.
Stamina, 66, 71, 75, 79, 112, 124, 140, 143, 155, 159, 166, 177, 180, 188.
Standards, utility, 267-8.
Stock, robust, 26, 66; weakly, 26, 51, 109.
Stones in runs, 31.
Struggle, when hens, 54.
Sun and shade, 98.
Superfine quality, 81.
Sussex, utility type of, 75.
Symmetry, 157, 166, 180, 204.

Table, cockerels for, 193, 317; condition for, 1, 46, 77, 134, 183, 185, 191-2.
Tail, carriage of, 66, 152-4, 159, 160, 166, 202; catching by, 53; squirrel, 152-3; wry, 109, 152-3, 202.
Temperament, 25-6, 46, 52, 57, 63, 74, 100, 116, 118-9, 145-7, 199, 204.
Testing eggs, 12.
Tests, handling, 118, 121, 125, 154, 192, 196, 270, 283, chaps. 23-26.
Tests, care of pullets for, 102, 138-9, 146-7, 150; dispatch to, 140-1, 147-8, 150-2, 158, 177; late start of, 94, 146, 177, 222; lottery of, 11, 140-2, 151, 222, 226, 231; successes at, chaps. 23-24; selecting for, 20-1, 83, 115-6, 127-8, 131-2, 139, 140, 143-5, 148, 157-8, 160-1, 172, 177-8, rejected pens from, 150.
Tests and Utility Shows, 278.
Texture, 85-6, 89, 92, 140, 145, 164, 182-3, 187, 204.
Thighs, withered, 152.
Toe-punching, 186.
Toes, 112, 145, 160; crooked, 31, 160; test for crooked, 160.

Tonic, 137.
Tottenham Society's example, 210.
Training pens, 170.
Trap-nest, removal of birds from, 54, 56, 59, 116, 157, 181.
Trap-nest *v.* handling, 38, 48, 63, 88, 93, 125, 155, 174, 188-9, 213-5, 271.
Trap-nest records, reading, 64, 75, 125, 174, 214.
Trap-nesting in pullet year, 29, 90, 93, 309.
Trap-nesting, selecting pullets for, 128, 131-2, 149, 152, 179, 180, 190.
Traps, training ducks to, 59.
Treading of hens, 39.
Tuberculosis, 25, 182.
Tumours, 152.
Types, 81, 83, 85-6, 92, 96, 112; handling for egg, 49, 42, 61, 63, 77; in eggs, 89; undesirable, 103, 114-6, 120, 123, 126, 145-6, 148, 152-4, 158, 164, 166, 171, 177, 191.

Underfeeding, 172-3.
Ungraded flocks, 223-4.
Utility and beauty, 212, 215, 256, 262.
Utility Poultry Societies, 210, 272.
Utility Shows, 211, 215-6, 263, 267, 272, 274.

Vent, 70, 77, 147, 149, 157, 172, 174, 176, 181, 185-6.
Vent disorders, 157-8, 181.

Walk, 112, 145, 157, 159, 180, 204.
Warm-weather hints, 55.
Wattles, 66, 74.
Weight, 78, 85, 87, 111, 114, 149, 175, 180, 188, 193-4.
Weight of egg, 89, 114, 172, 175, 177, 187.
Wheezing, 158, 192.
White plumage, 167.
Wing, catching by, 53.
Winter eggs, 46.
Wintering the pullets, 21-2, 101, 107, 119, 130, 132, 136-8, 143-5, 147, 158, 173, 175, 177-8, 193.
Wry tail, 109, 152-3, 202.
Wyandottes, Columbian, 121, 123; measurements of, 147; single-combed, 110; type in, 75, 153.

Yolkless eggs, 223, 320.
Yolks, absorption of, 17, 19, 37, 49, 88, 129; coagulated, 15, 16, 49, 54, 304-5; giant, 37; quality of, 88; manufacture of, 9, 19, 40, 59, 71.
Young stock, care of, 98, 102, 107, 119, 128, 150, 173, 177, 183; catching, 58; grading, 109, 128, 143-5, 163, 170, 178-9, 182.