

tail next, then the legs and thighs, thence from the tail along the back to the shoulders, then the neck, and last from the abdomen to the breast. The feathers should be plucked not with the finger tips but with the palm of the hand and the flat of the fingers. For the wings, tail, and legs the fingers are folded back to the palm to form a circle, but the body feathers are pushed off with the palm open. Only the few feathers left adhering to the carcass are pulled out with the finger tips. Experience will enable a comparative novice to dip and pluck each bird in a minute or less, but the temperature of the water must be high enough and the immersion time just right—neither too short nor too long. Too long immersion is worse than too short, as it causes the feathers to reset and they must then be loosened a second time, in which case the skin is certain to be too softened and will tear readily.

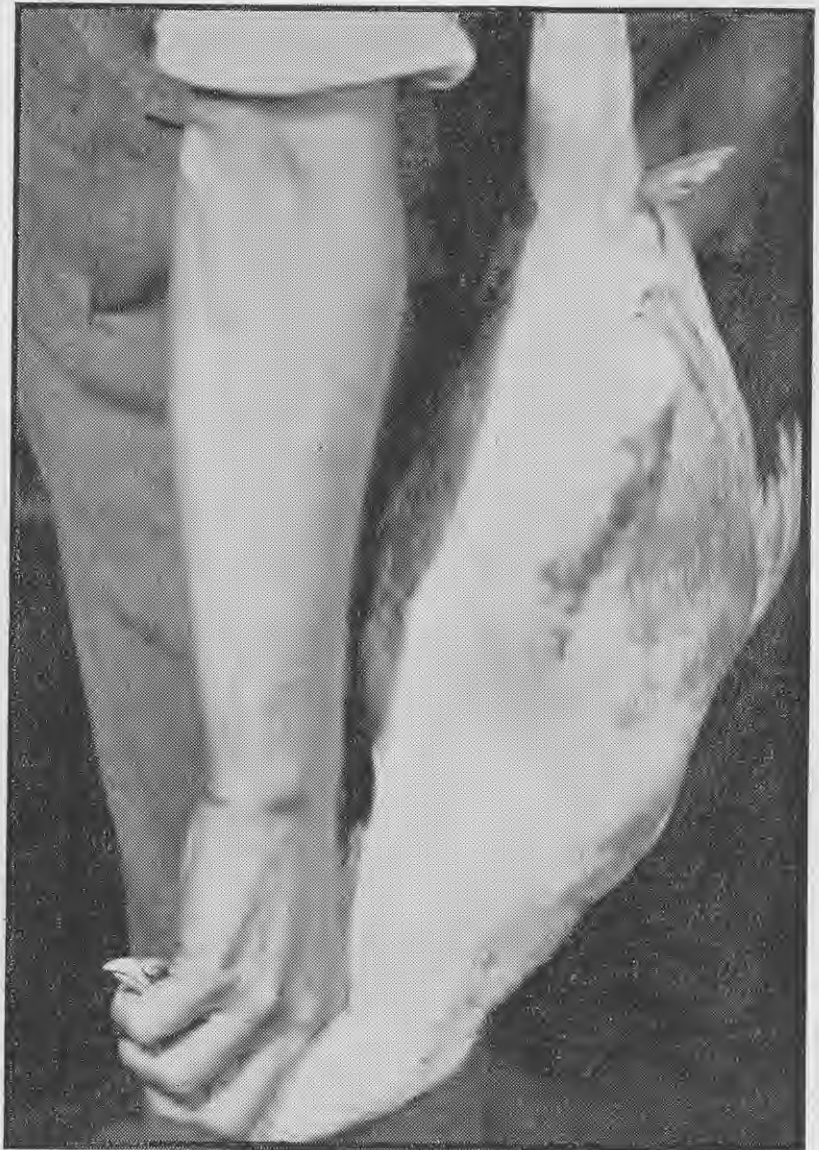
The neck can be severed and the shanks cut off at any stage after the bird has been plucked, but the most convenient time is before the "innards" are drawn. Sometimes pulling out the crop is a little difficult. If there is food in the crop, it can be taken out from the front end, but if it is empty, it can be pulled out from the rear, as it is, of course, connected to the stomach. To prevent the connecting passageway breaking under the strain of the pull, the crop should be loosened from the neck skin. With a very young bird this loosening may not be necessary, but the older the fowl the firmer is the adhesion. Instead of cutting a gaping hole at the rear of the abdomen a very small cut may be made in the side near where the last ribs join the backbone; all the organs cannot then be taken out in one pull, but they come out readily in smaller sections if first the gizzard and then the intestines are pulled away, followed by one pull for the liver and heart. The neck and the giblets—heart, gizzard, and liver, with the gall bladder and spleen cut away—should not be wasted; they can be either cooked with the carcass or made into soup.

This method of gutting enables the carcass to be self trussed without the use of string. If another small hole is made on the other side of the abdomen fairly close to the leg where it joins the body, one thighbone can be tucked into the hole on each side. The neck skin can be pulled back over the shoulders and the wings folded to grip this skin. The cook then does not have to sew up the loose skin either at the neck end or the rear end after stuffing the bird. Because the thigh bones are tucked inside the abdomen, there is less danger of the meat shrinking down the drumstick if the oven is overheated during cooking, as a slight excess of heat will be conducted quickly from the leg bones to the abdominal skin. The cooked bird then looks more attractive.

[The cooking of poultry is the subject of an article by Edith G. McNab, Rural Sociologist, on page 519.]

Preserving Eggs

Layers are just reaching the end of the flush laying season and egg prices will soon begin their seasonal rises, so if attention has not already been



[Fraser Niederer photo.]
The final action in the neck-dislocation method of killing a fowl. All the pressure is on the head, and the neck is twisted in addition to being stretched.

given to preserving a supply of eggs for next winter, now is the time to do it. This advice also applies to housewives who do not keep fowls and want to avoid an egg shortage.

The number of eggs to be preserved depends not only on the size of the family but also on the system used for replacing stock. If only hens are run, there will be a period of about 3 months from April to June with very few or no fresh eggs, but if all the hens are sold in January and the housing restocked with pullets hatched in early September, there will be very few weeks without eggs. The only way to ensure having fresh eggs all the year round is to run both pullets

and hens, but in that case the pullets must be hatched sufficiently early to permit them to come into production before the hens go off the lay, and pullets should be housed separately from hens.

Several reliable egg preservatives are on the market and the packets contain directions for use. Only clean, good-shelled, fresh eggs should be preserved. They must be free of even fine cracks in the shell. Usually vision is not enough to locate such cracks, but sound shells can be assured by lightly tapping two eggs together, when even a novice can tell the tone of a cracked shell.