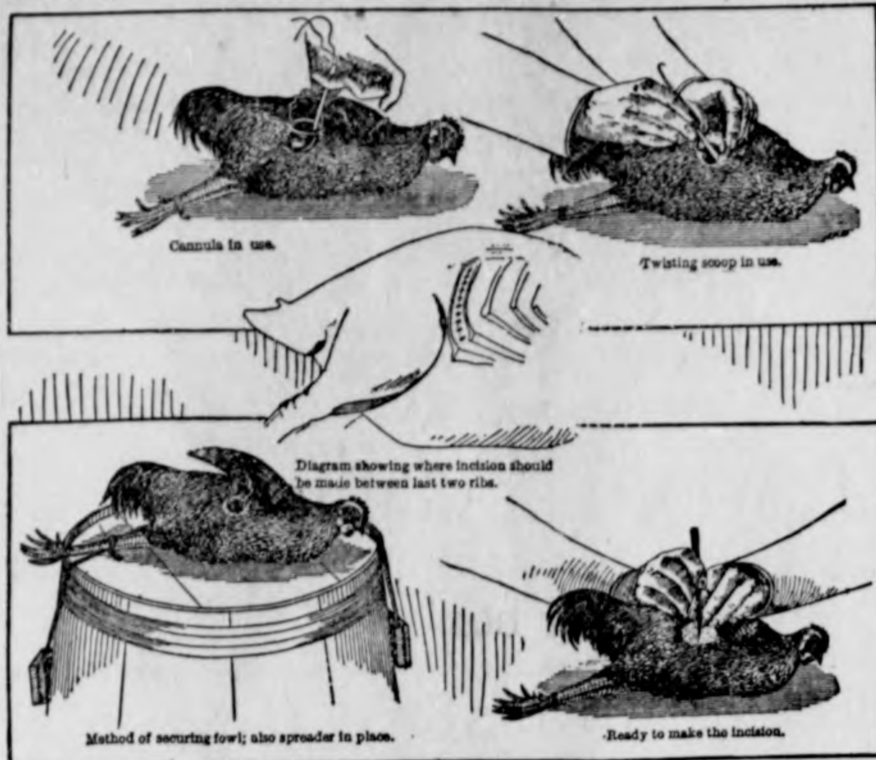
TURN SURPLUS COCKERELS INTO CAPONS



Many farmers and poultry fanciers have found it profitable to turn all their surplus cockerels into capons by altering or castrating them; others think they can do better by selling the cockerels as broilers as long as prices hold up and caponize only later-hatched chicks.

The capon or castrated rooster bears the same relation to a cockerel that a steer does to a bull, a barrow to a boar, or a wether to a ram. As with other male animals so altered, the disposition of the capon differs materially from that of the cockerel. As a result of the more peaceful disposition of the capon he continues to grow and his body develops more uniformly and to a somewhat greater size than is the case with a cockerel of the same age.

Selection of Breeds.

It does not pay to caponize small fowls. Yellow legs and skin, as in other classes of poultry, are most popular. The Plymouth Rocks, Light Brahmas, Cochins, Indian Games, Langshans and Wyandottes are all recommended by different producers, as are also various crosses of these. The Brahmas and Cochins possess good size. The Plymouth Rocks and Wyandottes are somewhat smaller, but sell readily and possess the advantage of yellow skin and legs. The Langshan is large and is easily operated upon. The Indian Game is probably most useful as a cross upon some one of the other breeds, thereby improving the breast meat without materially reducing the size of the fowl.

Time to Caponize.

In so far as the effects of the operation and the rapidity and ease of healing are concerned, the time of year when the operation is performed is of little importance. The age and size of the cockerel, however, are very important. As soon as the cockerels weigh two to three pounds, or when two to four months old, they should be operated upon. The lower age and weight limits apply particularly to the American breeds, while the higher apply to the Asiatics.

The fact that capons are in greatest demand and bring the best prices from the Christmas season until the end of March, and that it takes about ten months to grow and finish them properly, makes it important to hatch the chicks in early spring so that they will be of proper size for caponizing in June, July and August. These are by far the most popular months for the operation, though in some cases it is performed still later.

Operation of Caponizing.

Before beginning the operation two conditions are absolutely essential. If these are not favorable, do not attempt to operate. The first of these is that the intestines of the fowl should be completely empty, so that they will fall away and expose the testicle to view. This can be accomplished by shutting up the fowls and withholding all food and water for twenty-four to thirty-six hours before the operation. Thirty-six hours is better than twenty-four, especially for a beginner. The second condition is a good, strong light, so that the organs of the fowl may be clearly and easily distinguished. Direct sunlight is best for this, and in consequence it is well to operate out of doors on a bright day.

Methods of Holding the Fowl.

When ready to operate, catch the bird and pass a noose of strong string about the legs. Do the same with both wings close to the shoulder joints. To the other end of the strings are attached weights of sufficient size to hold down and stretch out the bird when placed upon the head of a barrel or box of convenient height, which is to serve as operating table.

Having fastened the fowl, be sure that all the instruments are at hand. It is also well, though not necessary, to have ready some absorbent cotton and a dish of water to which has been added a few drops of carbolic acid. Having once started, carry the operation through as quickly as possible. Moisten and remove the feathers from a small area over the last two ribs just in front of the thigh. With the left hand slide the skin and flesh down toward the thigh. Holding it thus, make the incision between the last two ribs, holding the edge of the knife away from you as you stand back of the fowl. Lengthen the incision in each direction until it is one to one and a half inches long. Now insert the spreader into the incision, thus springing the ribs apart. The intestines will now be visible, covered by a thin membrane called the omentum. Tear apart this membrane with the hook, and the upper testicle, yellow or sometimes rather dark colored and about the size and shape of an ordinary bean, should be visible close up against the backbone. By pushing aside the intestines this can easily be seen, and the lower one also, in a similar position on the other side of the backbone. Expert operators usually remove testicles through one incision. Inexperienced operators will usually find it well to attempt the removal of the upper or nearer testicle only and to make a second incision on the opposite side of the body for the removal of the other testicle.

If both testicles are to be removed through the same incision, remove the lower first, as the bleeding from the upper might be sufficient to obscure the lower. Each testicle is enveloped in a thin membrane. This may be and probably is best removed with the testicle, though some operators tear it open and remove the testicle only.

The delicate part of the operation is at hand, due to the close proximity of the spermatic artery, which runs back of the testicle and to which the testicle is in part attached. If this is ruptured the fowl will bleed to death. The cannula, threaded with a coarse horse-hair or fine wire. Allow the hair or wire protruding from the end to form a small loop just large enough to slip over the testicle. Work this over the testicle, being careful to inclose the entire organ. Now tighten up on the free ends of the hair or wire, being careful not to catch any part of the artery. If the spermatic cord does not separate, saw lightly with the hair or wire. When the testicle is free, remove it from the body. If only the upper testicle has been removed, turn the bird over and proceed in exactly the same manner upon the other side.

After removing the testicle, if the bleeding is at all profuse it is well to remove a portion of the blood by introducing small pieces of absorbent cotton into the body by means of the hook or nippers, allowing them to become saturated and then removing them. Be sure to remove all blood clots, feathers or other foreign matter. After the testicles and all foreign matter are removed, take out the spreaders, thus allowing the skin to slip back over the incision.

Some birds are sure to be killed even by experts, but the loss is small.

Care of Fowls After the Operation.

Upon being released from the operating table the capons are usually put in a closed yard where they can find shelter, food and water and can be kept quiet. No roosts are provided, as the less flying and jumping they do the sooner will the wound heal. The capons seem to be very little inconvenienced by the operation, and water and soft feed mixed with sweet skim milk can be given immediately.

For a week or ten days the newly made capons should be carefully observed to see whether they become "wind puffed." This is a condition caused by air gathering under and puffing out the skin near the wound. When observed it can be readily relieved by pricking the skin with a needle or knife and pressing out the air. In about ten days or two weeks the incision into the body should be entirely healed and, although no special antiseptic methods are employed in the operation, blood poisoning or any other trouble seldom results.

UTILIZE MANY SPARE HOURS

Odd Jobs About Farm May Be Done on Wet Days During Summer When Work in Field Is Impossible.

The wet days of summer are the time for odd jobs about the farm and the farmhouse. A new shelf needed here, or a hinge there; making the henhouse snugger or cleaning a piece of machinery; and a hundred more small jobs can be found by any farmer on any wet day when nothing can be done in the fields. The wise man will take advantage of these spare hours to do the odd tasks. He who does not generally finds them pressing upon him at a time when he is busy with more important work.

Plow Up Strawberry Bed.

Plow up the old strawberry bed as soon as it has fruited. Some late vegetable crop, such as late celery, cabbages or turnips, may be planted on the land.

HIS LOVE STORY

By MARIE VAN VORST

ILLUSTRATIONS By RAY WALTERS

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SYNOPSIS.

—16—

Le Comte de Sabron, captain of French cavalry, takes to his quarters to raise by hand a motherless Irish terrier pup, and names it Pitchoune. He dines with the Marquise d'Esclignac and meets Miss Julia Redmond, American heiress. He is ordered to Algiers but is not allowed to take servants or dogs. Miss Redmond takes care of Pitchoune, who, longing for his master, runs away from her. The marquise plans to marry Julia to the Duc de Tremont. Pitchoune follows Sabron to Algiers, dog and master meet, and Sabron gets permission to keep his dog with him. The Duc de Tremont finds the American heiress capricious. Sabron, wounded in an engagement, falls into the dry bed of a river and is watched over by Pitchoune. After a horrible night and day Pitchoune leaves him. Tremont takes Julia and the marquise to Algiers in his yacht but has doubts about Julia's Red Cross mission. After long search Julia gets trace of Sabron's whereabouts. Julia for the moment turns matchmaker in behalf of Tremont. Hammet Abou tells the Marquise where he thinks Sabron may be found. Tremont decides to go with Hammet Abou to find Sabron. Pitchoune finds a village, twelve hours journey away, and somehow makes Fatou Anni understand his master's desperate plight. Sabron is rescued by the village men but grows weaker without proper care. Tremont goes into the desert with the caravan in search of Sabron. Julia follows with Madame de la Maine, whom Tremont loves.

CHAPTER XXIV—Continued.

At night as he lay in his bed in his tent, Tremont and Hammet Abou cooled his temples with water from the earthen bottles, where the sweet ooze stood humid and refreshing on the damp clay. They gave him acid and cooling drinks, and now and then Sabron would smile on Tremont, calling him "petit frere," and Tremont heard the words with moisture in his eyes, remembering what he had said to the Marquise d'Esclignac about being Sabron's brother. Once or twice the soldier murmured a woman's name, but Tremont could not catch it, and once he said to the duke:

"Sing! Sing!"

The Frenchman obeyed docilely, humming in an agreeable barytone the snatches of song he could remember, "La Fille de Madame Angot," "Il Trovatore;" running them into more modern opera, "La Veuve Joyeuse." But the lines creased in Sabron's forehead indicated that the singer had not yet found the music which haunted the memory of the sick man.

"Sing!" he would repeat, fixing his hollow eyes on his companion, and Tremont complied faithfully. Finally, his own thoughts going back to early days, he hummed tunes that he and a certain little girl had sung at their games in the allees of an old chateau in the valley of the Indre.

"Sonnez les matines
Ding—din—don,"

and other children's melodies.

In those nights, on that desolate way, alone, in a traveling tent, at the side of a man he scarcely knew, Robert de Tremont learned serious lessons. He had been a soldier himself, but his life had been an inconsequent one. He had lived as he liked, behind him always the bitterness of an early deception. But he had been too young to break his heart at seventeen. He had lived through much since the day his father exiled him to Africa.

Therese had become a dream, a memory around which he did not always let his thoughts linger. When he had seen her again after her husband's death and found her free, he was already absorbed in the worldly life of an ambitious young man. He had not known how much he loved her until in the Villa des Bougainvilleas he had seen and contrasted her with Julia Redmond.

All the charm for him of the past returned, and he realized that, as money goes, he was poor—she was poorer.

The difficulties of the marriage made him all the more secure in his determination that nothing should separate him again from this woman.

By Sabron's bed he hummed his little insignificant tunes, and his heart longed for the woman. When once or twice on the return journey they had been threatened by the engulfing sand storm he had prayed not to die before he could again clasp her in his arms.

Sweet, tantalizing, exquisite with the passion of young love, there came to him the memories of the moonlight nights on the terrace of the old chateau. He saw her in the pretty girlish dresses of long ago, the melancholy droop of her quivering mouth, her bare young arms, and smelled the fragrance of her hair as he kissed her. So humming his soothing melodies to the sick man, with his voice softened by his memories, he soothed Sabron.

Sabron closed his eyes, the creases in his forehead disappeared as though brushed away by a tender hand. Perhaps the sleep was due to the fact that, unconsciously, Tremont slipped into humming a tune which Miss Redmond had sung in the Villa des Bougainvilleas, and of whose English words De Tremont was quite ignorant.

"Will he last until Algiers, Hammet Abou?"

"What will be will be, monsieur!" Abou replied.

"He must," De Tremont answered fiercely. "He shall."

He became serious and meditative on those silent days, and his blue eyes, where the very whites were burned, began to wear the far-away, mysterious look of the traveler across long distances. During the last sand storm he stood, with the camels, round Sabron's litter, a human shade and shield, and when the storm ceased he fell like one dead, and the Arabs pulled off his boots and put him to bed like a child.

One sundown, as they traveled into the afterglow with the East behind them, when Tremont thought he could not endure another day of the voyage, when the pallor and waxiness of Sabron's face were like death itself, Hammet Abou, who rode ahead, cried out and pulled up his camel short. He waved him arm.

"A caravan, monsieur."

In the distance they saw the tents, like lotus leaves, scattered on the pink sands, and the dark shadows of the Arabs and the couchant beasts, and the glow of the encampment fire.

"An encampment, monsieur!"

Tremont sighed. He drew the curtain of the litter and looked in upon Sabron, who was sleeping. His set features, the growth of his uncut beard, the long fringe of his eyes, his dark hair upon his forehead, his wan transparency—with the peace upon his face, he might have been a figure of Christ waiting for sepulture.

Tremont cried to him: "Sabron, mon vieux Charles, reveille-toi! We are in sight of human beings!"

But Sabron gave no sign that he heard or cared.

Throughout the journey across the desert, Pitchoune had ridden at his will and according to his taste, sometimes journeying for the entire day perched upon Tremont's camel. He sat like a little figurehead or a mascot, with ears pointed northward and his keen nose sniffing the desert air. Sometimes he would take the same position on one of the mules that carried Sabron's litter, at his master's feet. There he would lie hour after hour, with his soft eyes fixed with understanding sympathy upon Sabron's face.

He was, as he had been to Fatou Anni, a kind of fetish—the caravan adored him. Now from his position at Sabron's feet, he crawled up and licked his master's hand.

"Charles!" Tremont cried, and lifted the soldier's hand.

Sabron opened his eyes. He was sane. The glimmer of a smile touched his lips. He said Tremont's name, recognized him. "Are we home?" he asked weakly. "Is it France?"

Tremont turned and dashed away a tear.

He drew the curtains of the litter and now walked beside it, his legs feeling like cotton and his heart beating.

As they came up toward the encampment, two people rode out to meet them, two women in white riding habits, on stallions, and as the evening breeze fluttered the veils from their helmets, they seemed to be flags of welcome.

Under his helmet Tremont was red and burned. He had a short, rough growth of beard.

Therese de la Maine and Julia Redmond rode up. Tremont recognized them, and came forward, half staggering. He looked at Julia and smiled, and pointed with his left hand toward the litter; but he went directly up to Madame de la Maine, who sat immovable on her little stallion. Tremont seemed to gather her in his arms. He lifted her down to him.

Julia Redmond's eyes were on the litter, whose curtains were stirring in the breeze. Hammet Abou, with a profound salaam, came forward to her.

"Mademoiselle," he said, respectfully, "he lives. I have kept my word."

Pitchoune sprang from the litter and ran over the sands to Julia Redmond. She dismounted from her horse alone and called him: "Pitchoune! Pitchoune!" Kneeling down on the desert, she stooped to caress him, and he crouched at her feet, licking her hands.

CHAPTER XXV.

As Handsome Does.

When Sabron next opened his eyes he fancied that he was at home in his old room in Rouen, in the house where he was born, in the little room in which, as a child, dressed in his dimity night gown, he had sat up in his bed by candle light to learn his letters from the cookery book.

The room was snowy white. Outside the window he heard a bird sing, and near by, he heard a dog's smothered bark. Then he knew that he was not at home or a child, for with the languor and weakness came his memory. A quiet nurse in a hospital dress was sitting by his bed, and Pitchoune rose from the foot of the bed and looked at him adoringly.

"Pitchoune," he murmured, not knowing the name of his other companion, "where are we, old fellow?"

The nurse replied in an agreeable Anglo-Saxon French:

"You are in a French hospital in Algiers, sir, and doing well."

Tremont came up to him.

"I remember you," Sabron said. "You have been near me a dozen times lately."

"You must not talk, mon vieux."

"But I feel as though I must talk a great deal. Didn't you come for me into the desert?"

Tremont, healthy, vigorous, tanned, gay and cheerful, seemed good looking to poor Sabron, who gazed up at him with touching gratitude.

"I think I remember everything, I think I shall never forget it," he said, and lifted his hand feebly. Robert de Tremont took it. "Haven't we traveled far together, Tremont?"

"Yes," nodded the other, affected, "but you must sleep now. We will talk about it over our cigars and liquors soon."

Sabron smiled faintly. His clear mind was regaining its balance, and thoughts began to sweep over it cruelly fast. He looked at his rescuer, and to him the other's radiance meant simply that he was engaged to Miss Redmond. Of course that was natural. Sabron tried to accept it and to be glad for the happiness of the man who had rescued him. But as he thought this, he wondered why he had been rescued and shut his eyes so that Tremont might not see his weakness. He said hesitatingly:

"I am haunted by a melody, a tune. Could you help me? It won't come."

"It's not the "Marseillaise?" asked the other, sitting down by his side and pulling Pitchoune's ears.

"Oh, no!"

"There will be singing in the ward shortly. A Red Cross nurse comes to sing to the patients. She may help you to remember."

Sabron renounced in despair. Haunting, tantalizing in his brain and illusive, the notes began and stopped, began and stopped. He wanted to ask his friend a thousand questions. How he had come to him, why he had come to him, how he knew. . . . He gave it all up and dozed, and while he slept the sweet sleep of those who are to recover, he heard the sound of a wom-

Threatened by the Engulfing Sandstorm.

an's voice in the distance, singing, one after another, familiar melodies, and finally he heard the "Kyrie Eleison," and to its music Sabron again fell asleep.

The next day he received a visitor. It was not an easy matter to introduce visitors to his bedside, for Pitchoune objected. Pitchoune received the Marquise d'Esclignac with great displeasure.

"Is he a thoroughbred?" asked the Marquise d'Esclignac.

"He has behaved like one," replied the officer.

There was a silence. The Marquise d'Esclignac was wondering what her niece saw in the pale man so near still to the borders of the other world.

"You will be leaving the army, of course," she murmured, looking at him interestedly.

"Madame!" said the Capitaine de Sabron, with his blood—all that was in him—rising to his cheeks.

"I mean that France has done nothing for you. France did not rescue you and you may feel like seeking a more—another career."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

St. Bride of Ireland.

St. Bride, the patroness of Ireland and of Fleet street, whose feast falls in February, was the beautiful daughter of a bard who became the religious disciple of St. Patrick and abbess of Kildare. The story of St. Bride, or Bridget, fired the Celtic imagination, and in Ireland about twenty parishes bear the name of Kilbride. The spire of her church in Fleet street has been twice struck by lightning and much reduced from the original height, but is still one of the tallest steeples in London. It is supposed to have been designed by Wren's young daughter.—Pall Mall Gazette.

Have a Good Bed.

In Farm and Fireside a contributor, writing a practical article about mattresses and other provisions for beds, makes the following general comment:

"In furnishing a home the housewife should give most careful thought to the beds and their equipment. We spend at least a third of our lives in bed, and it is worth while to make that third pleasant and refreshing. The best mattresses and springs are none too good when one is storing up strength for some work. Besides, as is the case with most household purchases, the best are really the cheapest in the end."

HAVE QUEER POWER

Extraordinary Electric Qualities of Many Plants.

One in India Has Movement Very Similar to the Small Hands of a Watch—"Vegetable Octopus" of South America.

All plants are electric batteries. Some are weak, others are strong. According to Royal Dixon, author of "The Human Side of Plants," who has an entertaining article in the Edison Monthly on the extraordinary electric qualities of plants, the strongest is the well-known sensitive plant (Mimosa pudica), but the iris, nicotina, nasturtium and practically all the meat-eating plants produce a current of from .005 to .02 volt, which can be measured with a galvanometer.

"A very peculiar plant," writes Mr. Dixon, "and one which has tremendous

East Indian Telegraph Plant.

electrical powers, is the 'telegraph plant' (Desmodium gyrans). It is a native of India, and each of its leaves is composed of three leaflets; the larger one stands erect during the day but turns down at night, while each of the smaller leaflets moves day and night without stopping. They describe by means of jerking motions complete circles, not unlike the smaller hand of a watch."

Then there is the Utricularia, or fishing plant, which lures small fish "into its capacious mouth and suddenly, as if an electric button were secretly pressed, closes in upon its helpless prey. In other words, it fishes with a net electrically wired!"

Near Lake Titicaca in South America and in the interior of Nicaragua is found a really terrible plant, a sort of vegetable octopus. This was first discovered by the naturalist Dunstan, who heard his dog cry out as if in agony. Running to his relief, Mr. Dunstan found the animal "enveloped in what seemed to him a perfect network of what seemed to be a fine, ropelike tissue of roots and fibers." He cut the fleshy fibers of the magnetized plant only with great difficulty. The dog was covered with blood. "The twigs curled like living sinuous fingers about his hands and it required terrific force to free himself from the plant's electric grasp, which left his hands red and blistered."

"How's the Wind, Sergeant?"

Every British soldier at the front is said to have become a close observer of the wind since the Germans began the use of gas; if it veers to the north and east it is an almost certain sign of attack. The respirators, or "muzzles," as the soldiers call them, are declared to give little protection from the gas. "Just get some one to throw a handful of chloride of lime in your face," says an officer in describing the gas. "That will give you a fair idea of the preliminary stages of the gas trouble."

Of the Second battalion of Lancashire fusiliers, 403 men are reported to be "suffering from gas poisoning."

Scientists are believed to have discovered a means of combating the gas. It is planned to squirt hyposulphite of sodium in the air as the gas reaches the lines, thus destroying the deadly effects of the fumes.

No Hanoverian Orders.

The duke of Cumberland, struck off the roll of the Garter, cannot retaliate by striking Englishmen off rolls of his own as "rightful" king of Hanover. Hanoverian orders ceased to be conferred half a century ago, when Prussia extinguished the kingdom of Hanover, and the duke of Cambridge was the last surviving British Knight Grand Cross of the Guelphic Order. This order was established in 1815 by our prince regent, afterward George VI. After Hanover and Britain parted, King Ernest Augustus I established the Order of St. George, in 1839. But in 1844 we find Queen Victoria refusing permission to her subjects to accept Hanoverian orders, explaining to Lord Aberdeen that "it would not be expedient to give to the king of Hanover a power which the queen herself does not possess, viz., that of granting orders as favors, or for personal services."—London Chronicle.

Getting Nowhere.

"What a lot of energy we expend without making any actual progress!"

"Yes! Especially since the dancing craze set in!"