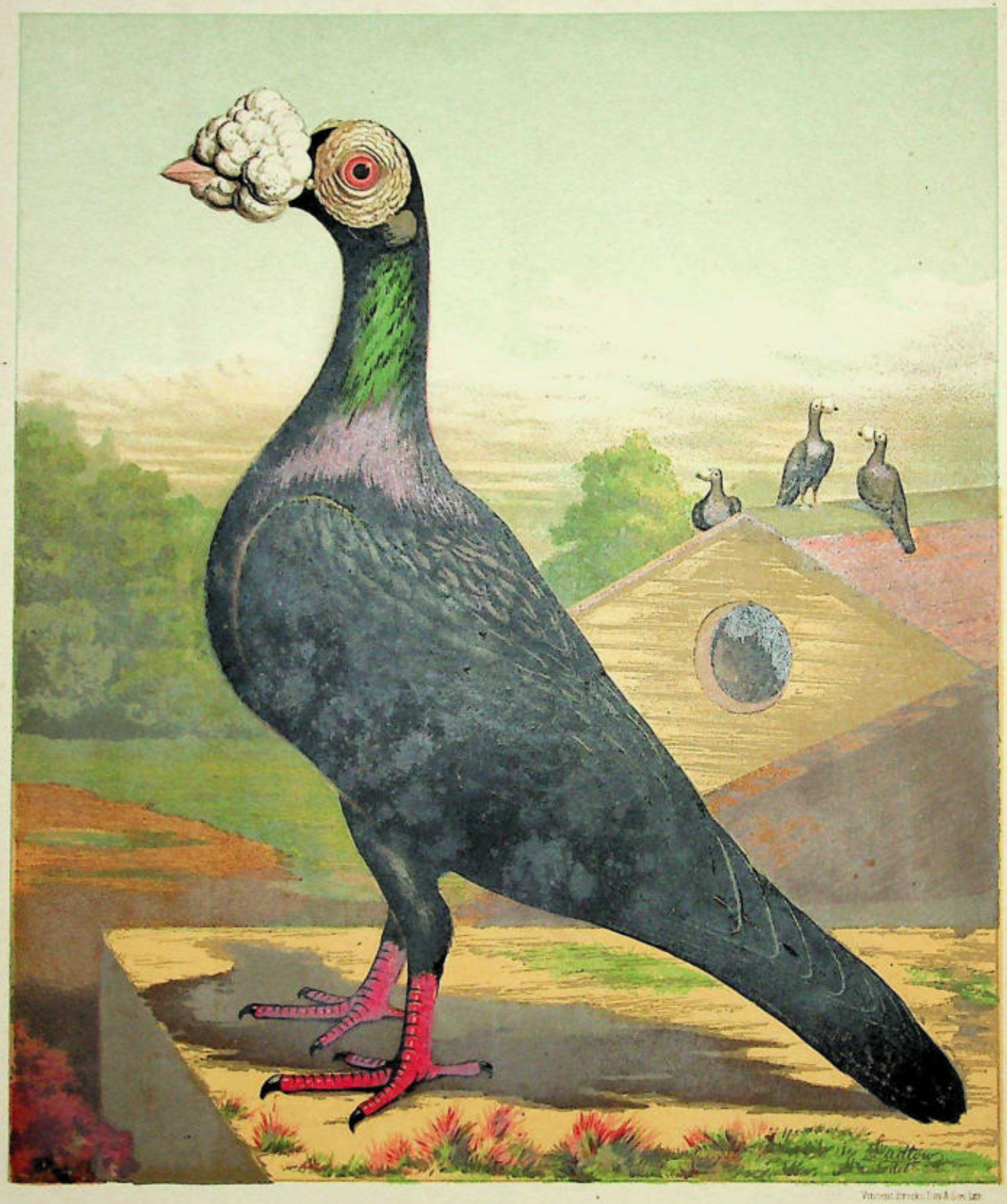


BLACK CARRIER COCK

BOOK NO.
1213

THE ILLUSTRATED BOOK OF PIGEONS.

WITH

STANDARDS FOR JUDGING.

BY

ROBERT FULTON.

EDITED BY LEWIS WRIGHT,

Author of "The Illustrated Book of Poultry," "The Practical Poultry-Keeper," "The Brahma Fowl," &c. &c.

ILLUSTRATED WITH FIFTY LIFE-LIKE COLOURED PLATES,

FROM PAINTINGS BY J. W. LUDLOW.

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PREFACE.



THE present work was undertaken chiefly in consequence of the unprecedented success of the "Illustrated Book of Poultry," and the numerous requests for the completion of that work brought by nearly every post to the Publishers for such a companion volume as that now before the reader. In such circumstances it was natural that recourse should be had to Mr. FULTON, and the final result is seen in the following pages.

Both Author and Editor have done their *best*, honestly and heartily, to provide a full and trustworthy treatise for the Pigeon Fancier. The one has desired and endeavoured to tell all he knows of the subject in its various branches, and the other has done *his* best to present that knowledge in the most effective form possible under the circumstances, with such introduction and occasional comments as might attract the reader, or give point to the Author's remarks.

It only remains to thank those who have aided us. Their names will be found in the text; but we owe special acknowledgments to Mr. J. W. Ludlow and Mr. H. P. Caridia. The former gentleman, besides the hearty manner in which he has carried out our wishes in his drawings for the plates which follow, has treated fully of large classes of birds concerning which he has special knowledge; and the latter has also fully expounded, for the first time, the true relationship and mode of breeding of a fascinating class of Pigeons hitherto but little known. Both have thus supplied a deficiency we are glad to acknowledge. We must also thank Mr. S. C. Betty and Mr. Esquilant for the interesting particulars respecting the old Pigeon Societies, which will be found in the Appendix.

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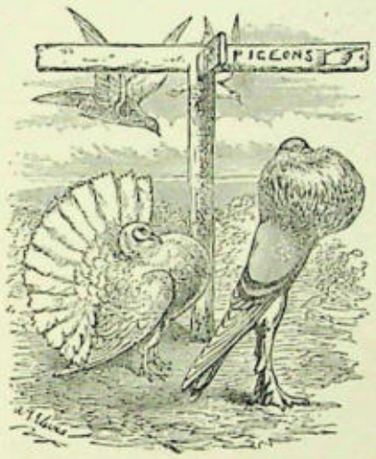


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THE ILLUSTRATED BOOK OF PIGEONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE PIGEON FANCY.



THE "fancy" for Pigeons, as it is called, stands on a different footing in many respects to the propensity for keeping Poultry; though time was—and not so very long ago either—when even a poultry-fancier was apt to be fought shy of, as being eccentric at least, if not worse. Still, poultry might be always considered as more or less useful; and in early days many a man was thankful to take refuge in the eggs they laid (but which his wife in those times never got—far too precious were they for that) as a reason for keeping the rare and costly birds in which his heart was so bound up. But such reasons cannot be alleged for keeping pigeons. Doubtless such things as pigeon-pies are not utterly unknown, and, if you happen to make one of the *first* storming party, are by no means to be despised; but any pigeon-fancier would scorn to pretend that he kept and bred his birds for such a destination as that. And hence, later even than his poultry-fancying brother, he has had to put up with sneers and insinuations about the "low" character of his pursuit, which could only have arisen from utter ignorance of what that pursuit really is, and what it is that gives to it such a strange fascination.

What it is, is very simply and easily stated. It is the cultivation and pursuit of *ideal beauty* in its highest forms; it is the constant effort to approach a standard of perfection impossible of attainment; it is progress, ever approaching completion, yet never completed, towards a beautiful shadow which ever and anon seems within reach, yet which is never grasped. It thus presents all the encouragement of success, with all the stimulus of failure; all the satisfaction of good work well done, with all the desire for greater perfection yet to be accomplished. We have heard poultry-fanciers laugh—nay, we have laughed ourselves—when their pigeon brethren have claimed for *their* pursuit a higher character, but there is truth in the claim; for the very combination of utility with beauty in fowls forbids the fancier ever forming an extreme ideal. Hence the reason why fowls which approach what is called perfection are plenty, while pigeons are so few. The one fancier seeks such development as he can get, consistent with his birds remaining useful to him; the other follows his ideal alone, untrammelled by any sublunary considerations whatever. And, hence, we find in the pigeon-fancy a numerous body of strictly amateur societies for

promoting pigeon-breeding, which have their own private shows, at which only members can compete; while the enthusiasm of poultry-fanciers has not been sufficient to maintain similar societies, except for a while in the solitary case of the Sebright Bantam, which is strictly analogous to the pigeon in the very points we are here considering.

Such statements and comparisons as these may perhaps provoke ridicule, but if so, most unjustly; for in their truth lies the secret of the engrossing interest of pigeon-breeding to those who follow it, and the reason why, if a man become fond of pigeons at all, he becomes so *very* fond of them. In them lie the reasons why such stupid prejudices as we just now mentioned are wearing away, and some of the busiest and best of men are becoming pigeon-fanciers, under the ever-increasing pressure of the battle of life in which they are engaged. They need—they crave—for something which shall afford them relief from their cares; recreation for their wearied minds—for the mind, far more than the body, needs it in these days; interest and enjoyment for their leisure hours; and they find all in the pursuit we are considering, which answers most exactly in all these respects to the culture of flowers. Like the florist, the pigeon-fancier seeks to develop what he calls the "beauties" of his pets; and artificial as his ideals are, they are scarcely, if at all, more so than those of the gardener. No one feels surprised that men should love flowers. We all understand, or rather *feel* that, next to the great fountain of mutual love and sympathy, they are God's great healers for the overwrought mind; and when we hear some "man of might" relate how, in a time of terrible crisis and strain beneath which he well-nigh sank, he believes that, under God's mercy, his brain was saved by his pelargoniums, we only smile with a smile that carries no ridicule upon it, as we remember what; at some other time, a rose or a dahlia has been to us. But natures are not all alike. Some of us cannot have flowers; some of us want more return than flowers can give. We would have their beauty; but we crave for an eye that can meet us, a pet that will welcome our approach, and show that our regular visit is joy to *both*. If only the beautiful flower it has cost us so much money, and thought, and time, to produce—if it could only turn round at our coming; if it could acknowledge gratefully the refreshing shower we bestow upon it; if it could meet glance with glance, to show us that it shared the joy of every meeting—if, we say, a flower could do all this, then it would answer, in nearly all respects, to a Fancy Pigeon. To the true fancier his pigeons are just such beautiful, rare—*living flowers*.

What! a smile again! There is no need, for what we have been trying to convey has been *felt* by the holiest and the best of men; and it will startle many to find how the very bird which forms our subject matter has been identified with even sacred history from the earliest times. It may surprise them to speak of Noah, though they will not forget the dove which returned to the ark; but the fact so simply mentioned, that the patriarch "put forth his hand, and took her," shows that it was a *tame* dove, although the unwillingness of nearly all pigeons to settle in a *new* home prevented her from finally returning to the vessel which could never have assumed that character to her.* We need not mention the place of the pigeon in sacrificial law; but we may again ask whether the exquisite lines in Psa. lxviii. 13 could have been written by any one who did not well love and study these beautiful birds, the more so when we compare them with Psa. lv. 6, in which the final clause about being "at rest" shows especially an intimate acquaintance with the strongest instinct of pigeon-nature. Indeed, from the time when

* Wilkinson relates a curious legend of the Arabs respecting this bird. They say that "the first time it returned with the olive branch, but without any indication of the state of the earth itself; but on its second visit to the earth the red appearance of its feet proved that the red mud on which it had walked was already freed from the waters; and to record the event Noah prayed that the feet of these birds might for ever continue of that colour, which marks them to the present day." We hardly need add that by "dove," almost throughout Scripture, the Common Pigeon is meant.

St. John—if it be not a beautiful myth—petted and toyed with *his* tame dove, down to the present, this gentle "fancy" has furnished relaxation, health, relief of mind—all, in fact, that we mean by "recreation"—more than anything else except the kindred passion for flowers, to those who have borne the deepest and most sacred interests of man upon their hearts. How many clergymen thus keep pigeons we should be afraid to say, and it is indeed difficult to ascertain, since most of them, naturally enough, do not exhibit; but there are many of them: and thus does a kindly "Wiltshire rector," long known to us and many of our readers, describe his first beginning as a pigeon-fancier:—

"I was a very little boy, when, having in my possession a much-studied juvenile volume, containing a history of fancy pigeons, a digest of old Girton's work, but with illustrations far superior, my imagination was often taxed as to what the real birds could be like—for in the pictures some seemed to have hoods, others very long beaks, others, again, very short ones; some had blown-out breasts, and others very extensive tails. Well, I wondered and wondered how the living birds looked, when to my surprise and delight my wonder was fully satisfied. It happened thus: I was born in a country town; therefore, living in a street, neighbours' gardens were only separated by walls, and the roofs of buildings in one garden were visible from another. One morning my eye was attracted to an outbuilding of our next neighbour, for its roof was covered with pigeons resembling the pictures in my book. While in London he had been smitten with pigeon-fancying; he was also a great poultry man, specially attached to Black Polish. Thus smitten, he had brought back several hampers full of good pigeons, for he was regardless of expense when his fancy was concerned, and as a stay-at-home man he delighted in pets. Here, then, were almost all the then-known varieties of fancy pigeons. As yet Germany had not sent us her 'toys.' On this morning our neighbour had let his birds out for the first time, and there they were bowing, cooing, strutting, pouting, or simply preening and sunning themselves on the long thatched roof of his stables, the south side of which he had covered for the birds' convenience with hurdles, whose broad and wide-apart bars made them good perches. What a sight this was to a bird-loving boy! Here were, feathered and alive, true fancy pigeons. Soon I learned the names of each variety by comparing them with my book. Many visitors came to our neighbour to see his wonderful pigeons, for such had hitherto been unknown in that far-away fen town. The result was, his example was speedily followed, and a perfect pigeon *furore* set in. Coach-loads of birds were brought from London by other tradesmen, or the young ones were bought as soon as ready, and in different parts of the town were fitted up many pigeon-lofts. Old Girton was bought and studied, and several persons became adepts in the fancy; pairing, exchanging, selling their birds, not satisfied until they obtained still better stock.

"This was in the year 1837, and during that and the five following years, while the *furore* generally lasted, I never knew so many valuable birds kept in one small town. That sight on that morning made me in heart a pigeon-fancier. How I longed to possess some; but how was it to be managed? To keep pigeons flying with a neighbour's stock 100 strong, and only ten yards distant, was clearly impossible; but when a boy sets his heart upon anything difficulties soon vanish. We happened to have an unused building, tolerably large and high, having no ceiling, and, best of all, with two sides of lattice-work, so it was light and airy. But how get the consent of the one boys call, I fear irreverently, 'Governor?' I dreaded a talk, for I might be cut short by one severe reply; so I wrote a note, an early effort of penmanship; I sealed it—by-the-way, in so doing I scorched the paper—and then I laid my note with a trembling hand on my father's desk in the surgery (for he was a doctor), where he would be sure to see and read it just after he had dined; for I knew even then that 'a hungry man was an angry man,' but the same man is

a good easy soul when toasting his toes comfortably after a good dinner. Anxiously I watched through a glass door the opening of that note and the reading it, for stay in the room I dared not; but I saw it caused a smile, and took that as a good omen, although, of course, the paternal pocket and corn-bin would of necessity have to be drawn upon. My stratagem succeeded, and after a little banter about my scorching the letter, I had a hearty ally in the one to whom I addressed it, and who then and after saved his boy from much sin by allowing him to fill the garden of the old house at home (bless its old roof-tree and the venerable one whom it yet covers) with many pets—Bantams, Hawks, Plovers, Rabbits, and at length Pigeons."

Yes: clergymen have always had a soft place in their hearts for this sort of thing. We think of one as we write, known as an occasional and successful exhibitor of—let us see—Nuns, of course; what else should they be? Another keeps and sometimes shows Fantails; but by far the larger number have their pigeons round them because they *feel the want of them*—that want which lies so deep in the human breast. Thus does another clergyman, George Crabbe, write of the pigeon and other kindred fancies—he is writing, by the way, of a tradesman's family in the busy town:—

"True pleasure hails them from some favourite source,
And health, amusement, children, wife, or friend
With life's dull views their consolations blend.
Nor these alone possess the lenient power
Of *soothing life* in the desponding hour.
Some favourite studies, some delightful care,
The mind with trouble and distresses share;
And by a coin, a flower, a verse, a boat,
The stagnant spirits have been set afloat.
* * * * * *
Oft have I smiled the happy pride to see
Of humble tradesmen in their evening glee,
When of some pleasing, fancied good possessed,
Each grew alert, was busy, and was blessed.
Whether the call-bird yield the hour's delight,
Or—magnified in microscope—the mite;
Or whether *Tumblers*, *Croppers*, *Carriers* seize
The gentle mind, they rule it and they please."

It would indeed be hard to put the whole matter better than Crabbe here expresses it. Well he understood the power of such pursuits to "soothe life;" to artfully drive out of the mind for a season trouble and distress; to "set afloat the stagnant spirits." And well, too, did he understand that the mind accessible to such influences must be essentially a "gentle" one; far away as such an assertion is from the ignorant scoff we used to hear, and for which we can imagine no reason beyond the fact that in every generation many fanciers have been artisans. But this bad old spirit is passing away: men are coming to recognise, as Crabbe did, the "gentle" character of such pleasures, and that even a working-man, so far as he manifests such tastes, and loves to cultivate such beauty as he can, is *raised* by it, and made by so much a better man. He is in the way to learn the grand lesson, that only by patience and perseverance can we ever attain the highest good; and he is preserved from many dangers by his love for the beautiful objects of his care. This last fact is not the smallest benefit, to many, of our "Fancy;" and many illustrations of it occur to us. We well remember on one occasion the warm-hearted manner in which we were received at a country house by a motherly lady whose son we had been the indirect means of leading into the kindred poultry-fancy, and expressing to him our sense of

it, considering that "fanciers" are apt to be regarded rather as nuisances in a mild way by mothers in general. "Ah," said the young man, "you don't understand. I never cared to drink; but just for society and to pass the time I used generally to go down of an evening to the village tavern. Since I had these fowls I am always home to see after them, and she is glad enough to have me, and you, and fowls and all." Very similar to this is the following, told by the "Wiltshire Rector" whose own testimony we have already quoted. On a visit to Scotland, "my Scotch host," he says, "told me that once, wanting a particular variety of pigeon, he heard where he could procure one. He found a very humble home, but a tidy, middle-aged, motherly woman. The birds were kept in a little pantry, opening into the living-room. He was bidden to wait a few minutes, as the owners, the woman's two sons, would soon be home from the foundry. A neighbour in passing noticed the woman sweeping up some sand which had blown into the room from the pigeon place, and said, 'I wonder, mistress, ye bother with they doos' (doves). 'Ay,' replied she, 'no bother to me, for they bring the laddies sune hame at night.' No sooner said than the 'laddies' came in, two stalwart, grimy sons of the forge, who preferred their birds to the public-house or the idle corner. Yes, to enjoy them, 'the laddies came sune hame at night.'"

We could add melancholy instances of what has followed when the strong natural craving for some such occupation and relaxation for the mind as we are speaking of has been unwisely thwarted; but one shall suffice, which came to our knowledge during a recent visit to Birmingham. A young man, very fond of pigeons, had married, and still endeavoured to continue his harmless "fancy." His wife, however, set herself determinedly against them; scolding at him incessantly for the time he "wasted" on them, and almost openly insulting every pigeon friend who came to see him, till at last not one such cared to call at the house. At last she carried her point, and in despair the pigeons were given up. But the lad missed too much the old interest and occupation: he took to drink, and far worse; and at the time we heard of it, the unhappy wife would have gone down on her knees could she only, by those pigeons she had so hated and opposed, have recalled her husband's lost love, society, and character.

In mentioning such a case as this, we would not be misunderstood, as if the one fault excused the other; neither would we wish to convey that all men need to keep pigeons, or to grow fruit, or to cultivate flowers. These things are not the highest even of recreations; and there are still nobler minds, who find in change of *work* all the rest they crave. Such minds will care for themselves while caring for others. But men differ; and there are multitudes who do need, and who would be in every sense *better*—better in body, mind, and spirit—for some such "gentle" pastime as that with which we are now concerned. Some have no taste for books; and many who have would be infinitely better for almost anything innocent which took them rather more away from those loved companions than otherwise. Only a few weeks before these words are written, we were interested to encounter in a well-known pigeon haunt an esteemed "minister" among the Quaker body, come to seek information as to obtaining certain of the pretty German Toys. Some might have been surprised to see a "ministering Friend" on such an errand, but we were not; any one, in fact, who observed the pale intellectual face, and who knew as we did that the owner of it had not long since been ordered entire rest for a while from all business cares, and as far as possible from all mental effort, would have felt the entire fitness of the quest, and the truth of what we are trying to convey. It is curious, but true, that thorough fanciers *generally live to be old men;* strange it is not, to all who know what human nature is.

And here we would conclude this chapter, but that some would ask us, How about those disreputable characters whose sole ambition is to "fly" pigeons; whom you see lounging about with pipe in mouth, or strolling off to the customary mile-stone to "toss" their favourites, or for

hours together in a dormer hoping to entrap some stray bird which, when caught, is not really worth one-tenth of the time it has cost? What can you say about them?

We could find many things to say about even "them." We could say, first, that even such "low" occupations are in reality higher and better than the amusements at brutal Hurlingham, where delicate ladies and high-born gentlemen will spend *their* hours in critically watching pigeons mangled for wanton sport and for lack of something better to do. We might say with equal truth, that it is better than dog-fighting or cock-fighting, which were formerly the sports such men as we are speaking of would have been engaged in, and that so far, it is an actual step upwards and a clear benefit. This will be more clearly seen some years hence, and would have been already, were not many of the "flying clubs" so mixed up with various public-houses; which keeps "flying" as an amusement much "lower" than it would otherwise be. As a proof of what we state we need only go over to Belgium, where it has been remarked that "every fourth man is a pigeon-fancier," and every occasion of public competition is attended by vast crowds interested in the results. "Flying" is there common to all ranks; yet the Dutch are not generally accounted a dissipated or reckless people; and there are signs, as we have already said, that in England also the pursuit is rapidly assuming a most elevated character. We will, however, readily admit that we cannot at present call most of these common pigeon-flyers "fanciers" in the true sense of that term. But we shall do all we can for them, too, nevertheless; and we hope many of them will be tempted to read these pages. If they do, we hope to lay hold of them by the common bond of an interest in pigeons; and that thus they may, by the beautiful examples we shall place before them, and the plain instructions we shall give, be made fanciers in reality; and acquire along with a true love for the birds, that *love of home* which those birds so strikingly show, and which is perhaps the greatest want in English artisan life.

In seeking, then, to expound thoroughly and practically every branch of the Pigeon Fancy, in the certain hope that by so doing we shall largely promote and extend it, we have the fullest conviction that if our object be in any degree attained, it will be an almost unmixed benefit. We know not, indeed, whether we may ever hope to see in England such a sight as many travellers have described with delight after visiting Venice. There the pigeons are the pets of the whole city, and any one guilty of shooting a bird would be looked upon in a light which would do the Hurlingham folk of both sexes some moral good to realise. But the grand sight is at two o'clock, when a bell is rung in the great square of St. Mark, and all the birds come down to be fed in such numbers that the air is darkened by their wings. Fear is unknown to them; and whenever a visitor purchases one of the little bags of "feed" which are offered by children on every side, he or she—the ladies especially take delight in this scene—is literally covered by the birds which have seen the little transaction, and are eager to share in the feast. It is a pretty spectacle—too pretty, we fear, ever to be an English one; for our insular habits and ways want that quick glow of feeling that can alone give it birth: we may hope, but perhaps never expect, to see such in this country. But we do hope to see the day when every booby will not seek to shoot the stray pigeon that crosses his path; or if he does, instead of boasting of it as a smart thing, may keep the fact concealed for very shame. We hope to see pigeons better understood, and as a consequence, better loved; and to this end, and with the desire to carry the love of them into many English homes, we commence our efforts towards an extension of "The Pigeon Fancy."

CHAPTER II.

HISTORICAL AND LITERARY.

THE Pigeon Fancy is of very old date, as might be shown by many extracts from the classical writers. These, however, have been so often quoted that we shall not go over the well-trodden ground again, or air once more those extracts which have so often done duty before that they must really stand now in some little need of rest. We will only remark that both Varro and Columella speak of prices being paid in their time for pairs of "good birds" which will bear some comparison with those given even now; while Pliny, in discoursing of what must have been a veritable "mania" in his day, states (see Lib. x. 53) that "many are mad with the passion for these birds, and build towers for them on the tops of their roofs, and *will relate the high breeding and ancestry of each* [how natural this reads to a fancier!] after the ancient fashion. Before Pompey's civil war," he continues, "Lucius Axius used to sell a single pair of pigeons for four hundred denarii," which, at the usual value of $7\frac{3}{4}$d. for each coin, would amount to £12 18s. 4d. With this single extract, however (which we take for its singular appositeness from Mr. Dixon's "Dovecote and Aviary"), we pass to fresher and less trodden fields, seeking rather to illustrate the strange hold these fascinating birds have kept on some of the best minds in all ages, by various allusions scattered throughout our own English literature.*

And to take first the most gigantic of them all—Shakespeare was evidently a close observer, if not an actual student of pigeons. It is indeed difficult to avoid the conclusion that he was at heart, if not in practice, a fancier, his intimate knowledge of them comes out in so many different ways. Thus, he alludes as follows to the mode in which they feed their young:—

> "CELIA. Here comes Monsieur le Beau.
> ROSALIND. With his mouth full of news.
> CELIA. Which he will put on us, as pigeons feed their young.
> ROSALIND. Then shall we be news-crammed."
>
> *As You Like It* (Act i., Scene 2).

So again, in the same play (Act iv., Scene 1):—

> "I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock pigeon over his hen."

Which may be taken, by the way, as collateral if not strictly historical proof of the great antiquity of the Barb. Such allusions as these, it is true, only prove a general acquaintance with the birds; but when the great poet makes Hamlet say—

> "But I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall
> To make oppression bitter,"

* For these extracts, and for the particulars regarding the older pigeon writers, we are almost entirely indebted to notes (chiefly in MS.) collected throughout many years' reading by the Rev. Alexander Headley, Hardenhuish Rectory, near Chippenham. He will be already known to many as the "Wiltshire rector" of the preceding chapter, in which the quotation from Crabbe is from the same kind hand. We only wish "our chaplain" could have strung his own notes together in his own way; but as this could not be, under the pressure of more important duties, we have gladly made the best of the materials so kindly placed at our disposal.

he shows a knowledge—however acquired—of the singular physiological fact that the pigeon, like the horse, has no gall-bladder.* Again, one of his inimitable comparisons is—

"As patient as a female dove,
When that her *golden couplets* are disclosed."

Now pigeons, unlike poultry, will readily leave their eggs before hatching, if disturbed; but very rarely when once the beautiful little "golden" young claim their care; then, as the same close observer elsewhere says, even "doves will peck in safeguard of their brood." It is rather significant, therefore, to find that Mr. Hotten identifies the old inn at Brentford which still goes by the name of "The Three Pigeons," and the sign of which (taken by permission from his curious "History of Signboards") forms the tail-piece to this chapter, as "being in all likelihood one of the few haunts of Shakespeare now remaining." He shows that "it was kept at one time by Lowin, one of the original actors in Shakespeare's plays, and is often named by the old dramatists." Thus—

"Thou art admirably suited for the 'Three Pigeons' at Brentford."
The Roaring Girl.

Or again, as in Ben Jonson's *Alchymist*—

"We will turn our courage to Brentford,
My bird of the night, to 'The Pigeons.'"

"The Three Pigeons" was, however, we are told by the same authority, a far from uncommon sign for taverns in old times, and was also employed by others besides innkeepers. Bacon, the famous hairdresser immortalised by the *Spectator*, lived at the sign of "The Three Pigeons," in St. Clement's Churchyard, so late as 1740, when he cut the boyish locks of Pennant; in 1663 it was the sign of a bookseller in St. Paul's Churchyard; and in 1698 of John Newton, also a bookseller, over against Inner Temple Gate.†

Passing away from the great dramatist, allusions showing not only notice of, but a genuine delight in and appreciation of pigeons crowd thick and fast upon us. The pages of poets, divines, philosophers—all classes bear out our remarks in the last chapter, and show that in all alike the best and most gifted have shared our love for these beautiful birds. Crabbe we have already quoted from. A little before he wrote, there wrote thus from a little Buckinghamshire village to the Rev. W. Unwin, another refined poet and gentleman, known to all English-speaking folk as the "gentle" Cowper (note Crabbe's "gentle mind"). "I have," says he, "eight pairs of tame pigeons. When I first enter the garden in the morning I find them perched upon a wall, waiting for their breakfast, for I feed them always upon the gravel walk. If your wish should be accomplished, and you should find yourself furnished with the wings of a dove, I shall undoubtedly find you amongst them. Only be so good, if that should be the case, to announce yourself by some means or other; for I imagine your crop will require something better than tares to fill it." Dr. Doddridge too—revered alike by Churchman and Dissenter—in one of his letters, gentle and playful as Cowper's own, writes to a friend: "You know I love a country life, and here I have it in perfection. I am roused in the morning by the chirping of sparrows, the lowing of kine, the bleating of sheep, and the cooing of pigeons." And Mary Russell Mitford, writing to Mrs. Browning—that highest and most gifted of all female poets—thus discourses on the same theme. "I love to see my tame pigeons feed at my window, and the saucy hen tap at the glass if the casement be shut. She likes to come in and sit on the innermost ledge of the window-sill, and listen, and turn her pretty top-knotted head to this side and that while I talk to her. This

* This same curious fact is also alluded to by old Fuller.
† Hotten's "History of Signboards," pages 218-19.

pleasure I owe to you, having taken to the home-loving, domestic pigeons as a rustic imitation of your doves; and they blend well with my flower-garden." This passage carries one back irresistibly to poor Mary Queen of Scots, who, in a letter dated 1574, thus writes to a friend abroad: "I beg you to procure me pigeons, red partridges, and hens from Barbary. I intend to endeavour to rear them in this country, or to feed them in cages as I do all the small birds I can come by—a pastime for a prisoner."

We must not, however, linger in the tempting fields of English literature, and a few more quotations must suffice. Thus does Tom Hood—he who sung the "Song of the Shirt"—connect pigeons with a *home*:—

"No dog was at the threshold, great or small;
No *pigeon on the roof*—no household creature—
No cat demurely dozing on the wall—
Not one domestic feature."

And how exquisitely does Tennyson, in "The Gardener's Daughter," bring in the habits of pigeons to illustrate the play of feeling he is describing!

"We spoke of other things: we coursed about
The subject most at heart, more near and near,
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round
The central wish, until we settled there."

Tennyson had evidently watched the dovecote with an observant eye, for the delight the inmates take in basking in the sun—especially the morning sun—had not escaped him. Thus he writes in his "Princess:"—

"Back again we crost the court
To Lady Psyche's: as we entered in
There sat along the forms, *like morning doves*,
That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,
A patient row of pupils."

Whether Pope ever kept fancy pigeons is uncertain; but from his known acquaintance with old John Moore, the first authentic writer upon them, to whom he addressed the curious lines quoted by-and-by, he must have known much about them. A contemporary of Pope—John Gray—certainly had "an eye" for their beauties; for in his "Epistle to the Earl of Burlington" he writes:—

"Then Turnham Green, which dainty pigeons fed,
But feeds no more, for Solomon is dead."

To which is added in a note, "Solomon was a man famed for keeping pigeons." But farther back still, going back in our gossipy review beyond our oldest pigeon-writer (Moore), midway almost to that gigantic genius with whom we began, we may make just two extracts from dear, garrulous, we fear most unprincipled, but certainly most entertaining, Samuel Pepys, who must assuredly have been sent into the world for the express purpose of keeping a diary. In the first, speaking of the effects of the Great Fire of London, he clearly proves the existence of pigeon-fanciers—ay, and of "dormers" too—even in those days; for he writes, "Among other things the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and barbuies till they burned their wings and fell down." In the second, dated September 11, 1661, he writes the following, which will go to the very hearts of all cat-plagued pigeon-fanciers: "To Dr. Williams, who did carry me into his garden, where he hath abundance of grapes; and he did show me a dog

that he hath do kill all the cats that come thither to kill his pigeons, and do afterwards bury them, and do it with so much care that they shall be quite covered, that if the tip of their tail hangs out, he will take up the cat again and dig the hole deeper, which is very strange: and he tells me that he do believe he hath killed a hundred cats." A dog of this breed would fetch a fabulous price nowadays.

Further extracts would fall flat after this; so with Pepys for a *bonne bouche*, and only a passing reference to Dickens' introductory chapter to "Barnaby Rudge," we will pass on at once from allusions to pigeons in general English literature, to the few remarks it seems desirable to make upon those writers who have specially treated the subject.

The first of these—at least the first of whom any record now remains—was John Moore, who published in 1735 "The Columbarium." This work is now very scarce, only two or three copies being known to be in existence; but it can be seen in the British Museum. Moore was an apothecary, described as living "at the 'Pestle and Mortar,' in Lawrence Poultney's Lane, the first great gates on the left hand from Cannon Street, who formerly lived at the 'Pestle and Mortar' in Abchurch Lane, London." His book contains some sixty pages; and it is remarkable, and no small testimony to the accurate knowledge of the author, that it not only formed the basis of nearly every other work since published, but that his descriptions are found generally accurate even at the present day, with the exception that most points are now somewhat more developed, so that the Carrier's face, for instance, is now longer than Moore described it. There are, however, no directions in Moore in regard to matching for breeding; some observations on the general management of pigeons and mere descriptions of the varieties then known making up his work. It is also to be noticed that in this early work the Almond Tumbler is dismissed with a brief description of a few lines.

Moore, as his book shows, was evidently an educated man; and even his prescriptions for diseases, though most of them are now discarded, are fully abreast of the general medical knowledge of the time. He was a celebrated character in more ways than one, being, as appears, the proprietor and inventor of a worm-powder which had great success and notoriety. It was in this character that Pope addressed to him ten stanzas of verses, by no means uncomplimentary in expression, if indeed they may not be taken to show almost a personal acquaintance and friendship. One of these stanzas is somewhat too coarse for quotation, but another—the last but one of the ten—was transcribed by the "Gentleman's Magazine" in the following short notice of Moore's death, which is by this brief obituary record fixed as occurring in 1737, only two years after the publication of his work. "April 12, Mr. John Moor, of Abchurch Lane, the noted worm doctor. He will now shortly verify Mr. Pope's witty observations, viz.:—

'O learned friend of Abchurch Lane,
Who sett'st our entrails free,
Vain is thy art, thy powder vain,
Since worms shall eat e'en thee.'"

Next to Pope's "learned friend"—a style of address which may occasion some curious comparisons—comes the unknown author, or rather editor, of "A Treatise on Domestic Pigeons," published by C. Barry, Fenchurch Street, London, in 1765. We call him the editor, because his "Treatise" is chiefly a reprint of Moore, without acknowledgment. His work is dedicated to John Mayor, Esq., and is therefore quoted by Eaton, in his reprint of Moore, as "Mayor." It has thirteen wood engravings, which Moore had omitted, stating that as he found good "icons" (by which queer name he calls them) would cost more than he could afford, he would not employ bad

ones: and we confess that those in the "Treatise" rather commend his judgment than otherwise. The "Treatise" is not however entirely reprint. In place of the few lines of Moore, it devotes a whole, though short, chapter to the Almond Tumbler, and refers also to a "Standard" for this breed published as a separate print for sixpence. It also notices for the first time the kindred varieties of Baldheads and Beards, and the Black and Yellow Mottles. The so-called "Lace" Pigeon—the absurdity of which name must hence be charged upon the "Treatise"—and the Frill-back are also described for the first time, and there is a fuller description of the Owl. The most interesting point about the "Treatise," however, is the evident advance in favour and popularity of the beautiful Almond Tumbler and its various short-faced relatives.

After the "Treatise," and we believe only a year or two after, came the "New and Compleat Pigeon Fancyer," by Mr. Daniel Girton, of the County of Bucks. The British Museum Catalogue, it is true, gives as the probable date 1800; but adds a mark of doubt, and there is very strong circumstantial evidence to show that it must have been much earlier. It is stated on the title-page to be "printed for Alexander Hogg, of 16, Paternoster Row;" and as we have the dates of Bibles and other works issued by this publisher at and soon after 1763, and we also find a fancier named Girton referred to by name both in Moore and the "Treatise," we regard it as almost certain that the date could not well have been later than 1770. However this may be, the work in question for a long time furnished the standard book on pigeons for all fanciers, and many editions were printed, which are still in request. Countless other books, not worthy of separate mention, are based upon more or less full extracts from Girton. He reprints most of the illustrations from the "Treatise," and in his notes on fancy pigeons follows that work; but gives a tolerable amount of new matter on the practical management of the pigeon-loft, and also describes two new varieties, called the Chinese Pigeon and the Smiter. The demand for, and the frequent reprints of this work, show conclusively the rapid growth of the pigeon-fancy in general popularity; and an incidental proof of the same fact may be found in a singular allusion to it by Southey, in "The Doctor." In that curious work, in the chapter on "Onomatology, or Names," Southey speaks of the many names given to the numerous varieties of fruits, and then proceeds as follows: "Hath not Daniel Girton, of Bucks, in his 'Compleat Pigeon Fancyer,' wherein he points out to the gentlemen of the fancy the foul marks and real perfections of every valuable species of fancy birds and toys which in his time were bred in England, France, and Holland: hath not Daniel Girton, I say (though Boswell thought that a sentence so formed as to require an 'I say' to keep it together resembled a pair of ill-mended breeches, and candidly acknowledged the resemblance in his own—the sentence I mean he was penning, not the breeches he wore), hath not Daniel Girton, I say, particularly enumerated in his title-page among the varieties of such fancy birds, 'Pouters, Carriers, Horsemen, Dragons, Croppers, Uplopers, Pouting Horsemen, Fantails, Chinese Pigeons, Lace Pigeons, Tumblers, Runts, Spots, Laughers, Trumpeters, Jacobins, Capuchins, Nuns, Shakers, Helmets, Ruffs, Finikins, Turners, Barbs, Mahomets, Turbits, Owls, Smiters?'—concluding the imperfect enumeration with an '&c.'" In this "old breeches" sentence two things are to be noticed: first, that in the enumeration of names Girton's title-page is followed word for word; and, secondly, that the mention of "Toys" is conclusive proof of Southey's having read the *inside* of the book as well.

The next work was an original one, and is a still further testimony to the growing popularity of the Short-faced Tumbler, being entitled, "A New and Compleat Treatise on the Art of Breeding and Managing the Almond Tumbler." Of this work two editions appear to have been published, and a copy of the first edition, by the kindness of our friend the "rector," lies before us as we write. It is "printed for the author by W. Williams, No. 35, Chancery Lane, London, price 5s., 1802," the second edition being published in 1804. It is anonymous, but is stated by

Eaton to be written by a gentleman named Windus, a "Solicitor, Southampton Buildings, Holborn." This is a thoroughly practical work, fully up to the breeding knowledge of that day; and the coloured steel plate of an Almond given as a frontispiece, though most modestly spoken of by the author, is much the best representation of a pigeon which had yet appeared. It was evidently drawn and corrected with the greatest care; and it is therefore interesting to observe that in this early portrait the flights are *not* carried, as at present, below the tail.

From the date of this treatise on the Almond Tumbler, there seems to have been a long pause until 1851, when two books appeared. "The Dovecote and Aviary" was published by Murray, its author being E. S. Dixon, who is also known as the writer of "Ornamental Poultry." Mr. Dixon was a scholar and a gentleman, besides being a most lively writer to boot; but he was no genuine pigeon-fancier, and wrote much more from a naturalist's point of view than any other. His book is accordingly of little or no value to the fancier, but the charms of its style are very great; and it is no wonder that much of its substance and that of another work by the same author should have been reprinted in a cheap form, under the title of "Pigeons and Rabbits." This little work is stated on the title-page to be by E. S. Delamer; but this appears to have been merely a singular *nom-de-plume* adopted by Mr. Dixon, when, residing by the sea and discontinuing his own proper signature, he devised the ingenious one of "De-la-Mer." In the unabridged work published by Murray we find, as far as we know, the first mention of the Archangel Pigeon.

Far different was the book, or rather books—for there were two of them—published at the same time by Mr. John Matthews Eaton. Dixon was, as we have already said, a gentlemen and a scholar, but no fancier; Eaton was assuredly no scholar, but a most thorough fancier. First in order was his treatise on the Almond Tumbler, followed immediately by that on fancy pigeons generally. The first of these was simply a reprint of Windus, with additions and numerous notes of his own; the second book, besides this, contained a reprint of Moore's book (which is thus preserved to us almost exactly in its original shape), with comments from "Mayor," Girton, and also by himself. Although therefore gross plagiarisms, if judged by the title-pages, they were not so in reality, the copied works being honestly enough avowed in the text itself. To both the Almond Tumbler and the first edition of the larger work was prefixed a coloured steel plate of an Almond as frontispiece, which represents a standard bird of the present day; but in 1858 a second edition of the larger work was published, which contained much additional matter (chiefly in the shape of notes taken from Mr. Brent), and additional coloured plates, all which were drawn by an artist himself a fancier—Mr. Wolstenholme. Some of these plates are exceedingly good—especially the short-faces; but others, such as the Pouter and the Carrier, are far from satisfactory. As for the text—by which we mean Eaton's text, or his own original notes—it simply defies description. Illiterate, rambling, often ungrammatical, and always ill-arranged, we yet never knew any one begin reading them without going right through to the end, such a strange charm is there in the author's odd but enthusiastic observations. One of these, in which he says, "I am not aware there is anything under the sun that you can imagine or conceive that is so truly beautiful and elegant in its proportions or symmetry of style as the shape or carriage of the Almond Tumbler (save lovely woman)," has been too often quoted not to be well known: but it is only a sample of many others; and he breaks off continually in the most diverting way to make either queer remarks, or to mention subjects quite unconnected with his own. Thus, in one place he tells us "all he knows" about bees, which consists in a humorous relation of how he once got severely stung through looking for the sting in the proboscis, and carefully guarding that quarter, when, of course, the insect improved the shining hour by using the real weapon to good purpose; since which, Eaton says, "whenever I see a bee I

am lost in wonder and astonishment at it." Near the end of his work, again, he makes the following quaint remark (which we may heartily commend in spite of its quaintness) : "It will avail you nothing whether the author thinks little or much upon the subject, provided you do not think for yourself. If you have never thought before, and the perfections or imperfections of the fine properties of the Almond Tumbler cause you to begin thinking, the Fancy will be a blessing to you, for you cannot think hard or deeply on the Almond Tumbler without thinking on more important matters, which may lead to the salvation of your soul;" going on from that to a really religious exhortation of twelve lines, which—odd as it is in such a place—is quite seriously meant, and hence far above ridicule. Part of it we may add, perhaps. "Should you," he says, "give up attending the house of God through your hobby for pigeons, give your pigeons up at once." "Happy is the man that forsakes his vices, and becomes an enthusiastic admirer of the Almond Tumbler!" is the extraordinary sentiment—borrowed, we believe, from Moore—which concludes the work of John Matthews Eaton.

Mr. Wolstenholme also engraved for Eaton six *life-size* coloured portraits of pigeons. Most of these are grandly done, and some, such as the Carrier and Short-faced Tumbler, can hardly be improved upon as standards even now; but the Pouter is again bad, and evidently neither Eaton nor Wolstenholme understood this variety at all.

With Eaton the older writers on Pigeons may be said to conclude, and we come fairly into modern days. To speak of any recently-published works would be ungracious; but we shall not be contradicted if we say that since Eaton little has been added of any practical value, all—even the most pretentious—being strangely silent just upon the very points concerning which a fancier most desires information; namely, the matching and selection of birds for breeding the most perfect specimens. The writers seem all to have forgotten that even old Moore told us with very fair accuracy and minuteness what Pigeons *ought* to be, and that what is now chiefly required is to instruct fanciers in the details of *producing* them. It does not become us thus early to make too large promises; but to supply this want will be the chief object of the following pages.



SIGN OF "THE THREE PIGEONS"

CHAPTER III.

THE PIGEON LOFT.

THE peculiar habits of Pigeons have, of course, to be studied, in considering the accommodation to be provided for them. Unlike fowls, they pair and bring up their own young until old enough to feed themselves; and unlike the majority of birds, they breed so often and so rapidly throughout the season, that the hen generally lays and commences to sit again before the young ones are able to dispense altogether with parental care, which is accordingly continued to them by the cock-bird, who is in this and other respects "a perfect model" of a father, and who attends to the young while the hen broods over the new eggs. All this will be more fully described in our next chapter, on the General Management of Pigeons; and we are only so far concerned with it here, that it may be clearly seen how the very nature and whole habits of the birds demand for each pair a

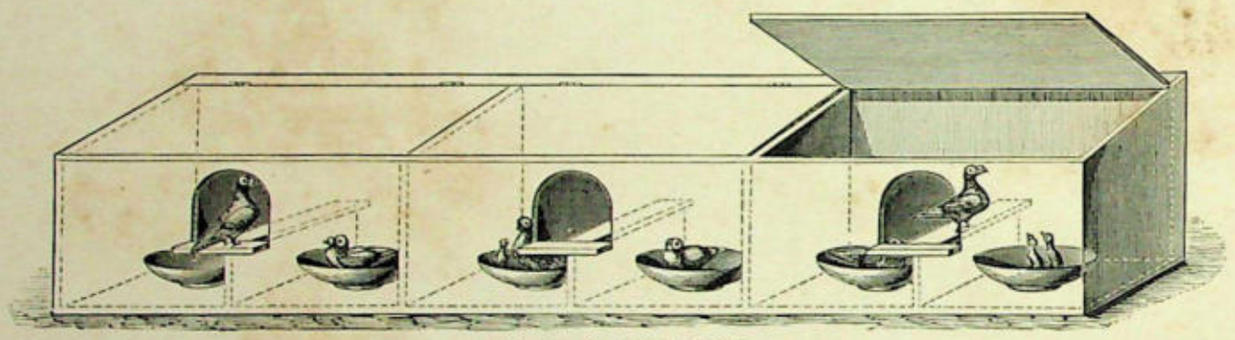


Fig. 1.—NESTING BOXES.

double breeding-place or nest-box. This rule is in fact universal: from the largest "dovecote," tenanted by scores of the commonest pigeons, to the most carefully planned accommodation for the most valuable birds, a double nesting-place for every pair of breeding birds is the fundamental condition for their comfort and thriving.

Such nesting-places admit, of course, many variations in construction, and we will describe first of all the very best arrangement known to us, and of which we have learnt the advantages by experience during many years. It is clearly represented in Fig. 1, which shows three of these breeding-boxes, each of which is two feet wide. These are meant to be set *on the ground;* and the hole by which the birds enter is eight inches from the floor at the bottom, and is furnished with a small landing. From the centre of its lower side runs a low partition, dividing the nest-box into two boxes of a foot square; and along the top of this partition is nailed a strip of wood three inches wide, to furnish a perch or landing between the boxes, the partition thus resembling in section the letter T. The two compartments will then be used in the following manner:—When the first pair of young ones are old enough to be left to the care of the father, the hen will go over into the other (in which the owner should take care to have provided another nest-pan) and lay her eggs there. She will then be able to sit quite undisturbed while the cock feeds the

young ones; and these latter not being able to see the mother on account of the partition, will remain in their own nest-pan quite contented until they are able to get upon the division; by which time, as it is eight inches high, they will be quite able to manage for themselves. But in a common nest-box, where there is nothing to hide the mother and other birds from view, it is constantly found, that no sooner has the cock gone away after feeding them than they try to get to the mother, and often get out of their own nest-pan before they are strong enough to get back again. It matters little whether they manage to get into the mother's nest-pan or not; for if they do they teaze and unsettle her so much that her own eggs are probably spoiled, and if not they probably die from being exposed. For although the cock will do his best, and will probably sit upon one and try to keep it warm, the other is almost sure, if both are out, to crawl into a corner out of his reach, and be found dead; while, if one remain in the nest, it is quite impossible for him to cover both. Sometimes the hen will come off to assist by covering the other, but the result of this too

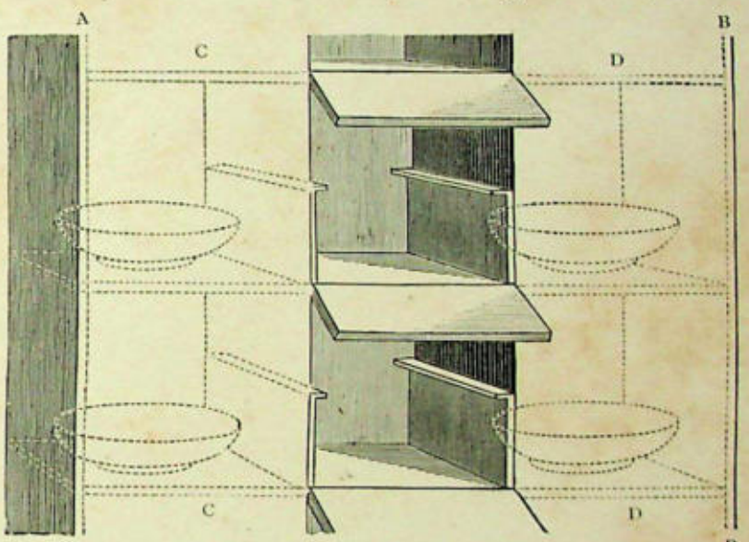


Fig. 2.—Nests for Flying Pigeons.

is that her own eggs are destroyed. All this is prevented by the arrangement we have figured and described. The lids of the boxes are hinged, to admit of lifting up either for cleaning, or to examine if the hen has laid, or for other purposes which do not need explanation. The lids should be of a good slant, to prevent the birds resting on them.

For all highly-bred pigeons, these or any other kind of nest-boxes should, if possible, be *upon the ground*, as breeding upon shelves off the floor often causes much mischief. If her nest be placed high, a highly-bred hen, when on the point of laying, will often be unable to fly up to it; and if the cock should see her in this predicament, instead of helping her, he will, in his anxiety to drive her to nest, peck at her until she lays upon the floor, unless the owner should happen to see and lift her up to her place. Again, the hen frequently becomes weak for some days before hatching, so that she cannot get up to her eggs in time; and the young ones, from being chilled, either actually die in the eggs, or are too weak to break the shells. We have known multitudes of young pigeons die in the shells in this manner, and as there is nothing apparently to account for it, it has been a mystery to the owners. Very often the cock is blamed, especially if rather an old bird, simply because no other cause can be thought of; when the real fault has been in the arrangement of the loft, which obliged the hen to fly up to a height beyond her strength. Again, when the breeding-boxes as commonly arranged are too high from the ground, it often happens

that when the young pigeons are old enough to come out of their pan, they fall on to the floor, when they are pretty sure to "come to grief," either by breaking their legs with the fall, or, if they escape that, from being attacked by the other birds in the loft, which are often most spiteful to such unfortunate youngsters, and peck them in a frightful manner.

Strong-flying breeds, many Toys, and the commoner hardy pigeons generally, need less care in this respect. For them it will be sufficient to fit up shelves a foot wide and a foot apart, as in Fig. 2, the shelves being separated by the partitions A and B into breeding divisions about three

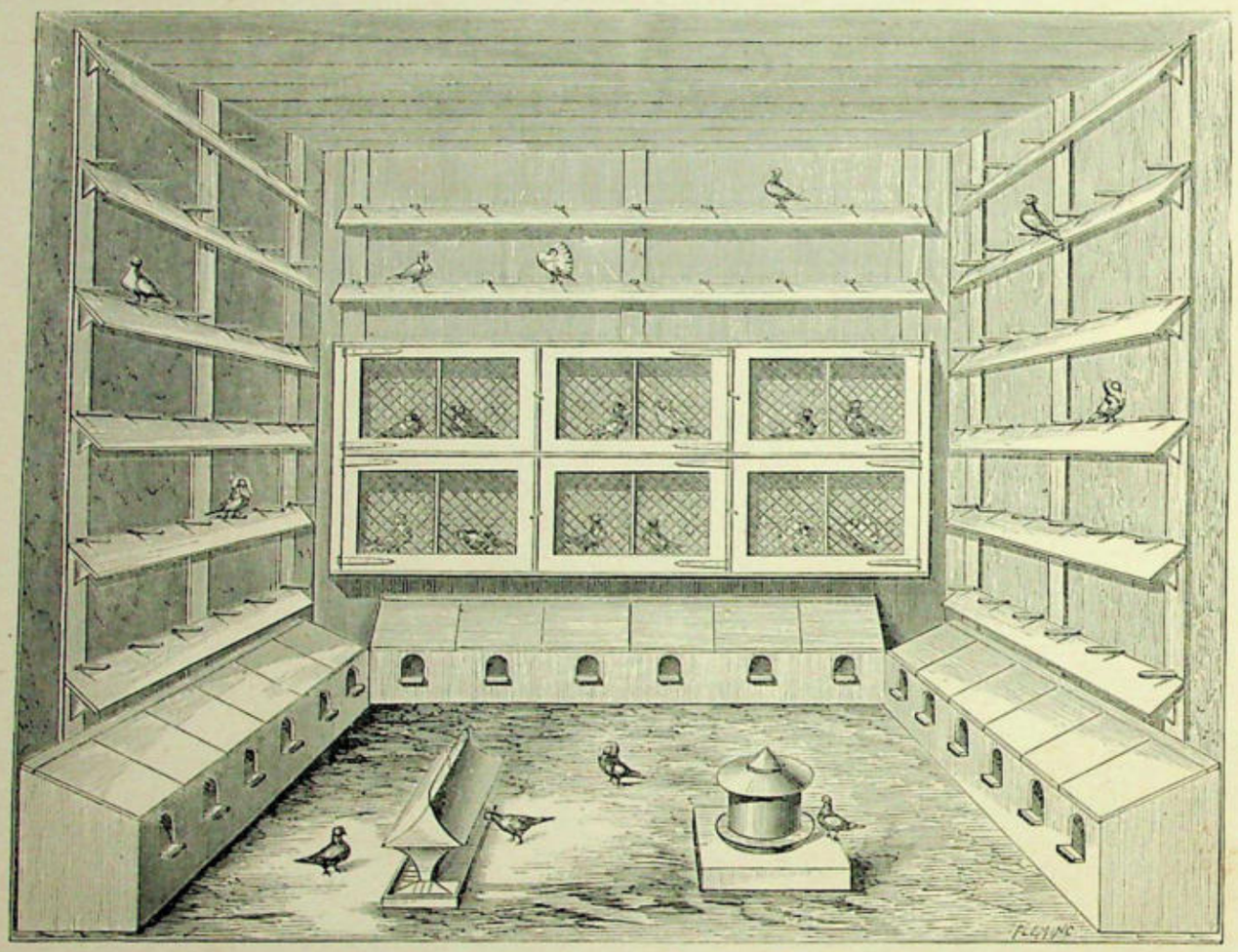


Fig. 3.—GENERAL LOFT.

feet wide, and boards, C D, a foot wide being nailed perpendicularly over the ends, to form shelters or screens for the nest-pans. Even in this case, however, it will be better to provide movable partitions about eight inches high, with which to enclose the nest entirely when the hen leaves the young ones, for the reasons already given, and also to prevent the young ones falling off the shelf on to the floor. We prefer these partitions to be movable rather than fixed, as they are only needed at the times specified, and their removal gives less trouble in examining the birds or in cleaning at other times, and also gives to each division more the appearance of a *single home*, which is very desirable, to avoid the intrusion of other birds. If slanting boards be fixed to the front of the shelves, as shown in the figure, and more fully described in speaking of Fig. 4 the

accommodation for such strong-flying breeds will hardly be susceptible of further improvement; but, for the reasons given, is *not* suitable for the "high class" fancy birds.

The best general plan we can suggest for a moderate-sized loft, suitable for keeping any of the "high-class" pigeons, except Carriers and Pouters (which require somewhat special accommodation, to be fully explained when treating of these varieties), is shown in Fig. 3, which represents a loft about fourteen feet square, and containing arrangements of the most perfect kind for eighteen breeding pairs of pigeons. The nest-boxes are of the kind already described, and are upon the floor as there recommended; at the back, over the nest-boxes, are six pens for matching birds, which will be further described in the next chapter, while the sides of the loft, and the back wall over the matching-pens, are fitted up with perches, the construction of which is more clearly shown in Fig. 4. They are contrived on a plan described some years since by Mr. Noye, of Birmingham, slightly modified, and form the very best perches for all kinds of pigeons except the two breeds already mentioned, the provision for which will be treated of in the proper place. They are formed

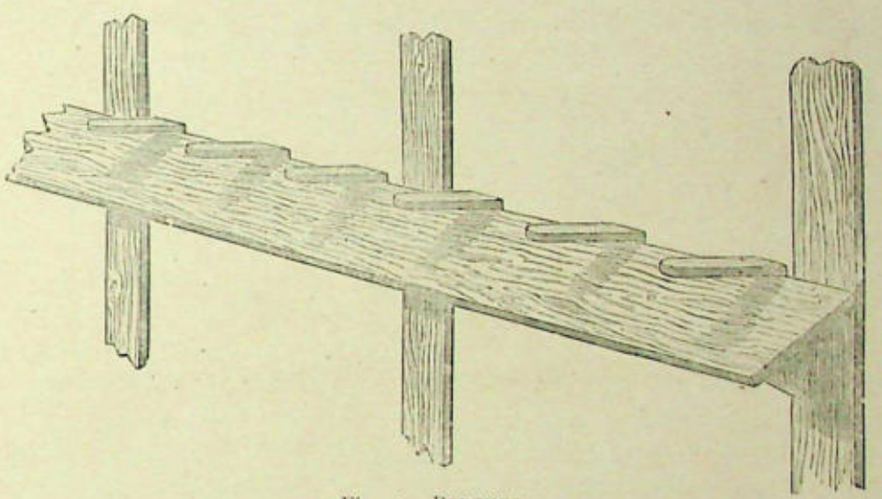


Fig. 4.—Perches.

by nailing on triangular brackets fastened to the wall, or to perpendicular uprights fixed to it, boards ten inches wide, planed smooth on the upper side, so as to secure them in a slanting position, as represented in the figure. On the top edges of these boards are nailed or screwed, in a horizontal position, slips of wood about four and a half inches long, by two and a half inches wide, with the corners rounded off to prevent injury while flying. These strips or perches must be not less than ten inches apart, so that one bird cannot possibly peck at another whilst perched; but of course the total number of perches must depend upon the size of the loft and the number of birds it is meant to accommodate, and there should not be many more perches than there are meant to be birds. The boards catch all the droppings, and prevent any bird soiling the plumage of the one underneath it or on the floor, while the slant prevents them from being perched or walked upon. It gives a little more trouble in construction if the perches are fixed in a separate length of wood, fixed rather above the slanting board; but it saves a little trouble afterwards in cleaning, as a scraper can then be drawn with one sweep along each board. This was the plan adopted by Mr. Noye, who used round perches instead of flat; but the pigeon not being a perching bird, and its feet only adapted for flat surfaces, the flat strips here described will be found preferable.

The best nest-pans are those made of rough earthenware, of the shape shown in Fig. 5. The size for ordinary pigeons is eight inches across; for Carriers, Pouters, and Runts, ten inches.

They should be sufficiently heavy to give no fear of overturning under the weight of the birds perched upon them. For lining the nest, nothing can equal good pine sawdust. Straw, hay, or matting always harbour vermin; but if only sawdust be employed in the pans, and also kept to the depth of an inch over the whole floor of the nesting-places, while these last and the nest-pans themselves are well painted with good oil paint, there will be hardly any trouble from insects at all. Sawdust should also be spread over the whole floor of the loft, to the depth of at least half an inch. This depth is necessary, because if spread too thinly, directly any of the birds rise to fly, or even flap their wings, they will blow it all into places on the floor, besides causing it to enter the eyes of other birds, and thus producing inflammation; but if kept half an inch deep none will rise, but all will lie "dead" on the floor. Strewn in this way, nothing is so warm to the feet of the pigeons, nothing keeps them so clean, and nothing gives so little trouble; for unless far too many birds are crowded together, it is only necessary to use a rather fine garden rake once, or at most twice, a week over the top of the sawdust, to remove all the droppings, and have the floor nice and clean again; while it will only be needful to renew the sawdust itself once in every five to eight weeks, according to the number of the birds. We are, as before, supposing the loft not overcrowded;

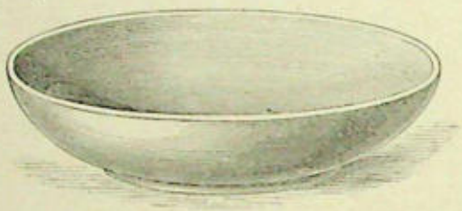


Fig. 5.—Nest-pan.

if there are too many birds the sawdust must be renewed oftener. Such use of sawdust on the floor and in the breeding-boxes *is a sure preventive of insect vermin*, unless the loft itself be put up so roughly as to give the insects harbour in the walls. This is easily prevented by smoothing all inside work off, painting the nest-boxes and pans, and occasionally white-liming the interior of the loft itself. Ticks, lice, fleas, &c., are dreadful torments to pigeons when allowed to accumulate, which is always the case if the droppings are allowed to remain in heaps, as is so often the case; and many fanciers will hardly believe that they can be so easily set at defiance by such simple means. We can, however, state positively that such is the case.

If sawdust cannot be had, the best substitute is good gravel. Even this will be found some check upon insects, though it will not prevent their appearance; but it is very far inferior to the sawdust in all respects. We hardly need state that the sawdust, when finally removed, makes capital manure. The droppings themselves if sifted clean, are generally gladly purchased by tanners, and also by florists, who soak them in water to employ as liquid manure.

Whether the plan here described, or any other, be adopted, the loft should if possible front to the south, as pigeons always thrive much better with a southerly aspect; and if it can be managed should open into an aviary, or "flight," as pigeon-fanciers call it, enclosed with wire-netting. This is not absolutely necessary if the loft be tolerably roomy, well-lighted, and amply ventilated without draught; which last is highly important, for pigeons are nearly all perfectly hardy as regards cold, and will care for themselves as regards rain, but are tender—at least high-class varieties—in regard to draught. But if an open flight can be given, say for six, nine, or twelve feet out in front, it will be much better; in which case a moderate-sized window to the loft will be sufficient, and there may be two holes cut in the doors, four and a

half inches wide, and furnished with small landings, to give ingress and egress to the pigeons. These holes should either be furnished with traps, or be so shaped that they can be exactly closed by a small stone fountain placed on the landing. For the aviary two-inch mesh will be sufficient, and the larger space that can be afforded the better. Whatever the space be, however, it should be furnished round the sides only with shelves or boards a few inches wide, and placed a few inches from the wire, in order that the pigeons may not damage their tails in turning round. We say round the sides especially, as it is very foolish and unadvisable to have any perches crossways, or anywhere in the middle; such would not only prevent the birds making the most of their space, and having a good fly from one end of their enclosure to the other, but we are certain, from many observations, that the birds striking against such obstacles in their flight is a frequent cause of wing disease. The floor of the aviary must be kept as clean and free from any dampness as possible, especially as the bath will always cause some water to be spilt; hence it is best either laid in gravel or concrete, or asphalted; and it will be all the better if it be covered over, and only open at the sides, as this both keeps off much wet, and also the power of the scorching sun, which spoils the colour of many breeds. Pigeons are, it is true, very fond of the sun; but if the sides are open, and furnished with boards for perching and promenading as we advise, they can always have this at pleasure, without suffering from that scorching light which does the mischief. It is only the paler-coloured reds, yellows, and duns which thus suffer from the sun, becoming not only still paler, but mottled in colour all over the body, giving a very unpleasant and blotchy appearance. If the colours be a good sound dark red, or a really deep and rich yellow, or a dark dun, and the same shade throughout (that is, both shoulders, rump, and thighs all one shade of colour) the sun will not injure them at all.

In a town, however, the aviary will need not only covering, but even protecting at both ends, only leaving the front open, whatever colours be kept. If not, it will be almost impossible to keep the birds clean; for in the morning especially the soot will drift or fall into the aviary and cause all the plumage to become dirty. Now good plumage is of great importance; for many judges are so partial to it that they will even pass over really fine quality for fine condition; and if the aviary be covered in both on the top and sides, the city fancier will find that he is able to keep his birds in almost if not quite as good condition as his country rival, which will abundantly repay him the cost of a properly-constructed aviary.

The best actual arrangement of a loft adapted for a variety of birds which we have yet seen, is that fitted up for his own pigeons by the late Mr. James Wallace, of Burnbank East, Glasgow, by whose kind permission we give the plans and drawings shown in Figs. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, which have been prepared for us *con amore* by Mr. Matthew Stuart, another well-known member of the fraternity. The arrangements differ in many respects from those we have already given, and for that very reason may prove the more fruitful in suggestiveness, being the result of the thought and experience of a fancier of thirty-five years' standing. The building was not specially erected, but is in reality the attic of a dwelling-house, though we have represented it as if put up in a garden, for the sake of effect. It is equally applicable to either, but perhaps the upper part of a house is most suitable, as the peculiar arrangement of the aviary or flight round the roof gives the birds plenty of air and exercise, perfectly secure from either thieves or vermin.

From the perspective and working drawings, the arrangements of this loft will be readily understood without detailed references. The total length is forty-seven feet, the width of floor eighteen feet, and height of ceiling six and a half feet. On entering the door at the end, the pens are right and left along the whole length of the loft, as shown in the interior perspective view (Fig. 6). There is both a lower and upper tier of pens, and the loft contains thirteen lower and

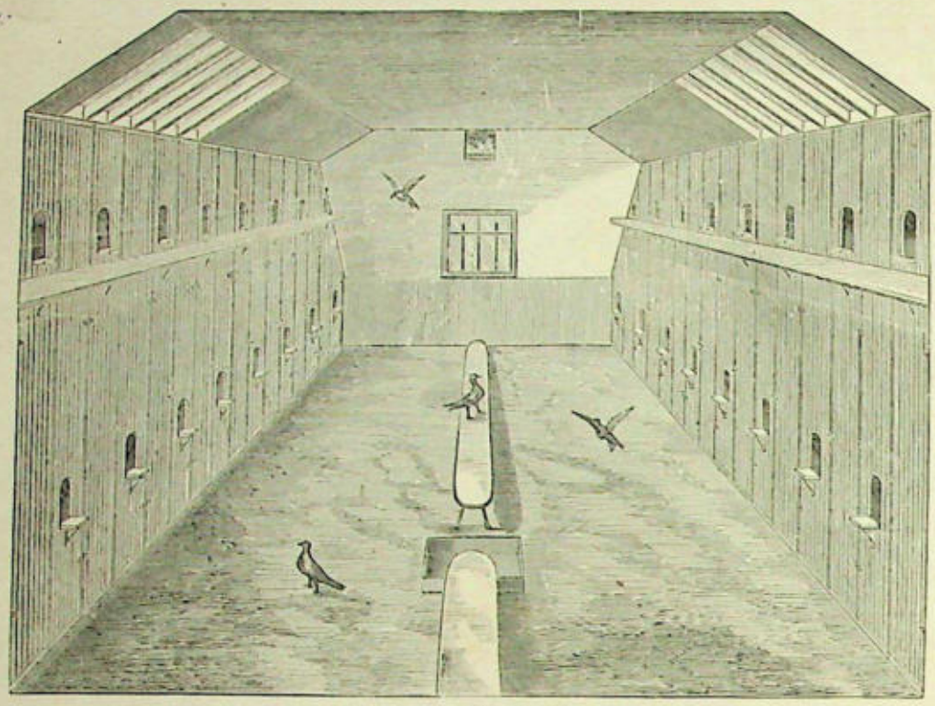


Fig. 6.—INTERIOR VIEW.

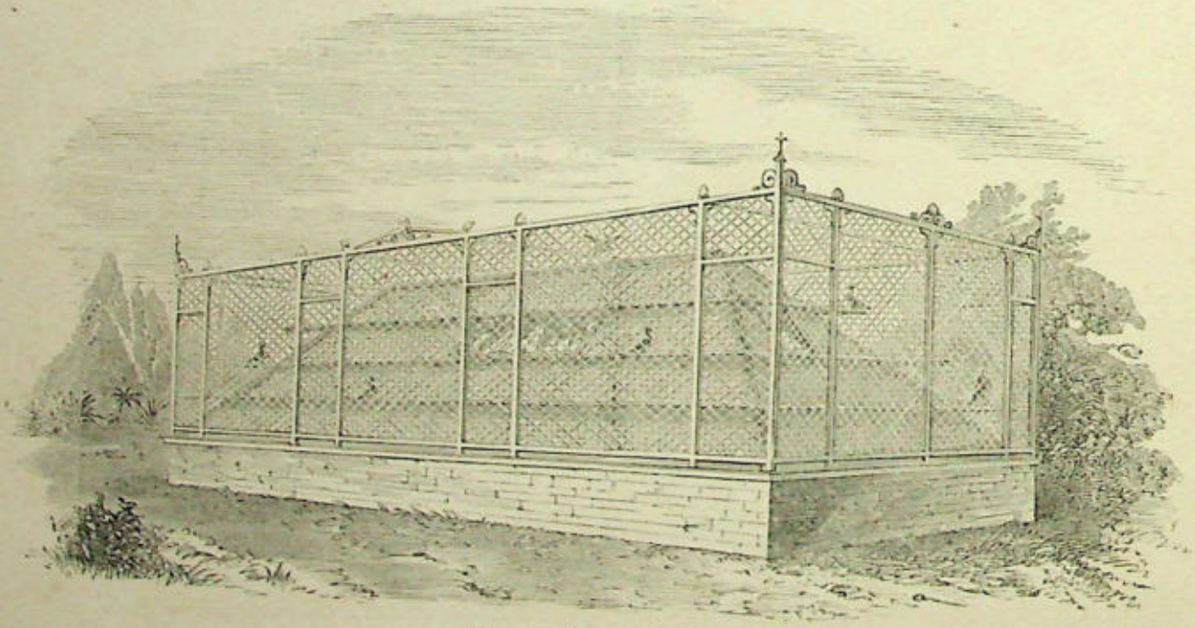


Fig. 7.—EXTERIOR VIEW.

MR. WALLACE'S PIGEON LOFT

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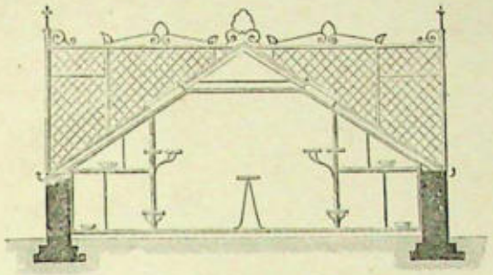


Fig. 8.—Transverse Section.

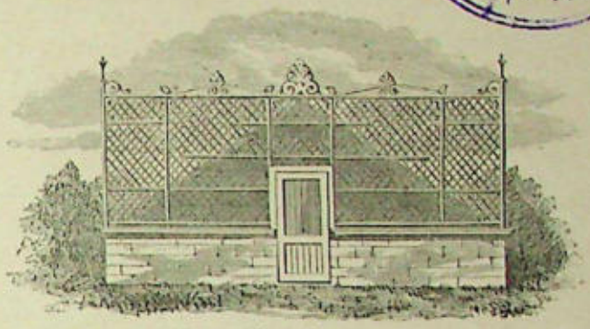


Fig. 9.—End Elevation.

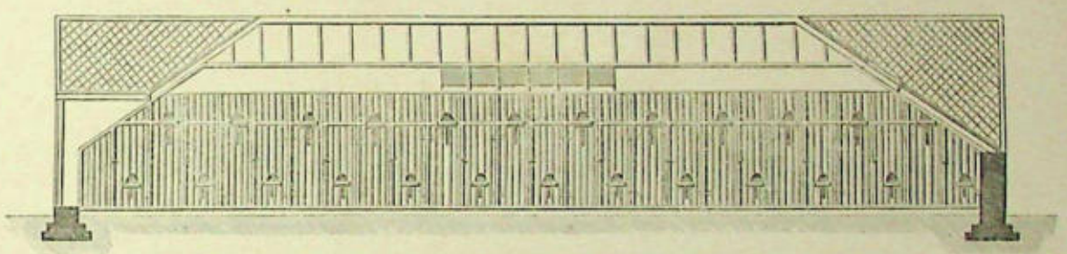


Fig. 10.—Longitudinal Section.

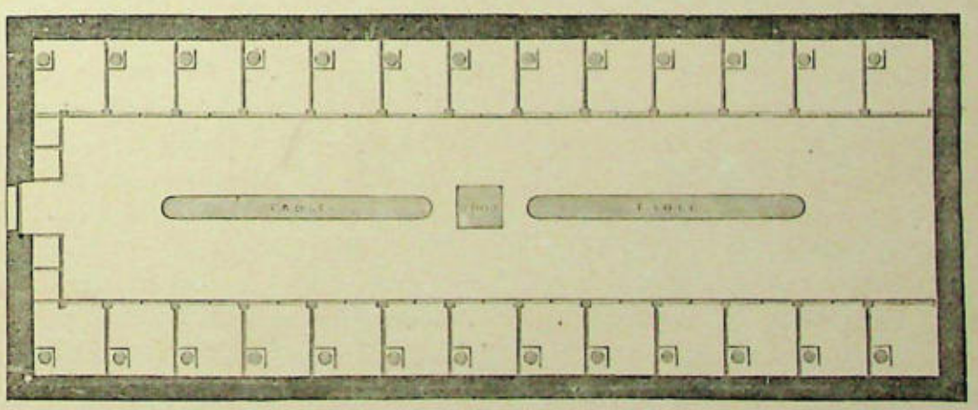


Fig. 11.—Ground Plan.

Mr. Wallace's Pigeon Loft

thirteen upper pens on each side, each separate pen having a clear floor space of three and a half by four feet, which is amply sufficient for all breeding purposes, and also to give any pair of birds plenty of room during confinement. The transverse section (Fig. 8) shows how the pens are fitted up; and it will be noticed that the floors of the upper pens are six inches below the tops of the doors to the lower pens, so as to allow the upper floors and nests to be cleaned or scraped out by only opening the under doors.

The fronts or doors of the pens facing the middle hall or passage look very neat, being made, as shown in the longitudinal section (Fig. 10), of yellow pine spars one inch wide by three-eighths of an inch thick, and each-half of the door is made to open outwards, to allow free access for cleaning or examination. The holes by which the pigeons enter are placed nine inches up off the floors, so as to prevent young birds getting out of their own pens before they are able to fight their way. Each of these holes is nine inches high by six and a half inches wide, which allows of a water fountain standing on the outer shelf when required, to serve the double purpose of confining the birds when desired, and giving them water whenever so confined and debarred from the general fountain in the loft. The entrance-holes to the upper nests are, as will be seen, not placed over the under holes, but over the solid portions of the under doors, in order to prevent birds which are resting on their landings dropping excrement upon the under birds.

The nest-pans are set on the floors of the pens, as shown in the plan and transverse section (Figs. 8, 11). They are each provided with a movable screen made of pine wood, shaped in plan like the letter L. This arrangement keeps the birds from leaving their eggs on the approach of a stranger, which they would often do if exposed. If desired, the nest-pans can be sunk, say two inches, into the floors, so as to allow the squeakers to get easily back to their nests when they have left them, which they often do in search of food from the old birds.

There are two shelves, as shown in the transverse section, which run the whole length of the loft, at the same height as the landings of the upper pen holes. These shelves are six inches wide, and are supported six inches clear of the pens by quadrant iron brackets. There are also two tables or promenading boards or shelves, of the same width, down the centre of the loft, at a height of three feet, supported on ¾-inch iron legs. Between the ends of these tables is a clear space of six feet, in the centre of which is placed a board for the food, which is immediately under the principal roof-lights, and is raised three inches clear of the floor.

The whole loft is most thoroughly ventilated from the roof windows, care being always taken not to open them so as to cause a draught; and the walls, floor joints, and roof timbers are all covered with boarding, and every angle of tables, &c., rounded off, so as to prevent any damage from a pigeon coming against a sharp corner, which is not to be found throughout the whole loft.

Coming now to the outside, the exterior perspective view shows clearly how this is fitted up as a flight or aviary, having pine framing covered with galvanised wire-netting, of a mesh fine enough to keep out the sparrows. There is a platform all round the lower part of the roof, about a yard wide, to allow the pigeons plenty of walking space, and this is furnished with old lime and gravel. And higher up the roof, on the slates themselves, and running all round parallel with the platform, are two resting-boards, one above the other. Along these resting-boards are fixed blocks, six inches high, and about four and a half feet apart, which is found necessary owing to the bad habit some over-bold cocks have, of claiming possession of the whole shelf and sweeping everything before them. They are also beneficial in giving a quiet rest to a breeding pair; for when a cock is driving his hen to nest he will not allow her to rest unless some plan of this kind is adopted. By paying attention to little arrangements of this kind, the fancier will have much fewer barren or "empty" eggs.

Opposite the front window is a bath, four feet by three feet, and four inches deep, which has a

jet of fresh water continually running into it. It is made shallow purposely, or some birds, such as Short-faces, would get drowned. A block is also placed in the middle to prevent this, and for the birds to get on when leaving the water.

Right and left of the entrance doors, and the other end under the window, are fitted up with smaller boxes or nests about eighteen inches square and two feet high, having sparred or lath fronts to match the other doors in the loft. Altogether there are seventy-six breeding-boxes or nests round the walls, and a clear space for birds flying about, besides the outer flight, of forty-three by ten feet. Throughout the loft are a number of neat little feeding-boxes or hoppers, with sloped tops, and wire to prevent the birds scattering the food. The entrance door is glazed at the top, in order that observation may be quietly made of how the birds are behaving when left alone. There are always a number of ill-behaved cocks that will persist in going into their neighbour's pens, and generally smash the eggs in the *mêlée* that ensues. When caught at this, a day or two's confinement to their own pens does good; and these are so large that even should the hen be sitting, no inconvenience will result to the pair.

In concluding our description of this excellent loft, for which as well as for the drawings we are indebted to the kindness of Mr. Matthew Stuart, we should state that what we have described is only the "fancy" or show loft, which does not occupy nearly the whole extent of the attic. At the other end of this is another loft for the feeders, which is arranged much the same as the fancy loft, but in a plainer style, as visitors are rarely shown into it. And midway between the two is a room eighteen feet square, in which are kept show-boxes, nest-pans, water-fountains, oak barrels fitted with iron rims for food, &c. This room is also furnished with a large show-pen, placed on a table in the centre of the room under a skylight, and a few chairs, "for the purpose of enjoying a private view," or arranging matches for the breeding season. How often those chairs have had to be renewed Mr. Wallace has forgotten to inform us; but it is very evident the Glasgow fanciers rather *enjoy* looking at their pigeons, and it is perhaps better on the whole for the loft to be in the attic than on the ground floor!

In the admirable loft here described, the objects we have before mentioned are secured, but in a different manner, more space being at command. Here also the young birds are prevented from falling on the floor or being attacked by others, and quietness in breeding is thoroughly secured; while the large size of the pens, enabling any pair of birds to be secluded at pleasure without detriment, is of the very greatest advantage. Where an attic can be given up large enough to carry out such a system, it will be difficult to excel Mr. Wallace's arrangements generally; and the plan of the aviary outside the roof, in particular, is the very best we have ever met with, the birds being perfectly secure from any danger except rats and fire.

For pigeons which are allowed their liberty, or are "flown," as it is called, less care is needed as regards the internal arrangements of the loft, the birds being stronger and hardier, and passing much of their time in the open air. The breeding-places for such birds we have already mentioned, and it is only needful to mention the arrangements for giving the birds ingress and egress. In all pigeon-flying lofts, these consist of some kind of wire cage, called an "area," fixed at its open side to an aperture in the loft, and furnished round the other sides and end, or sometimes only on one side, with hinged doors, which can either be lowered like drawbridges, to form a landing, or closed. Such an area is perhaps found in its greatest perfection of arrangement in what is known as the "Spitalfields dormer," shown in Fig. 12, and of which any number may be seen, with slight modifications, in that celebrated pigeon-flying locality. All round are the trap-doors, which in these Spitalfields affairs are connected together, so that they can be closed instantaneously by one pull at a string; and if a stray pigeon lights on any one of the doors, he is a "gone" bird—for the

truth must be told, that the object of *many* (we do not say or mean all) of these Spitalfields contrivances is as much pigeon-*catching* as pigeon-flying. In the stand behind the area will remain hour after hour, flag in hand, many a Spitalfields fancier; and if, by dint of food, and flag, and decoy birds, he can induce one stray pigeon to alight, up go all the doors, and the prize is bagged. The bird is probably worth a shilling, and is sold for ninepence the same evening (for as it would be off again, it is no use keeping it), and such a prize is thought worth the best part of a day's work! "True it is, and pity 'tis 'tis true." We have, however, nothing to do with the questionable uses to

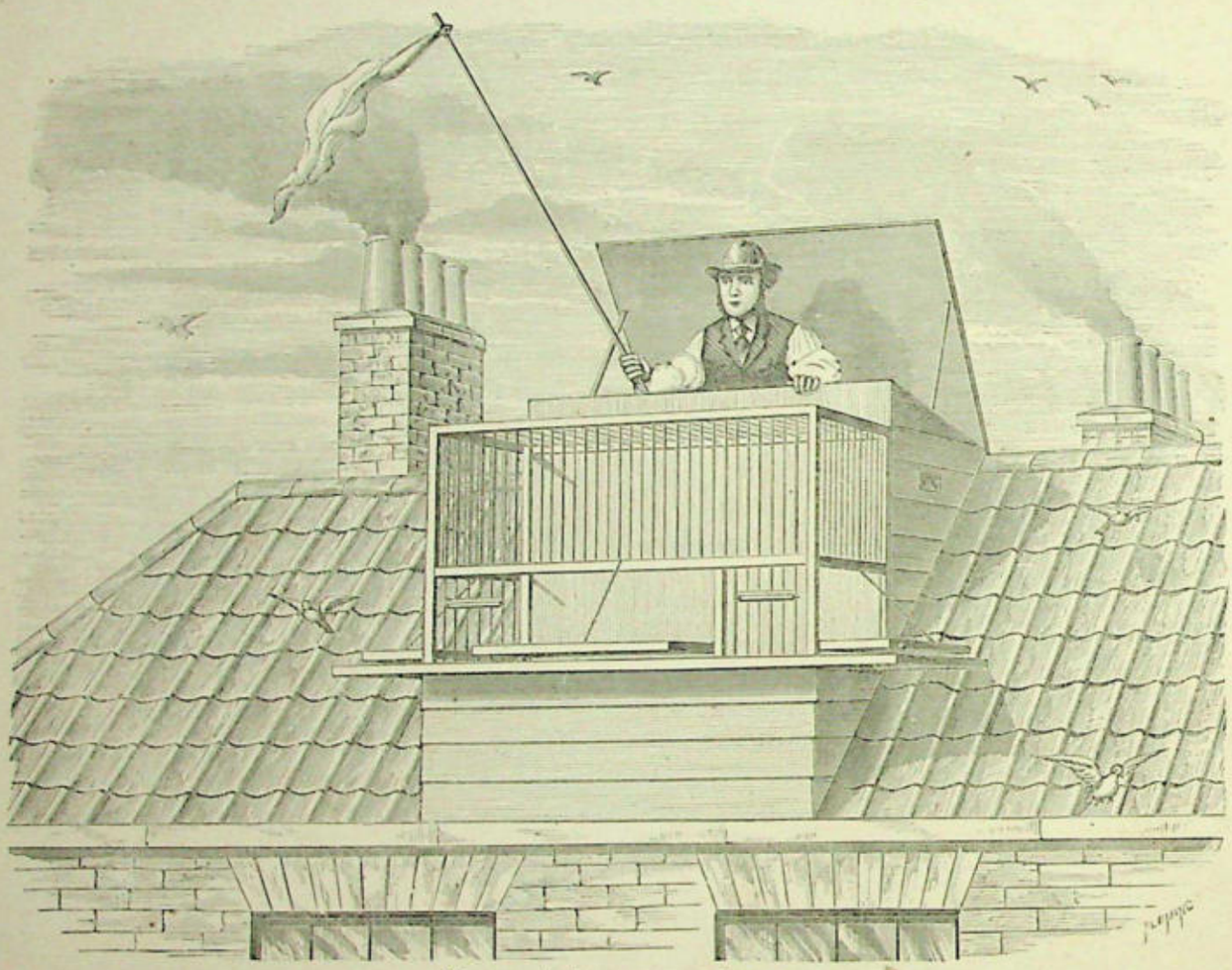


Fig. 12.—A SPITALFIELDS DORMER.

which such a "dormer" *may* be put (except, of course, to condemn them); it has its many legitimate uses, and, as the best general arrangement for flying pigeons, must have a place in these pages.

On each side of the trap-door in front of this Spitalfields area will be observed what are called "bolting-wires." These are simply little swing-doors, composed of a few wires fixed into the little roller which serves as the hinge. The bottoms of these wires, or of the door, rest against the inside of the frame of the area, or of a small slip of wood, so that the door will open *inwards*, but not *outwards*. The need of such an arrangement is obvious: without it, the owner must either stay on the watch till all his birds returned, or some of the last must be shut out, to fall a prey to thieves or cats; but these bolting-wires enable late stragglers to come in after all is shut up for the night, while they do not allow any pigeons to leave in the morning until the owner pleases.

The same kind of area, on the top of a loft or house suitable for flying pigeons, is shown in Fig. 13. It is drawn from an actual example erected entirely of wood at the bottom of a garden, and can be readily put up in such a situation at no great expense. Inside are wire pens on each side, which serve well as breeding-places so long as the doors to them are left open, while they give the power of confining any birds as desired. Shelves fitted up as in Fig. 2 may be

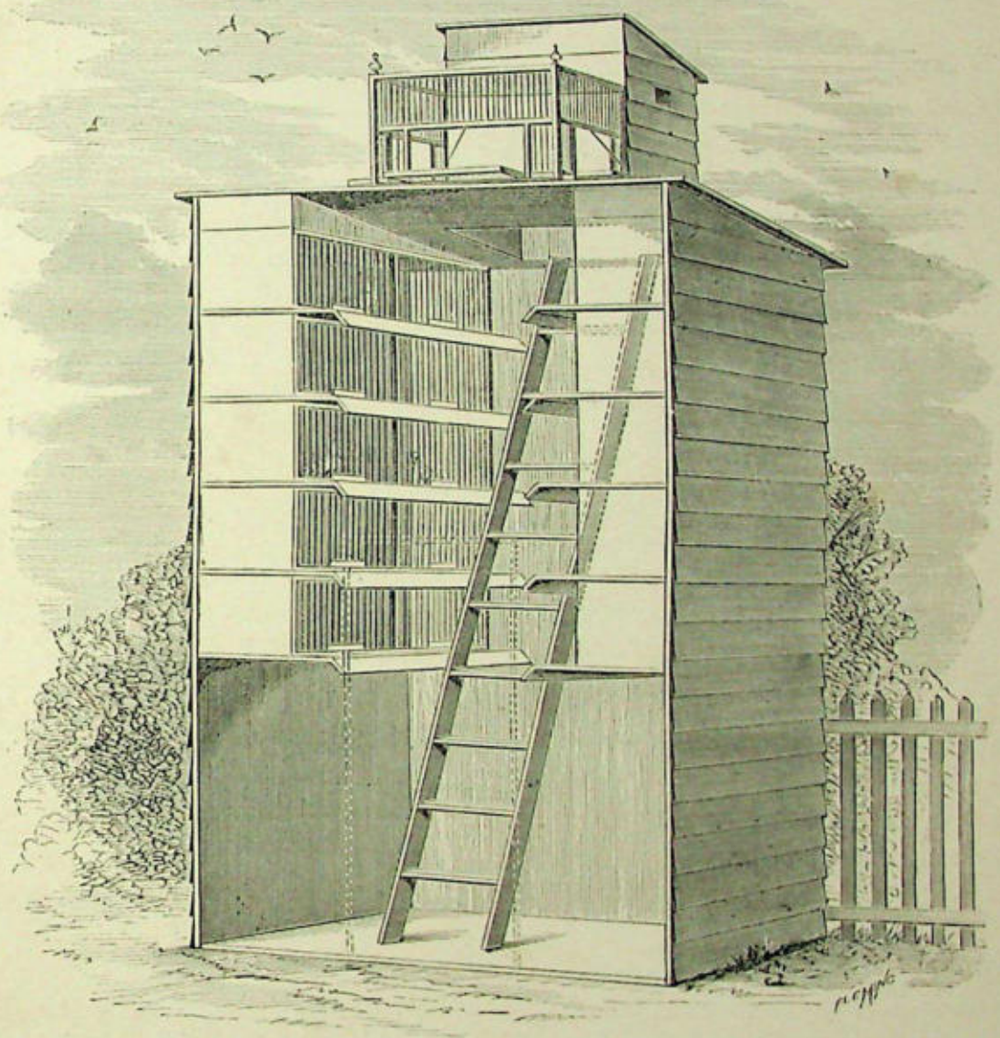


Fig. 13.—Detached House and Area for Flying Pigeons.

substituted if desired, or one side may have shelves and the other the wire pens. Such a construction may indeed obviously be varied, to meet individual wishes or requirements, in a dozen different ways; but we give it as an actual example, well adapted for the general purposes of the pigeon-flier.

Rats often give great trouble in a pigeon-loft, and many of them might almost be termed "good fanciers," they so invariably select *the best*. It is worth while taking some trouble to prevent them coming in at all; and as they almost always do their preliminary gnawing at the angle of

the floor, this can generally be done by nailing all round a strip of zinc or tin about twelve inches wide, shaped like an L, so as to cover six inches of wall and six inches of floor. A trained cat is also of service; but the training must be so constant and watchful before pussy can be trusted not to do a little poaching on her own account, that very few fanciers can boast the luxury. Cats, however, are kept out with comparative ease, and none but pigeons allowed to fly should be in any danger on that score.

Every fancier should have in his loft one or more "sick pens," or cages in which ailing birds can be confined at once on their ailment being discovered. No sooner does a bird appear ill than the others will begin persecuting and pecking it—especially if Carriers are kept, which are the most spiteful and vicious of all pigeons—so that if hospital pens are provided it will be the means of saving many lives. These pens should be in sight of the other birds, and not away from them; for a bird thus confined in sight of his companions will keep up his spirits much better and make a quicker recovery than if shut up alone. Such wire pens as are shown at the back of the loft in Fig. 3 will answer this purpose very well; and as the pens in which diseased pigeons are confined are not, with the sole exception of the mysterious new disease called small-pox, liable to become infected and communicate disease to others, they may be used as matching pens, or for other purposes if required.

And this mention of sick pigeons leads us to remark finally upon a point, the importance of which we have become more and more convinced of every year. We have described the best arrangements known to us for the interior of a loft (with the exception of some special breeds to be separately treated of in their place), but, however perfect these may be, they will not keep away disease if the birds be at all *overcrowded*. Few can speak more feelingly than ourselves upon this point, or have a right to speak with more authority. We have been compelled to keep more pigeons than our judgment would approve of, for greater or less periods, during many years; and when we state that at such times, if prolonged for more than a few weeks, all that care and experience could do have not been able to avert the penalty, and that we have ere now lost, in a wonderfully short space of time, hundreds of pounds' worth of valuable birds, we trust no further testimony will be needed. And especially, unless the birds are allowed to fly at large, let the amateur strain every point to provide, if possible, a good flight or aviary. Pigeons *must* have some fair amount of *flying exercise* to keep them in really good health and condition, be it in aviary or at large. The inside space is not half so important as this; healthy birds do not require much room inside the loft if they have plenty of exercise outside, as witness the hardy dovecote birds, which have no shelter beyond their own breeding-place in the dovecote. But open-air exercise is vitally important to enable the birds to get appetite and properly digest their food, and even to properly disgorge it for their young ones. This last assertion may surprise many; but we repeat, most emphatically, that want of flying space is the chief cause of young pigeons being badly fed and needing artificial aid. Again, it is impossible to keep birds with the same gloss and tightness of feather in a small overcrowded space as when they have ample room for flying exercise, which will also be found to cause much fewer barren eggs, and to give the young birds a far more bold and stately appearance or "carriage," especially in the case of Carriers and Dragoons.

We should not have said so much upon this point, had we not observed that, with the increase of the pigeon fancy, there had been far more cases of disease within the last fifteen years than were ever known before; and some of these, diseases which were previously unknown altogether. In nine cases out of ten we have *known* these last to have occurred in lofts where the flying space was too confined, while we very rarely find disease amongst birds which are allowed to fly at large. At no very distant period, in fact, fanciers, both in town and country, used to allow all their birds

liberty, both high-class and common pigeons, and it was seldom they were then troubled with disease; but of late there has been such a vast increase in the number of fanciers that this has become impossible, owing to the strong pairing instincts of the birds. Hence town fanciers especially have had to do their best with the space at their command, and we have seen pigeons kept in a place hardly large enough for a pair of canaries, so strong are the attractions of the "pigeon-fancy." In such cases, let the birds be flown if possible; if it is not possible, exhaust every contrivance of ingenuity to give the very largest flight or aviary that can be managed, and *keep very few birds.* There will be no loss, but gain every way in this; for we have repeatedly observed that one single pair of birds turned loose by themselves in a loft, will bring to maturity in one

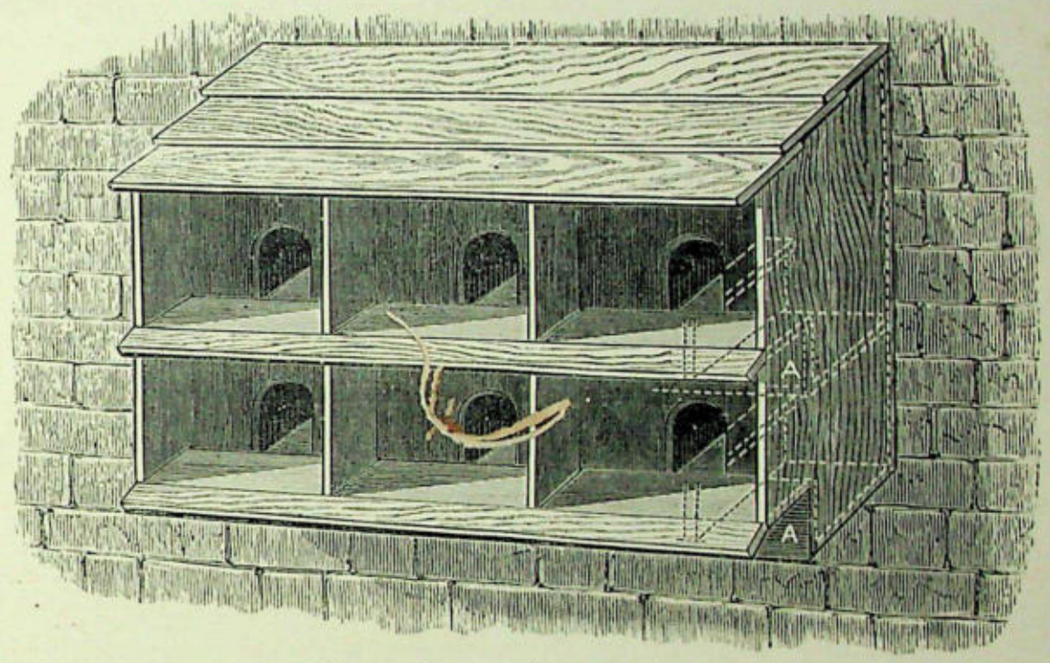


Fig. 14.—Improved Dovecote.

season about three times as many young ones as any one pair of birds in a crowded loft belonging to the most skilled fanciers of our acquaintance, while all these young ones will be stronger and finer birds. The show condition of these few birds will also be infinitely better, and this goes a very long way in exhibition, since it is very seldom indeed that the best quality and the best condition are both combined. If they are, triumph is certain; but it more commonly happens that those who have the really best birds keep them far too crowded, and will not spend money upon a really good loft; while those who have the best and most spacious lofts generally possess only middling pigeons.

It is most desirable, if it can possibly be managed, that every loft should be, if not permanently divided into two compartments, so constructed as to be capable of being so, in order to allow of the sexes being kept separate during the colder months. With common or flying pigeons this is not so necessary; but the more delicate kinds will often, where this precaution is neglected, go on breeding much later than is advisable, to the serious injury of their constitution, perhaps so much so as to cause their loss in moulting. For dis-matching birds which are badly paired, and for countless other reasons, such division of the loft will be found highly advisable in all cases except such as afford, like Mr. Wallace's, the same facilities in other ways.

In regard to accommodation for pigeons which are kept merely for food, or dovecotes as they are called, we say nothing at all about pigeon-houses on poles, such as are often seen, except emphatically to condemn them as unfit for use. Let the wind blow from what quarter it may, some side of such miserable dwellings must be exposed to it; and thus all in turn have to suffer from a vicious plan which has no single merit, being no more ornamental than useful. A dovecote fastened against a wall is less open to objection, and may easily be so contrived as to give amply sufficient shelter for hardy birds. It should be fixed to the south wall of course; and each breeding-place, which forms the home for a pair of birds, should be so arranged as to give the greatest possible shelter. The ordinary pattern of dovecote, so well known, answers fairly well; but for these purposes nothing can exceed the plan of nest-box shown in our Fig. 1, substituting for the small landing-places before each entrance a broad ledge running along the whole front of the dovecote, furnished in front with slanting boards for the purposes already described, and which also serve as roof and shelter for each tier of cells. A portion of such a dovecote will then appear as Fig. 14. There should be a good slanting roof over all; and the birds when not breeding will perch upon the slip of wood which forms the top of the partition between each half of the breeding-place, or in fine weather remain outside all night. The upright partitions between each breeding-place and the next are not absolutely needful, but the cote is better with them, as they tend to prevent other birds intruding, and also give more shelter from side winds. If the front of the lower part of each breeding-box, at A A, be hinged, so that it can be opened for cleaning or examination, it will be more convenient; but this is by no means necessary.

For erecting detached pigeon-houses or lofts of any kind, what are called match-boards, or boards planed smooth on one side, and with a tongue on one edge fitting into a groove on the other, are the best material. Three-quarters of an inch is a convenient thickness, and if well painted outside before the boards become swelled with wet, will be found quite sufficient. Similar boards of a less thickness may be used for partitions and nest-boxes; and by using material of this kind very neat-looking places may be quickly put up, with little trouble or difficulty, by any one who can use a saw, hammer, and nails. The roof may be felted, covered with galvanised iron, or tiled; but if tiles are used, the rafters should be match-boarded on the under side, to prevent draught. Ventilation must, however, be thoroughly provided for.

Further plans of pigeon-lofts or aviaries, for special breeds, will be found, as already intimated, in the chapters on Carriers and Toy Pigeons.



CHAPTER IV.

FEEDING AND GENERAL MANAGEMENT OF PIGEONS.

GOOD food is of the very first importance towards success in keeping and breeding pigeons, not only for the sake of the old birds, but still more on account of the young ones; for it is often found that if the food be bad these latter will die, even although the old birds, by exercise and a strong constitution, remain in vigorous health. Old worm-eaten beans, or such as have many with a little hole in them, should especially be avoided, as also should those very old shrivelled beans which look nearly black from age. In such food the inside part is nearly gone, and unless the birds are extra strong, the fancier will find his birds "sick," as it is called, not being able to digest their food. Small, full, plump-looking beans should be selected; and the same general remark applies to tares, except that these being naturally smaller, the large full-looking ones should be chosen, which seem to be all good, and not merely the skin of the tare left, such as we have seen given to pigeons, but on which, though the old birds may just manage to live, the young ones cannot be reared without heavy loss. Next come good grey (or dark) peas, and in the breeding-time no food can surpass these, as old beans are often too much for the young ones to digest. During this time, therefore, say from March to the end of August, there is nothing better as a diet for the old birds than good grey peas, tares, and small maize in equal parts, on which they will rear their young well. From the time the birds are separated, on the contrary—say from the end of August to the end of February—we have always found it best to change the diet to such good old tick beans as we have described, finding that in the cold weather they do best with a diet rather less laxative than in the summer months.

We would particularly caution the amateur not to feed his fancy pigeons on maize during the winter months, as such is very apt to cause severe scouring, emaciation, and finally death. Wheat should also be avoided in the cold weather, for unless birds are well accustomed to it, they generally go wrong when wheat is given them. Even a little is often bad; but like the maize, in the warm weather it seems to suit them well. Hempseed, if sound and good, they are very fond of, and it is very beneficial at times, especially in cold weather, or given as a relish and not as regular food. It is, in fact, a stimulant, and to be so regarded. If a bird appear low-spirited, nothing will cheer it up more than a little good hempseed mixed with some dry raw rice. Particular care should be taken that all hempseed given to pigeons be fresh and new, old seed being most injurious, and often causing illness.

The feeding here described is what we have found most suitable for pigeons generally; but the small, delicately-formed Short-faced Tumblers could not swallow beans, unless they are coarse specimens, or the beans unusually small. These should therefore be fed during the winter upon small grey peas and tares, with occasionally a handful of canary or hempseed, or millet seed; while during the breeding season the fancier may add with advantage some raw rice or old wheat.

Having thus spoken of the food itself, we would strongly advise that it be given always from a hopper. Various patterns are in use, the principle being the same in all; but the best in our

opinion is one we have had made and in use for years, and which is shown in Fig. 15. It is made so that the top slants and overhangs the feeding-trough, and is also furnished with a wire above the ridge, in order to prevent the food being soiled by birds perching upon it. The feeding-trough extends all round, and this is equally important in a large loft, as many birds are spiteful (this is especially the case when sitting or feeding young ones) and will not allow others to feed near them. If there be but one small place at which to feed, such a bird appears to take a pride in standing there, and driving away all others; and very often a hen bird coming to feed in a weak state (either just before laying, or after, or before hatching) has to be content with a very scanty meal, when she more than ever requires an ample diet. Especially if a hen is feeding young ones, she is thus prevented from eating nearly as much as she needs, and would have taken were she unmolested. All this is prevented by having the feeding-trough extend all round. Finally, the trough is covered or protected with wires about two inches apart, to prevent the pigeons scattering the food right and left with their beaks, which they take a perverse pleasure in

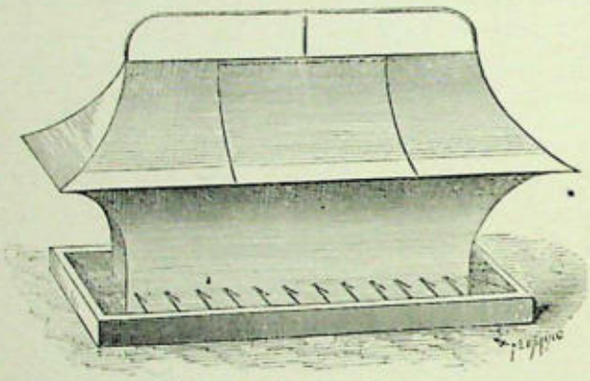


Fig. 15.—FEEDING HOPPER.

doing, wasting more than they eat, unless thus guarded against. The wires allow plenty of room for a bird to put in its head, but no more. If the birds are fed by scattering the food on the floor, as some recommend, there will probably be some left after they have done feeding, which remains all night, and becomes more or less polluted. Then in the morning, if they are very hungry, it will be eaten, which frequently causes purging and death, while the owner never suspects the cause. We have seen many such cases when birds were fed off the ground, and would therefore strongly advise all who keep their pigeons confined to use a hopper. Even when birds are penned it will be best to feed out of some box or dish, to avoid any possibility of their eating soiled food.

The feeding-hopper here described is meant to be made of zinc, but except as regards security from mice and rats, will be equally good in any other material. Should mice infest the loft, they may be effectually defied, as regards the food, by slinging a board say six inches from the ground by four *smooth wires* at the four corners, and standing the hopper upon it. It is of some importance to see to this, for independently of the great waste of food when the mice "get to it," food mingled with their excrement and the shells they leave—"mousy" food—is another fruitful source of that severe obstinate "scouring" so much dreaded by the pigeon-fancier. For the same reason, all food should be kept in bins or chests, either made of iron or lined with tin or zinc, wherever mice are likely to abound.

For pigeons left at liberty, the hopper above described is less suitable. The owner naturally

likes them to feed at his feet, which is easily managed by giving them a little hempseed now and then—a treat for which they will not only come there, but speedily begin to perch upon his person. Still, it is not advisable to feed upon the ground, both for the reasons already given, and because a great deal would be wasted upon the sparrows. Under such circumstances the contrivance shown in Fig. 16, for which we are indebted to our friend the "Wiltshire Rector," may answer the purpose. It consists of a little shed or verandah with a sloping roof to throw off the wet, and about half a yard deep from front to back; at the back of which are placed one or more *square* wooden troughs, three inches deep and wide, and of any length required, about three feet being most convenient for handling. The square section will almost entirely prevent the pigeons scattering the food with their beaks, which they would do with any shallow vessel, and the rain cannot get in. It will be still better if wires be fixed across the top of the troughs, as in Fig. 15

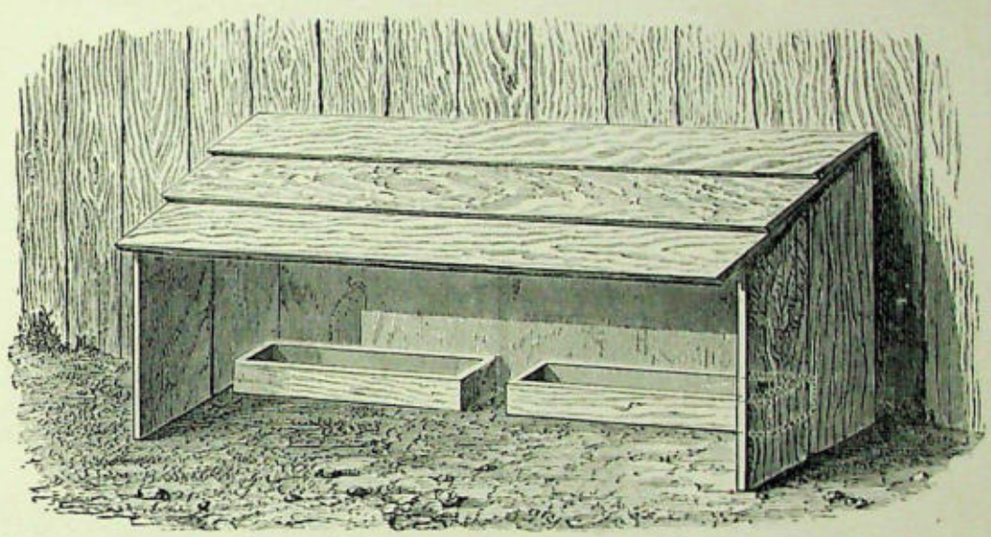


Fig. 16.—Feeding-place for Pigeons at Liberty.

The troughs should always be brought in at night, to prevent the ravages of mice. The height of such a verandah may be from twelve to eighteen inches. The former height best keeps out driving rain, the latter is better for the birds if suddenly startled and rising quickly from their food.

Another very good plan of feeding pigeons at liberty is to have a small round wooden table, upon one tripod leg, the circumference of which is surmounted by a perpendicular rim of almost three inches' depth, to confine the feed. On this table the food is placed, and it is a most pretty and enjoyable sight to watch the birds standing round and feeding. No plan of feeding brings them into such full view as this, but it is not so well adapted for wet weather.

We have been thus careful to guard the young fancier against mistakes in feeeding, and we would also lay stress upon what we shall say regarding clean water and other kindred points, because the digestive system of pigeons is very difficult of regulation by any drugs in the pharmacopœia. It is possible, though often very difficult, to stop purging; but if the bowels become confined, we believe we are not going beyond the truth in saying that there is *no* aperient which can be depended on with any certainty. Were it otherwise, many valuable birds would have been saved; but under the circumstances it becomes doubly important to avoid such disturbances of the system as make remedial measures necessary.

As a rule, pigeons are best without any green food. No doubt birds at large get a portion of

green meat, but any attempt to give this in confinement, as some do, often causes more harm than it can possibly do good. Some people seem to be always trying how *many* things they can give their pigeons, and we rather wish to guard against this. But one exception may be made, in favour of lettuce, hung up so that the birds can reach and peck at it, but not thrown on the ground. All through the breeding season this will be found of great advantage, but neither it nor other green vegetables should be given except at that time.

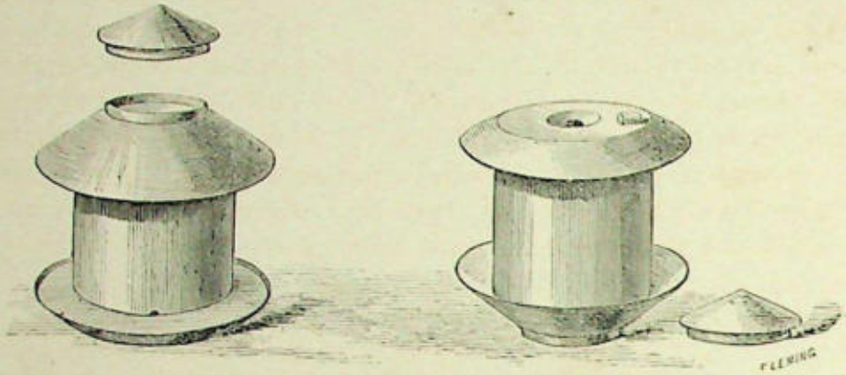


Fig. 17.—IN USE. Fig. 18.—READY FOR USE.

Clean water to drink is of equal importance, foul water being by many fanciers thought to cause canker and other evils. Figs. 17 and 18 represent the best drinking-fountain we have been able to contrive, in the position for filling, as well as when in use. It is best made in zinc, as glass or stone will often crack in frosty weather, while zinc will stand any temperature, and can be easily cleaned by shaking about inside some water and clean gravel when required, which will be very seldom if the water be renewed every one or two days as it ought to be. The top is made in two pieces, in the shape of a cone, to prevent the pigeons perching on it, or any dirt from falling in.

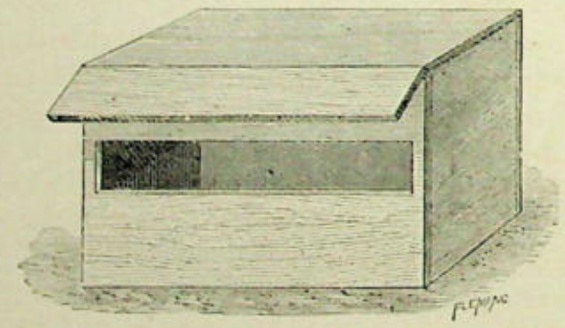


Fig. 19.—GRAVEL-BOX.

The top or apex of the cone is removable, in order that when taken off the fountain may be reversed, and stood upon the plane of section while being filled, which is done through the hole then seen in the bottom, which after filling is closed by a cork. The ordinary stone fountain, with a hood over the drinking-pan, will also answer well in a small loft; but the one here figured is best where many pigeons are kept, for the same reason as an "all-round" hopper, or to prevent tyranny.

One of the most effectual preventives of disease is a good supply of clean water, both in the fountain and in the bath, to be presently described. Some fanciers have their loft so fitted as to

provide a continual running stream of water, and of course such, wherever possible, will supersede both fountain and bath; but very few can afford such a luxury, and a good fountain, kept clean, will answer all purposes.

Besides food and water, pigeons require a supply of gravel, with which should be mixed some old mortar. The best mixture is composed of good coarse gravel, old mortar roughly pounded, and some soft loamy earth or mould. Unless pigeons are supplied constantly with this, they speedily begin to mope about and become very loose in feather. The best receptacle for it is a box shown in Fig. 19, made with the slanting cover so frequently mentioned by us in connection with other fixtures, in order to prevent any birds perching on the top soiling those below. The opening in the side should be about four inches off the ground, so that the pigeons can get their heads in when standing on the floor; and if there be an opening and slanting lid both sides, so much the better. Instead of gravel, some fanciers prepare a salt-cat, as it is termed, for which various recipes have been given, some of them very offensive. Others give salt in a pan separately; but salt does not suit all birds, some being so fond of it as to take hardly anything

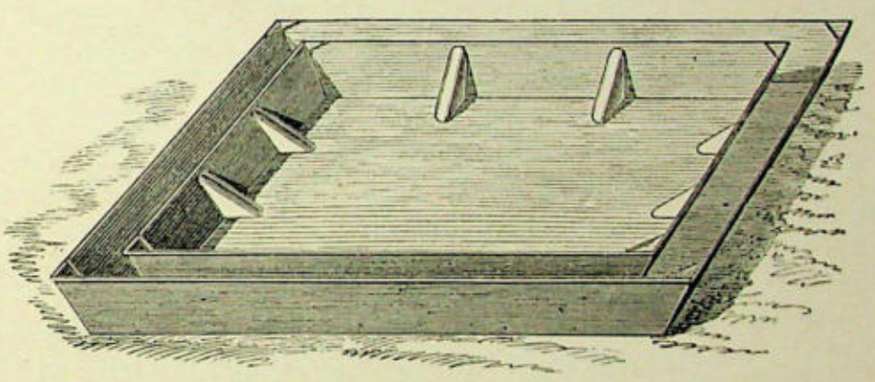


Fig. 20.—Bath for Inside Loft.

but salt and water, and becoming nothing but bones and feathers—a condition very difficult to remedy when once it is established. On the whole, what we would advise is a mixture made as follows, by measure:—Two parts sharp gravel, one part loam, one part old mortar pounded, and one part coarse salt. This should be mixed together dry, and put in the box, when the pigeons can hardly take more salt than is good for them, and will be kept in fine condition. We have for years used this mixture for our own pigeons, and can confidently recommend it as equal or superior to any salt-cat that can be manufactured.

Pigeons clean themselves by constantly washing in water, not by rolling in the dust like fowls; and require the continual enjoyment of this luxury to keep them in health. Fig. 20 represents a bath so contrived as to enable the fancier who has no open flight or aviary to keep it in the loft without wetting the floor, a sloppy mess being very injurious both to health and condition. It is made of zinc, about four inches deep, and has double sides, so as to resemble one pan within another. The sides are also furnished with stays, to prevent them bulging out with the weight of the water. The use of this arrangement is obvious; the birds in washing splash terribly, and the outer wall catches the water splashed out of the inner, and saves it going on the floor. To the many who are obliged to keep their birds confined in a room we can confidently recommend this pattern of bath; but for those with an outside aviary it is needless, and the inner pan alone will be sufficient. A brick should be placed at the side for any small or

weakly birds to step upon when leaving the water, as without this aid some would be unable to do so. We have known more than one beautiful Short-faced Tumbler drowned for want of this precaution.

Some recommend that the bath be only allowed two or three times a week; but we unhesitatingly say that it should be *constantly* afforded the pigeons; the water, unless always running, which is best of all, being frequently renewed. This is the more necessary, as the birds will often drink out of it as well as bathe in it. And we would here remark that the bath, or the use made of it, is the *very best general indicator* as to the health of the pigeons. As soon as any bird leaves off bathing, *it is a bad sign;* and though nothing else should be observable, that bird should be very carefully looked after, in order to discover at the earliest possible moment what is wrong. And, on the contrary, as soon as you see a bird that *has* been unwell go into its bath again, you may make pretty sure it is all right, and that it has "turned the corner" towards a good recovery. We have noticed this so often, that we give it as a sign very nearly if not quite infallible.

Fancy pigeons generally show an inclination to mate together some time in the month of February; but much depends upon the temperature, as in very severe weather they will sometimes show no signs of doing so until March, whilst if it be mild some birds, if allowed, would go to nest in January. This, however, the owner should in all cases prevent, by keeping the sexes separate, for several reasons. In the first place, though it is possible the young ones may be reared, and if the weather keeps mild throughout they will in that case make wonderfully strong early birds, still the chances are many against it. But still more, though the young be reared, the result is likely to be the ruin of the constitution of the hen; for if she is what is called a free breeder, or lays her eggs fast, before the season is over she becomes so weak as in many cases to become ruptured, and in other cases barren, when she is of course valueless. The cause of this is not only the excessive laying—indeed a young and rank hen will often lay, like a fowl, whether she be mated or not—but the cock-bird continually driving her to nest and teasing her while in her weak state, which causes her weakness of course to increase, until the ovary gives way, and she becomes what is called "down behind." A most singular fact is, that we have often noticed the mate of such a hen to become similarly affected, in which case he is commonly said to be "gizzard-fallen;" but having dissected many birds in such a condition, we can state positively that the gizzard has nothing to do with it, but that the part affected is a portion of the intestines. We never knew a cock breed in such a condition; and though we have occasionally known a hen do so, the progeny of such birds could not be expected to have any but a weakly constitution. In any case, it is much better to get even only three or four pairs of eggs in a season, hatched at a time when they are likely to become strong and healthy birds, and preserve the constitution of the parents also for next season. We have known some persons, by what is called "pumping" a hen, or breeding from her as long as possible, obtain eight or nine pair of eggs from her in one season; but we have seldom known more than half reared, and often some of these would have crooked breast-bones, which is a great fault as well as a sign of weakness. And as to the hen herself, she is, as already stated, if not entirely ruined, seriously debilitated for life, so that none of her after progeny will be as vigorous as they ought to be.

It is a pretty sight to see Pigeons at liberty when "courting," and few have described it so pleasantly as Mr. Dixon. "They begin," he says, "to go together in pairs, except while associated with the flock at feeding-times; and when they are resting on the roofs, or basking in the sun, they retire apart to short distances for the purposes of courtship, and pay each other little kind attentions, such as nestling close, and mutually tickling the heads one of another. At last comes what

is called 'billing,' which is in fact a kiss, a hearty and intense kiss: as soon as this takes place the marriage is complete, and is forthwith consummated. The pair are now united, not necessarily for life, though usually so, but rather *durante bene placito*, so long as they continue to be satisfied with each other. If they are Tumblers, they mount aloft and try which can tumble best; if they are Pouters, they emulate one the other's puffings, tail-sweepings, circlets in the air, and wing-clappings; while the Fantails and Runts, and all those kinds which the French call *pigeons mondains*, walk the ground with conscious importance and grace. But this is their honeymoon—the time for the frolics of giddy young people. The male is the first to become serious. He foresees that 'the Campbells are coming' better than his bride, and therefore takes possession of some locker or box that seems an eligible tenement. If it is quite empty and bare, he carries to it a few straws or light sticks; but if the apartment has been already furnished for him, he does not at present take much further trouble in that line. Here he settles himself, and begins complaining. His appeal is sometimes answered by the lady affording him her presence, sometimes not; in which case he does not pine in solitude very long, but goes and searches out his careless helpmate, and with close pursuit and a few sharp pecks if necessary, insists upon her attending to her business at home. Like the good husband described in Fuller's *Holy State*, 'his love to his wife weakeneth not his ruling her, and his ruling lesseneth not his loving her.' And so the hen obeys, occasionally, however, giving some trouble; but at last she feels that she must discontinue general visiting and long excursions, and enters the modest establishment that has been prepared for her performance of her maternal duties. A day or two after she has signified her acceptance of the new home an egg may be expected to be found there. Over this she (mostly) stands sentinel till, after an intervening day, a second egg is laid, and incubation really commences, not hotly and energetically at first, as with hens, turkeys, and many other birds, but gently and with increasing assiduity.

"And now the merits of her mate grow apparent. He does not leave his lady to bear a solitary burden of matrimonial care, while he has indulged in the pleasures only of their union. He takes a share, though a minor one, of the task of incubating; and he more than performs his half-share of the labour of rearing the young. At about noon, sometimes earlier, the hens leave their nests for air and exercise as well as food, and the cocks take their place upon the eggs. If you enter a pigeon-loft at about two o'clock in the afternoon, you will find all the cock-birds sitting—a family arrangement that affords an easy method of discovering which birds are paired with which. The ladies are to be seen taking their respective turns in the same locations early in the morning, in the evening, and all the night. The older a cock-pigeon grows, the more fatherly does he become. So great is his fondness for having a rising family, that an experienced unmated cock-bird, if he can but induce some flighty young hen to lay him a couple of eggs as a great favour, will almost entirely take the charge of hatching and rearing them by himself. We are possessed of an old Blue Antwerp Carrier who by following this line was, with but little assistance from any female, an excellent provider of pie materials, till he succeeded in educating a hen Barb to be a steady wife and mother."

So far Dixon. It is, however, very seldom that the real pigeon-fancier can let his birds mate up themselves in this natural way; he wants to control their unions to suit his own purposes, and this he is able to do by the strong instinct of fidelity when once paired, and which indeed often gives him some little trouble when he wishes to *undo* a previous injudicious match. If a single pair of pigeons can be turned into an empty loft nothing further will be required; but as this can seldom be done, the "matching-pen" shown in Fig. 21 will be found in constant demand early in the season; and in fact several are requisite for a good-sized loft. It consists simply of a large

wired pen, with a sliding wire partition in the middle, which can be withdrawn as soon as the birds appear to have become kindly disposed to each other. There is rarely any difficulty with regard to the cock, unless the cage be in sight of a hen with which he has previously been paired, or—what occasions more difficulty still—with which he has paired himself. In that case the old mate must be removed before he will pair again ; or still better, a piece of white calico be drawn over the front of the pen to hide the other birds, while still affording light inside it. But the hen is often less tractable. If the birds, after being two or three days in the pen, do not seem to agree, which may always be known by the pretty curtseying and bowing of the female in response to the strutting and cooing of the cock, the partition should be withdrawn ; which will soon settle matters, unless the hen should prove—as she sometimes will—mistress of the pen, and beat or drive the cock away. In that case, the hen should be put by herself in a nearly dark pen, where she can hear but not see any of the other birds, and kept thus for several days, a little hempseed

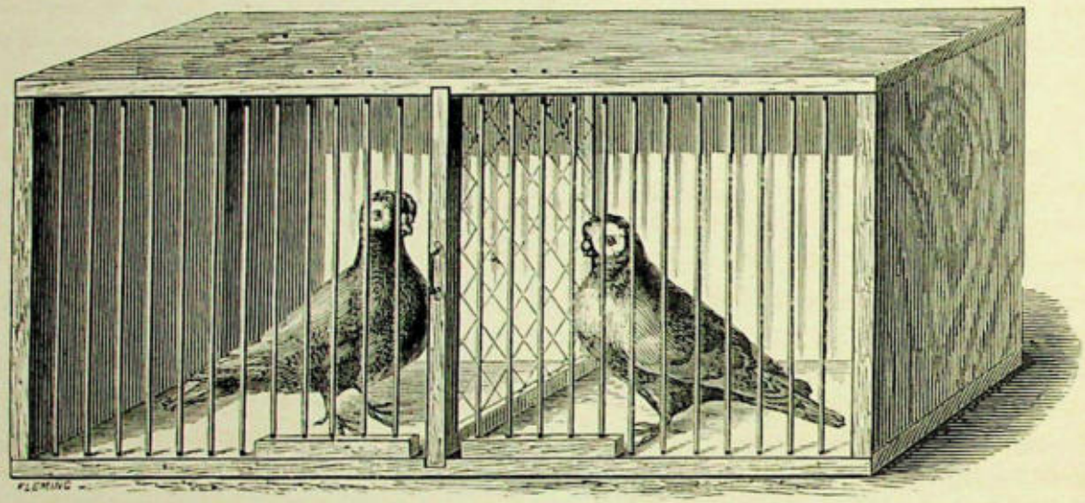


Fig. 21.—MATCHING PEN.

being given her every day. The cock should meanwhile be kept in the matching-pen, and also have a little hempseed. He will thus become at home in the pen, and when the hen is returned after her confinement in the dark, she will, in almost every case, find her master, and submit to him with a good grace. After the birds have been mated three or four days, they may be turned into the loft without any fear of the marriage being dissolved.

Whenever it is desired to dis-match birds and make other arrangements, which will often happen to an experienced fancier, who may perhaps have acquired since the first mating a better cock for his favourite hen, which he accordingly wishes to substitute for her present husband, the proper mode of procedure is to let the hen lay her two eggs, and then immediately take her away both from them and from the cock. She should be kept apart from all male company for at least eight days if her first pair of eggs, a fortnight if her second pair, and three weeks if later in the season, in order that she may have a proper rest before laying again. After this she may be re-matched, and as soon as she has thoroughly accepted her new master, the pair may be returned to the loft in the usual manner. Most pigeons lay in from eight to sixteen days after being mated, some being what are called much "freer breeders" than others. If a hen does not lay within three weeks of mating, she should be separated from the cock for about eight days and then returned to him, which will usually produce eggs; but if after repeating this treatment two or

three times there are still no results, no further attempt should be made to breed from her that season, not only to avoid wasting the services of her companion, but with a view, if possible, to recover her strength sufficiently in time for next year.

It is very necessary to avoid having odd or unmatched birds at liberty in the loft during the time the other birds are either mating or breeding. If there be but one such bird in the loft, be it male or female, it will be sure to cause disturbance amongst the mated birds, either by getting mated to some bird you have had great trouble to get mated to your wishes, or by causing continual fighting, resulting in many broken eggs or dead young ones. All odd birds should therefore be either kept up in pens or in a loft by themselves during the breeding season. For the same reasons, three or four pairs of newly-mated birds should not be turned into the loft together. If they are, there will certainly be quarrelling, as two or more pairs will want to take the same nest-box, which will often be the cause of pairs getting unmatched, and re-mated in a manner which is not desirable. To avoid this, each pair as they are mated should be turned into the loft singly, when they will select one of the unoccupied boxes, and go on quietly. It is very rarely necessary, if this plan be pursued, to adopt any measures for inducing a pair to take to a proper nest, supposing there be one at disposal; but if any trouble be anticipated, any kind of a cage of lath or wire may be fixed to the front of the breeding-box, and the birds then confined for a few days in sight of the rest of the loft, till they have got thoroughly used to their new abode. We can hardly remember an instance, however, where such a plan was necessary, unless the breeding-places were so numerous and so much alike as to puzzle the birds. In this case the plan we prefer is to make some distinction at the entrances: thus, a half-brick may be placed at one hole; and passing the next, something else at the next alternate one, by which the birds will readily learn their proper breeding-places.

One more caution must be added in regard to mating the birds. It frequently happens that, on account of proved sterling qualities, it is desired to breed from an old pigeon as long as any fertile eggs can be obtained from him; and this can only be done by matching him with a very young hen. Such a pair will frequently breed well; and we have had fine strong young ones from an old Barb over ten years of age, which had won many prizes. But it is in such cases particularly needful to avoid having in the same loft any lively young cock *with a strong voice;* for if this be the case, the young hen will frequently leave her eggs to reach and pair with the young bird, even though he be already mated, and thus all the owner's plans are liable to be frustrated. For although pigeons as a rule pair with great fidelity, exceptions are by no means rare; and cases have been known in which a cock has mated with two hens, and even assisted both in hatching and rearing their young; while we once possessed a cock which, though he never aided them in family duties, regularly paired with no less than *five* hens. This case being so very remarkable, we took particular notice of it, and can vouch for the truth of what we state. To the naturalist such instances are particularly interesting; as showing that, under some circumstances, pigeons might possibly become gregarious, like poultry.

We have spoken already of the evil effects of weakening the hen by over-breeding; but there is another cause which has much to do with the abundance of small weakly hens as compared with cocks. The two eggs which a pigeon lays are almost invariably cock and hen, the cock being almost as invariably the first one. When the first has been laid the hen generally sits upon it with more or less steadiness, in consequence of which this egg usually hatches many hours before the other, and on account of the really enormous rapidity with which the young pigeon grows, it is considerably larger by the time the second egg is hatched; and having more strength, gets far more than its share of nutriment, the other being proportionately starved, and not unfrequently

dying altogether; while if it lives, it is stunted and weakened, and very likely grows up with a crooked breast-bone, and imparts a weakly constitution to its progeny in turn. To prevent this, some "dummy" eggs should be kept at hand; and as soon as the first egg is laid it should be taken away, and the "dummy" substituted until the second is laid, when both may be given to the birds, and will be hatched nearly at the same time. For these dummies the eggs of common pigeons answer well, and may be boiled hard to prevent their breaking; but as pigeons never eat their eggs as fowls do, a breakage is of little moment. Some fanciers use dummies made of ivory or bone.

Such small hens as we have been speaking of are not of nearly the same value for breeding purposes as a fine large bird; for even when—as is the case of Barbs and most Toys—great size is a defect for the show-pen, the strength of constitution denoted by size (as a rule) is of the greatest importance. Small weakly hens are often very troublesome with their first eggs, and if the owner is a beginner, and does not see the signs of distress, frequently perish; but with proper care this may be avoided. A young hen should always be watched after going to nest; and if she appears evidently ill and weak, and cannot lay her egg, she should be taken in the hand, and a few drops of oil dropped from a bottle into the vent, or a quill-feather from one of the birds be dipped in the oil and introduced a little way, turning it gently round a few times. The hen should then be placed where the cock cannot reach her; the best plan being to return her to her own selected breeding-box and shut the cock out; well supplying the whole box with sawdust, in order that the egg may not break, even if the hen lays it when not in the nest-pan. The oil will generally cause the egg to be laid without difficulty; but in bad cases a capsule of castor-oil should be given internally as well. Should even this treatment fail to enable the hen to get rid of the egg, there is still one chance left; take the hen and hold her lower parts in water as warm as she can bear without pain, or in the steam from boiling water. If this does not effect the purpose, the case must be regarded as hopeless. In the event of the egg being laid, the second will usually follow without difficulty; but the hen should be kept from the cock for at least a week afterwards, in order to recruit her strength; for loving as her mate may be at other times, it is most singular that, when in such a weak state as we are now speaking of, he will often peck at her so fearfully, in his anxiety to drive her to nest, as in some cases to lay the brain bare. In the case of small weakly hens, therefore, the owner should always be on the watch to guard against this when necessary.

About the end of August the sexes should be separated. We are aware that many young birds are bred in September; but as a rule, these young ones very seldom survive many seasons, owing to its being always so late in the year before they begin to moult. Very few seem to have noticed this; but we have seen so many birds die when moulting in the winter months, that we have frequently made inquiries, and have almost always found that they had been bred late in the season. The parents are also somewhat weakened, as already mentioned; so that all considerations alike should lead the pigeon-fancier to be content with a breeding-season beginning and ending within moderate limits.

On the eighteenth day from the laying of the last egg the young ones should hatch; and if the first egg has been taken away as we recommended, at about the same time. The fertility of the eggs can be detected after about a week, in the usual manner, by examining them with the aid of transmitted light, when the barren ones appear clear, and those hatching more or less opaque. All operations of this kind, and all approaches to the birds for the purpose of shifting the young, &c., should be performed without taking the light near the birds, but the eggs or young ones taken away almost in darkness. It often assists hatching very greatly, especially in dry weather, to dip

the eggs for a moment at a time several times in warm water, allowing the water to dry off between the dips, two days before they are due.

Of all newly-hatched birds a pigeon is one of the most helpless. It cannot stand, it cannot peck, it cannot even see; but is entirely dependent upon its parents or its owner, and it is therefore provided for by Nature in a most singular manner. The "pigeon's milk," which has pointed so many a joke, is no myth, but a veritable existence; the fact being, that as the time for hatching approaches the crops of both old birds secrete a soft substance closely resembling curd, which forms the sole food of the young pigeons for some days, after which its quantity slowly diminishes, and it becomes gradually mixed with the grain more or less softened, till by degrees the young pigeon is thus introduced to hard food and can feed itself. This "soft food," as it is called, is pumped up by the old ones with a sort of vomiting action, and the little pigeons have just sufficient sense to feel about for the bills of the old birds, into which they insert their own, and are thus fed; they will feel in the same way for the finger if held to them. It is singular, but true, that the beak of a young pigeon being thus almost entirely intended for a kind of suction, is much *thicker and larger* in proportion to the body than in after life, besides being of a soft and fleshy character. It looks immense at first in proportion to the bird, but gradually shrinks and hardens.

If all goes well, the young pigeons grow amazingly: at a rate, in fact, which we believe to be unequalled by any other family of birds, and throwing the growth of chickens entirely into the shade. When hatched, the average weight is about half an ounce; but Mr. Dixon found by experiment that one of this weight weighed on the sixth day four and a half ounces, on the very next day five and three-quarter ounces, on the ninth day eight and a quarter ounces, and at the age of *one month* twelve and a quarter ounces, somewhat heavier than one of its parents. If we compare the size of an ordinary chicken at one month old with that of its parents, we shall see the vast difference in growth; which Mr. Dixon ingeniously accounts for by the fact that the young pigeon makes no exertion all the time, but does nothing except to grow, and has also "the assistance of *two digestions* in addition to its own." However this may be—and he is probably right—it may be taken as a rule, that unless you can "almost see" a young pigeon grow, something is wrong—it is not thriving as it ought to do. If the parents are any strong hardy sort, such as Dragoons, Antwerps, or even most Toys, this will rarely be the case; it is only necessary to see that the *old* birds have all they want, and everything will go well, *they* taking all the trouble and responsibility of rearing off the owner's hands. But it has been found by experience that the more highly-bred varieties are "bad feeders," and that in very few cases can they be trusted to bring their young up to maturity. Hence the practice of employing "feeders," or nurses, which are necessary to all fanciers of the "high-class" varieties, and to which the young are transferred when a few days old to be reared, only being left long enough with their own parents to "feed off the soft food," which would otherwise make them sick, and cause the hen to be much longer in laying again than if allowed to feed young for a few days. Common Dragoons and Antwerps are very favourite birds for feeders, and so are Jacobins; but nearly any common hardy pigeons will do, the kind being of much less consequence than a tame and quiet disposition, and readiness to take to fresh young ones without suspicion. These qualities are to a great extent hereditary, and are so valuable to a high-class fancier, that we have known several who bred their feeders almost as scrupulously as their fancy pigeons, and would not accept £5 each for some of them (though utterly worthless in any fancy point of view), so valued and trusted were they for *rearing* the more prized specimens.

The young require to be left with the old birds, in general, from six to eight days, in order to relieve them of their soft food, when they should be shifted to the feeders. But in shifting one

caution is very necessary, viz.: not to shift to old birds which have hatched *before* the young ones it is desired to rear. Should this be done the young will in all probability perish, through the food now supplied being too "hard," or too far advanced for them, in conformity with what we have already explained as to the gradual change in its character, by increasing mixture with grain, which the young cannot digest till the proper age. On the contrary, should the feeders have hatched three or four days *after* the breeding-birds it will be all the better, and do the young a great deal of good, since nothing brings on a young pigeon so well as this extra allowance of soft food; and if the fancier has an extra good pair of birds, but rather small and weakly, he can adopt no better plan for increasing the size of the young than by arranging for a shift to birds that have hatched a full week later, and which will thus give the young an extra week of infant diet.

Another caution may be necessary. We have seen how easily, in the case of most pigeons, the young ones may be "shifted" at almost any time desired within a fortnight; and pigeons will also readily take to and sit upon other eggs than their own: but it will *not* answer to give to any pair eggs partly hatched, unless laid at the same time as their own, and therefore due to hatch at the same date. The reason is obvious; the eggs hatching before the ordinary time of incubation is expired, there is *no soft food ready* for the young, and they must therefore perish. One day or perhaps two does not matter; but success when the shifted eggs have been sat upon more than this is very doubtful.

If the shift takes place within ten days or a fortnight of hatching, it is well to give the common squeakers to the old birds whose young have been removed. Being of a hardier nature, they will often live, although the food is "by rights" too hard for them; but even should they only live a few days, it will greatly assist the old birds in thoroughly feeding off the contents of their crops. If there is only a few days difference in age, they will often be reared till large enough to come in useful for pies; if not, they may be killed or otherwise disposed of.

If there are, however, no feeders ready to take the young ones when required, and they evidently need better feeding than their parents can give them, they may generally be saved by the following plan:—With one of the small coffee-mills grind into meal a mixture of Indian-corn, grey peas, and tares, which mix up with boiling milk and leave to soak all night. Supposing the natural food to have failed, as is probably the case, at about a fortnight old, feed the young ones upon this, warm, for a week or ten days, by means of a kind of spoon going off at the tip into a sort of tube, and which is easily made with a bit of "tea-lead;" or still better, from a small india-rubber syringe with an ivory nozzle, which is the most perfect implement of any. At the end of that time soak grey peas and small beans all night in water, and feed on these three times a day, always soaking them for a little while in *warm* water before feeding, in order not to be so cold, which is often found to disagree with the young birds. This will seem a great deal of trouble to some, but a very enthusiastic fancier cares for nothing if he can only rear a fine bird; and some of the very finest Carriers we have ever seen were reared in this manner from a fortnight old. Not that anything can quite equal the natural food of the parents; but it may be useful to know, that even should their food fail, and no feeders be ready to take their place, the young may still be reared to become fine birds if only the parents continue to sit upon them and give them warmth. If they fail in this also, refusing to sit upon them as well as failing to feed them, then it is useless to make the attempt, unless the fancier can contrive some kind of "artificial mother," such as is used for chicks. We have never tried this in the case of pigeons; but can see no reason why it should not succeed, in case of necessity, in saving the life of a good bird. However this may be, warmth somehow is as necessary as food, and without it it is useless to try.

Artificial feeding to a less extent is often necessary, or at least very beneficial, on other

occasions, which the fancier can only ascertain by carefully watching his birds. Sometimes a pair of strong young ones will take all the soft food from the parents in a very few days; when they fall off and become so weak for want of it, that the parents hardly attempt to feed them at all. In all such cases the young should have their crops filled every night with the artificial soft food, when they will soon become stronger, and the old ones will take to feeding them again. Directly they do this the artificial food may be left off. Later on, say at about three weeks old, when the soft food is entirely gone, and the old birds give the young ones nothing but grain which has been soaked in their crops, it will often happen that the crops of the young are badly filled at night; in which case the young birds should be crammed every night till the crops are tolerably full with the soaked grain as before directed, always putting this into *warm* water before administering. Such treatment will keep the young ones from falling off in condition. Again, it frequently happens that one of the two young ones—usually a hen, as we stated a little while back—is a great deal larger than the other, especially if the first egg has not been taken from the hen as advised by us. If the difference is great, the strong bird is apt to get the lion's share of the food, being more clamorous; and hence the little one dwindles still more, and ultimately perishes. But if in such cases the small one gets a few nights of this cramming—soft or hard according to its age—it will grow rapidly till both are equal in size; and thus two fine birds may be reared instead of one.

All such operations should be performed with especial care not to frighten the old birds. If these are disturbed carelessly at night, the hen is apt, if wild, and especially if a Carrier, to fly off, and not go on the birds again for hours. When such a case occurs, the hen should be caught in the dark, and replaced gently in the nest-pan; but to avoid it, the light should be kept at a good distance, and the hand, *well warmed*, gently and stealthily introduced under the bird to abstract her young one. The beans and peas being rather swelled, the crops are soon filled, when the birds should be returned in the same way. The easiest way of feeding is to put a gutta-percha ring, about a quarter of an inch aperture and the same in thickness, over the point of the upper mandible, which serves as a gag to keep it open, when the peas and beans are easily slipped in the opening behind. Many fanciers put the beans in the mouth, and put the beaks of the young ones to it, which is a very easy plan. Some folks would perhaps shudder at this, but for our part we cannot see that there is anything about it more offensive than a young lady teaching a pet canary to take food from between *her* pretty lips. However, it is perfectly optional either way, and we are not ashamed to say we have reared plenty of birds by both the methods we have described.

Another useful plan we have often employed, when the old birds did not appear to feed their young sufficiently, and these were accordingly ceasing to make satisfactory progress, is to give the old birds a good feed of rice boiled in milk in the evening. At first there is often a little difficulty in getting them to eat it; but once this is got over they are inordinately fond of it, and will eat such a quantity as to ensure their young ones a plentiful supply. Oatmeal cake broken into small pieces is also good for them. We have seen a marvellous difference worked in a few days by this method; but it is only suitable when the food of the old birds only partially fails, and cannot be depended upon altogether. Such expedients are also useless in the case of birds—such as high-class Barbs—the conformation of whose beaks places *mechanical* difficulties in the way of feeding their young after a certain age.

As soon as the young birds are able to leave the nest we have described, they will usually be able to peck for themselves. Whether they want food given to them, besides what they pick up or obtain from their parents, must be ascertained by feeling their crops at night. These ought to be fairly full of grain, and should be filled artificially if needed; but by degrees less and less

of this will be necessary, till the young birds are entirely independent. But *soaked* beans and peas must always be used, both to make them easier of digestion and to supply the place of drinking, until the young ones are able to satisfy their own wants. Pigeons brought up by hand are much longer in learning to feed than those which are fed by their parents in the natural way.

While the young pigeons are growing, their nest-pan should be cleaned out from time to time, and clean sawdust substituted. This should not, however, be done too often, and the same care must be taken to avoid startling the old birds as we have already spoken of in relation to other matters.

As soon as the young pigeons are fairly independent, it will conduce greatly to success if they can be turned into a separate loft or compartment of their own. Some old birds are very tyrannical over the as yet weakly youngsters; but birds all of the year, especially if all of one variety, are much more peaceable, and it is always found that they thrive much better if thus kept to themselves. Tiresome as nearly all pigeon diseases are when once contracted, it is fortunately true that the birds are little liable to any of them, if only given room, air, and exercise, with fair attention to cleanliness and gravel, as well as food. We repeat, therefore, let the beginner, more especially, follow our advice in keeping few birds in proportion to his space, and we assure him again that such a plan will save him numerous anxieties and troubles, and of itself go far to ensure his possessing at least a fine and vigorous stock, which, so far as their "condition" goes, will be the envy of many a brother amateur. Especially, if he can allow his birds to fly at large, let him do so; he will then have less trouble from disease, and stronger and hardier birds than he can ensure in any other way.



CHAPTER V.

BREEDING AND EXHIBITING.

WE would strongly advise all who wish to begin pigeon-keeping, to consider first of all with some little care concerning the variety they select. For pigeons differ so very greatly, and some of them require such different management from others, that perseverance seldom holds out in the case of a breed not really admired; whereas, if one or two varieties are selected which are really "fancied," so great is the charm of the pursuit that the owner will probably get more and more attached to them the longer he continues, and if he has any judgment, or any tolerable "eye" for the birds, is almost certain in time to produce good specimens, at least if he has commenced with any stock of decent quality. But above all, let the new beginner avoid keeping too many varieties; as such a course almost always causes disappointment and ultimate abandonment of the pursuit, and if it does not, at least results in a continual "chopping and changing," which is both a hindrance to success and a sad enemy to the pocket. Moreover, those who begin in this way hardly ever attain a sound knowledge of *any* pigeon; and when they do happen to possess good specimens, most probably are not aware of the fact unless informed of it by some more skilful friend.

On the other hand, by commencing with one, two, or we will allow even three varieties to which the fancy really inclines, the owner may hope in a short time to become at least fairly acquainted with the points of the birds for himself, so as to be able to see at a glance the slightest "standard" fault either in his own birds or those of his friends, and to know for himself their real value. Once as far on as this, the fancy has "got" him; for we have noted again and again that nothing pleases a young fancier more than being able to point out to some skilled friend that *his* bird is faulty in this or that point, of which his own bird is possessed in a superior degree. To see and know such a superiority in any one important point gives a great deal of inward pleasure, and from that time such a one usually takes more interest in his birds than ever, and begins to study the various other points in a way which he did not before. In order to attain such a discriminating knowledge, it is of great service to belong to some one of the various private societies established in different parts of the kingdom for the cultivation of pigeons; but if this be impossible, we would strongly advise the amateur to attend the first and every other public exhibition known as likely to be a *good* one, and there take particular notice and give careful study to the winning birds, picking up as much as he can from any more skilled friend or other fancier he may be able to meet with; as such free *viva voce* comments in presence of the birds, although often grossly coloured, and, indeed, perhaps scarcely ever to be depended on as giving the fair merits of the specimens, are of wonderful efficacy in bringing to light the most minor and hidden *faults*, and are thus most useful to an inexperienced breeder. By thus noticing the best birds, and all that can be said against them, the young beginner will find he has gained a great deal which it is difficult to pick up in any other way.

Some may think us too narrow in the choice we have allowed. We do not say it is impossible

for an amateur to widen his range later on; but we do say, and wish our opinion to be so expressed that it may not possibly be mistaken, that after long observation we consider it *impossible* for a young fancier to become in any moderate time a good judge of a lot of different varieties; and we have also seen again and again, that when a man keeps what he knows little about, his interest is likely soon to become as little as his knowledge. What we wish is to add to the *real pleasures* of those who read these pages, and to give a wholesome change of thought and interest; and this can only be thoroughly enjoyed by such of them as shall be capable of appreciating the beauties of a perfect or nearly perfect specimen. We will go further, and say that we *never* knew one case of an amateur fancier who kept a large number of varieties, and was at the same time a competent judge of them all. The nearest approach to an exception was in the case of a late much-respected fancier, who kept many toy pigeons, and whose stock certainly never was surpassed; but it should be added that he had the services of an equally well-known and respected dealer, Mr. Ovens, who had a standing commission to look out for him, and thus kept his stock up to the mark. An extensive dealer, in fact, is the only man who can, in our opinion, attain a thorough knowledge of nearly all the varieties; and for this the reasons are very obvious. Every bird he purchases is bought with the design of selling at a profit, and thus he adds a little to his knowledge with every bird that passes through his hands; while every mistake, whenever he makes one, is brought home to him at once in the most practical and convincing way by the pecuniary loss. For this reason nearly all large dealers are good judges—that is, they *know* perfectly well which are the best birds at a show, even when self-interest may hinder their acknowledging it; but as this work is not intended to make successful dealers, we have given what we know to be sound advice; to which we may add that we have known scores of cases where a young fancier began by sticking to one variety, wisely chosen, and, by giving proper space to a *few* birds of good stock, has in a very short time made his mark, and attained such a position that the older fanciers, and even men with unlimited money at command, learnt to dread competing against him. Such a course is easier now than formerly; as in old times amateurs had scarcely any opportunity of comparing their birds together, whereas the numerous shows now offer every facility in this respect, and give a great advantage to the fancier of the present day over his predecessors. Indeed, we have often wondered at the progress made by our ancestors, seeing that all writers upon pigeons hitherto have carefully abstained from giving any hints on the most important points concerning the judicious matching of birds. It must have been uphill work indeed in those days; and it will give us pleasure if we are able in any degree to smooth the path for others, which we shall endeavour to do by explaining *every* point of breeding and management as far as we can, but especially those points which bear upon the first producing, and then maintaining, a first-class strain of birds.

Perhaps here we may be allowed a few brief words concerning our qualifications for such a task; partly because some may question it, and partly because it will further elucidate the various means by which competent knowledge is to be attained. We say some may question it; because it is generally supposed that dealers are not breeders, and know little about breeding, and our own occupation is well known. But we have *bred* Carriers, Pouters, Barbs, Tumblers, Jacobins, Turbits, &c., which have gained against all comers the first position at the most celebrated shows; and few "breeders" can perhaps boast of more success even in the way of breeding prize birds. But we have obtained still greater knowledge of this part of our subject by taking particular notice of the quality of the progeny whenever we have supplied good birds to amateurs, and especially when, as frequently happened, we supplied breeding pairs and the matching was left in our own hands. In cases too numerous to mention we have also been applied to for birds expressly to match with other birds already possessed; and in all such cases, when the bird on one side or

the other was of good quality, we have taken especial note both of any particular progeny and of the *general* produce, and are not going beyond the truth in saying that birds thus mated by our advice have produced many of the very best specimens exhibited. We have also made mistakes, and met with disappointment; and in many such cases have been allowed to supply another bird and to watch the next produce, which has or has not come nearer the mark. We have also, at many different times, had the privilege of seeing the studs of nearly all the amateur fanciers in the kingdom, and never missed an opportunity of seeing how their birds were mated, or of noting the progeny of those which we had fancied would produce the best offspring. This has not been the case during a short time only, but has already continued during a moderate lifetime, having been almost trained to be a fancier by a parent who was a fancier before us, and a good one too; who knew all the points of horses, poultry, pigeons, rabbits, and many dogs, and who was seldom content to keep for long a third-rate specimen, if a first-class one was to be had. In this way we were literally brought up to become a fancier; and having, from the nature of our occupation, seen more of the evils which undoubtedly do attach to such pursuits than most men, and knowing fully the very worst side of the matter, we affirm deliberately that the advantages and benefits in most cases far outweigh them, and that a wise parent has cause to rejoice when his sons show a decided *penchant* for any such pursuits as we are here concerned with. It is to help such young beginners, and to smooth away such of the difficulties as may be removed from their path, that we purpose freely to impart *all* that we have acquired during our long experience, keeping back no secrets whatever, but doing our very best in every way to impart the conditions and means of success.

As we shall go fully into the details of matching under the different heads, we will only add here our advice, to begin if possible with really *good birds*. We do not mean that it may not often be proper to keep at first a few quite common pigeons, just to get a little into their ways and habits. If pigeons have never been kept before this is sometimes advisable; and the same birds will afterwards come in useful as feeders. But when the fancy itself is taken up in earnest, we would far rather advise even one thoroughly good pair of breeders, and two or three pairs of feeders to rear the young to the greatest advantage, than several pairs of mediocre stock. A good stock, bred with judgment, will always pay its way, barring disease, and often leave a very fair balance; while pigeons are, on the whole, less trouble to attend to than poultry, on account of their feeding from a hopper and rearing their own young. It is notorious that once let a fancier become noted for the quality of his birds, and he can command a good price for only a middling specimen, as experienced breeders well know that it is not always the best birds which produce the best progeny. Two first-class birds mated together sometimes produce mere trash to look at; but this very trash may subsequently produce wonderful specimens; so that a good judge will often give more for a pigeon he knows to be bred from first-class birds, even if it is not much to look at, than for a much better-looking bird he knows nothing of; in fact, a good fancier will not cross his strain with any bird, however grand it looks, unless he knows something of its breeding. It appears, in fact, as if pigeons had an especially strong tendency to throw back to the *grand-parents*, so that in some strains bad and good generations seem to alternate in a most curious way. But this can be got rid of by degrees and with care; and a strain which has bred grand birds for three generations running becomes exceedingly valuable, and is eagerly sought after. For further remarks on breeding, and for details, we will refer to the following and subsequent chapters.

As soon as the amateur knows his birds to be pretty good, we strongly advise him to exhibit in good company. We do so, presuming that he knows he has no real chance of winning. If he has, so much the better; but even if not, it is still of importance to him to see his own best specimens in close proximity to the best birds of the day, that he may compare them, and learn

thus both their good points and their deficiencies. This is especially the great benefit of the private Societies. If the pigeons have space, air, and exercise, they will almost always be in good condition and hard feather, and will need no special preparation beyond careful cleaning and dressing of such parts as wattles, &c., and such more special treatment as will be freely spoken of when we come to the different varieties, even including such "dodging" as can scarcely be called honest, perhaps, but which must be treated of in its place. White birds will, however, often require washing, which should be done with good white soap boiled in water with a little soda, washing the bird thoroughly and rinsing it well, afterwards drenching it with a very weak solution of borax, containing a little honey; it should then be kept in a tolerably warm place in a basket to dry.

Pigeons shown in pairs should be separated about two days before the show. They will then,

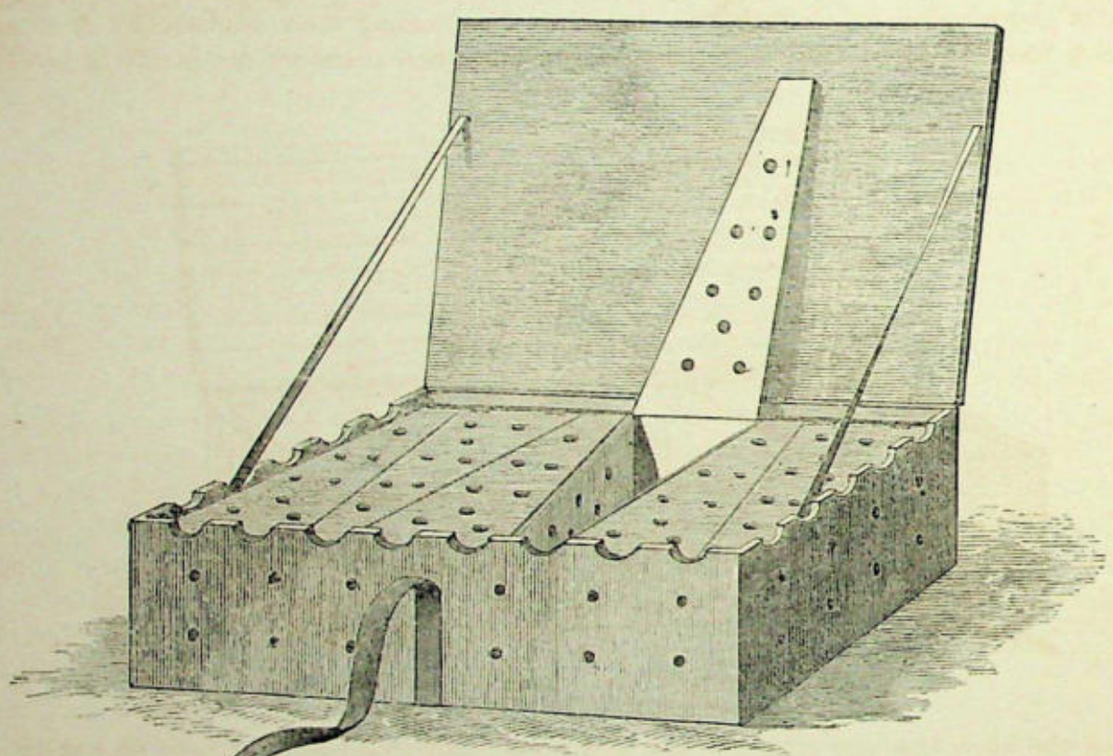


Fig. 22.—BOX FOR POUTERS.

when put together in the show-pen, in their pleasure at again meeting each other, play up to one another in a lively manner, and show themselves off to the best advantage; while if left in company as usual, they will appear when in the pen much more listless and tame, which is a great drawback.

The birds being got into the requisite condition, it is of course important to get them to the show in good order, much of which depends upon proper package. The nature of this will depend a little upon the kind of pigeons exhibited. Fig. 22 represents the best kind of box we are acquainted with for sending Pouters to be exhibited, made to contain six birds, though the number of compartments may of course be varied, and one or two boxes of various sizes should be kept in store, as to a constant exhibitor it is of much consequence to save carriage. As made for six, the box should measure *inside* 25 × 16 inches, by 9 inches in depth, and is divided into six compartments by partitions. It will, however, be noticed that each pair of compartments is divided

slantwise, and not rectangularly, so as to make each much wider at one end than the other. This will be found to fit nicely the body of the bird, the shoulders of course going in the wide end, which quite prevents it from turning round, keeps it in position, and prevents it breaking or spoiling the flight-feathers or the tail. The bottom of each compartment should be well furnished with wheat-straw cut short, to prevent the bird from soiling its plumage; or clover chaff is excellent for the same purpose. Each compartment has a separate hinged lid, with a small fastening at the other end, so that when one bird is put into its place it remains secure while the others are being attended to. When all are in place the outer lid covers the whole. The arrangements for giving air must be particularly studied. There should be half-inch holes all round the box, and also in the separate lids; while, to make these last available, half-round pieces are cut out all round the top edges of the box, as clearly shown in the figure. These holes are not only for ventilation, which is of course necessary, but to keep the birds from soiling their plumage by their own breath, as it has been found that when confined in a box where there are not plenty of holes to

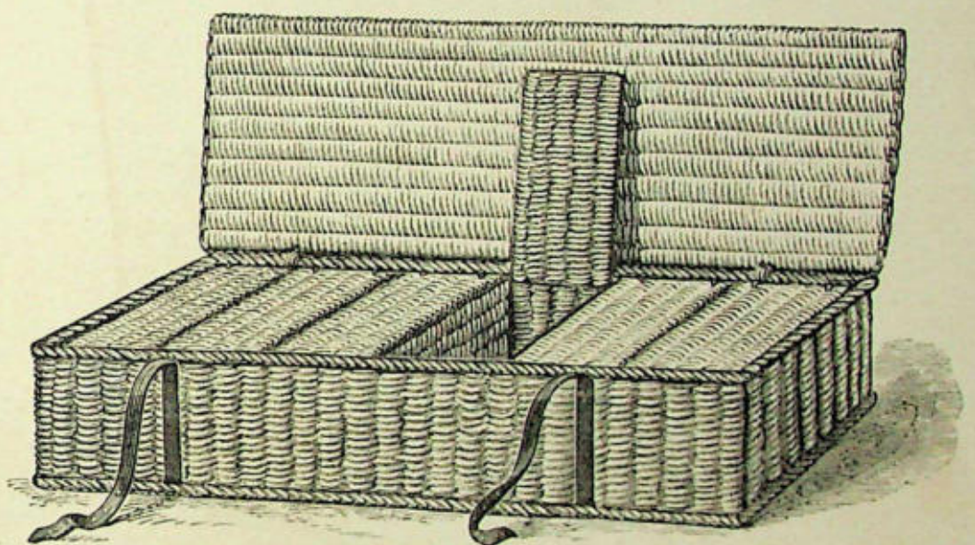


Fig. 23.—Basket for Pigeons generally.

carry it off, the whole plumage gets quite wet, and so dull and soiled as to be unfit for exhibition. Such a box as the above answers all these purposes, and will be found excellently adapted either for sending to exhibitions or for despatching birds upon approval to intending purchasers.

Fig. 23 represents a basket to answer the same purpose for other varieties of pigeons. The only difference that need be made is, that when Fantails are exhibited the inside of each compartment ought to be lined with cloth. so as not to break the tail-feathers, which are else very apt to get into the interstices of the wicker, and thus get either broken or twisted, which quite spoils one of the chief beauties of a Fantail, whose appearance depends almost entirely upon the condition it is in. For this reason some Fantail fanciers use a box instead of a basket; but the lined basket is in our opinion the best, besides the important fact that it is so much lighter in weight, and therefore costs much less for carriage. We show our basket also as constructed in six compartments (which for an average exhibitor is a very convenient number), and the same construction will suit well for every variety except Pouters, with only some difference in the size. For Carriers or Runts this should be 32 × 13 inches, and 8 inches deep, but for other varieties it should be somewhat smaller. If to the two straps shown be added one in the middle, or a short

strap joining the two others, such a basket can be carried any moderate distance with ease and convenience.

Fig. 24 represents a box of somewhat different character, which is in frequent use amongst members of private Societies, for the purpose of conveniently carrying their specimens in the hand. It is so constructed as to effectually prevent the passer-by from having any suspicion of what it contains, no holes being visible except under very careful scrutiny, in order to avoid the great annoyance of other people endeavouring to stare in and observe the contents of the box. It is an especial favourite for carrying Carriers or Pouters, and for this purpose should measure inside 15 × 8 inches, and 13 inches deep. As will be seen, it is divided into four compartments inside, the perpendicular partitions being arranged diagonally, as in the Pouter-box shown in Fig. 22 ; and the lids of the lower compartments lifting up with a hinge, and when put down, after

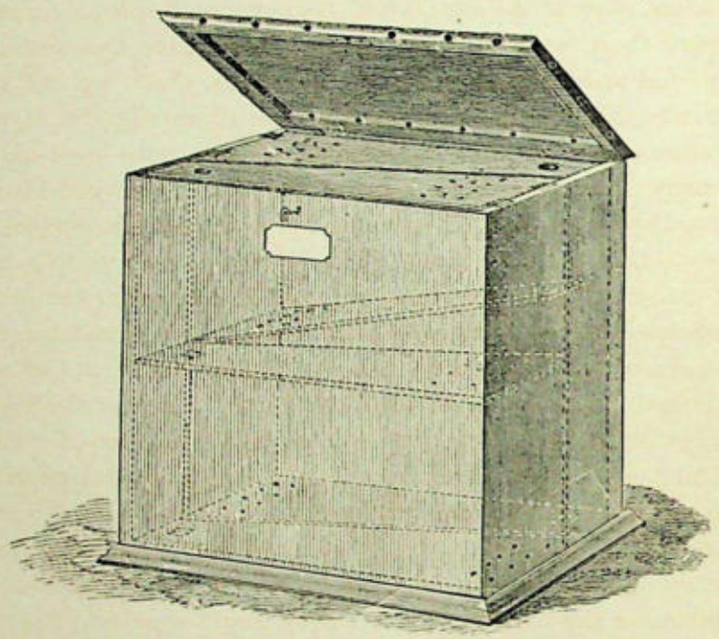


Fig. 24.—Box for Carrying Pigeons.

the bottom birds are inside, forming the floors of the top compartments. The same size will also answer well for other varieties, each compartment holding in that case a pair, unless in the case of Runts. Air is given by eight holes, a quarter of an inch in diameter, in the bottom of the box, which stands on four knobs, so as to raise it a little from the floor, and thus admit air through the holes ; and there are also holes in the middle and top lids, while finally the outside lid is made with a deep moulding all round, through which other holes are bored in such a manner as to be almost invisible. In this way, without being perceived, there is a free but moderate circulation of air through the whole from bottom to top, which both gives the birds plenty to breathe, and prevents any dampness from the condensed moisture. These boxes are often made to look so neat and handsome that they might be supposed to contain valuable instruments or other property, and thus enable a gentleman to carry his own pigeons without exciting any annoying curiosity.

Other forms of boxes and baskets are in use ; but from the foregoing, any reader will be able, if he pleases, to contrive one for himself. We need not say that for a single pair of birds any good simple box, with a few holes cut to give ventilation, will answer the purpose, except perhaps

in the case of Pouters, which really require their box to be fitted to them; but where several pairs are exhibited, it saves much money for expense of carriage to have the whole contained in one well-contrived package.

Many valuable birds perish from exhibition, on which subject we should like to say a few emphatic words. We do not refer only to birds which are too often shown, and suffer accordingly; no doubt this is often the case, but each amateur has the remedy so far in his own hands, and if he commits the fault deserves the punishment. But apart from this, at very many shows there is neither proper food, proper food-vessels, nor proper attendance. Indeed, with regard to some breeds, it is not too much to say that this is the case at the majority of shows, in spite of the promises so freely made that "every care will be taken of the specimens." For instance, it is well known that good Carriers and Barbs cannot see to feed on single grains—the eye-wattle obstructing the sight; and times without number we have seen fine birds of these breeds return from a two-days' show *without having tasted food*, through proper tins not being provided. At many shows where there were men engaged to look after the birds, we have found them utterly neglected, and fed and watered the whole ourselves, which we can state distinctly was the *only* feeding they ever received; and far more, Carriers especially, die in this way—that is, from *sheer starvation* at shows, and its after consequences—than from over-exhibition. Besides this, improper food kills many; and many birds reach home violently purged from eating the food which has been, according to the usual plan, thrown into the pens and become soiled by the excrements, the owners never suspecting the real cause. The remedy is very simple, and we would strongly advise all owners of really valuable birds to *refuse to exhibit*, however tempting the schedule, unless they know the committee of the show will carry out the few needful measures. These are, to provide a meat-tin and a water-tin for every pen; to furnish the meat-tins with a mixture of good sound old grey peas and tares, which will suit *all* birds, whatever their previous diet may have been, and which cannot be said of other food; and to have these tins, for Carriers and Barbs, fixed *inside* the pens. This last is highly necessary, as the heavy wattles prevent them in most cases from putting their heads through the wires to the outside; but for other varieties the outside is the best. No more than this is required; and if a committee find such simple elements of good management burdensome, they have no business to hold a show. If those who do carry out such regulations would announce the fact, we feel sure they would soon find the benefit of such a course; and others who did not would soon find themselves compelled by want of support to adopt better management.

Finally, we may just say a word on the proper way of handling or holding a pigeon. This is with the breast across the palm of the hand, the head towards the little finger or body of the holder. The legs should be allowed to pass through between the first and second fingers, when the thumb can be brought over the back, and will hold the bird perfectly secure. In *catching* a pigeon, the best way, if possible, is to get the hand over the back, with the forefinger in front of the neck, and the thumb under the breast.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CARRIER.

How this variety of pigeons obtained the name by which it is known is by no means certain. By the various anecdotes he gives, Moore seems to have thought that it was this pigeon that used to be employed as a messenger, which is certainly not absolutely impossible, since no doubt its points were not so highly developed in those days, and its near relation, the Dragoon, is a very fair homing bird. In other words, it may be that the name was given when the bird was little better than a modern Dragoon, from which it has been bred up since into the high-class Carrier; and it is indeed perfectly certain that considerable development *has* been made since Moore's time, since he describes the beak as an inch and a half long, much shorter than would pass muster now. But the greatest difficulty about this view is, that the eye-wattle, which is the principal obstacle in the way of the bird's "flying" at the present day, is by no means a difficult point to breed, and seems to have always existed, since we have any record, in a very high state of perfection. Thus, besides the descriptions of the bird in old pigeon writers themselves, we find Lord Orford, in his "Voyage Round the Fens" (now very rare), making the following remark: "I observed in going to Deeping a man in a one-horse chaise, with large warts round his eyelids, much resembling a Carrier Pigeon." The date of this work is 1774; and it proves, therefore, that so much as one hundred years ago the Carrier was heavily wattled round the eye, and not in this respect like a Dragoon.

Some enthusiastic fanciers think the name was bestowed on account of the noble "carriage" of the bird, which stands and walks like the "king of pigeons," as he is universally admitted to be. This is an attractive theory; but, alas! candour compels us to state that no student of the English language can believe in it for one moment, since at the date when the name must have been given it could not possibly have been bestowed for such a reason, and even now would be grammatically and etymologically incorrect. Perhaps on the whole the first theory is the most probable, in spite of its difficulties; but however this may be, nothing annoys a genuine Carrier fancier more *now* than to hear his pets confounded with the "carrying" pigeon, which he scarcely considers, we fear, as a "fancy" bird at all, and which from *his* point of view is indeed not so, though it is as strictly bred for other qualities as are his own cherished specimens.

The modern Carrier is indeed of all pigeons, except the Pouter and the Barb, the very least adapted to "carry" messages, the development of wattle round the eye and upon the beak hindering the sight so much as to quite incapacitate it for such employment, notwithstanding the fact that the flight muscles are the most powerful of all varieties. The young birds, indeed, before their wattles are grown, can fly powerfully, and if let out at liberty from the first will continue to fly round their house with much freedom, and be better for the exercise; but if they are let out for the first time when come to maturity, the sight is so much obstructed that they are quite timorous, and soon become lost. Common birds, in which the wattles are less developed, can of course fly pretty

well; and some which might more properly be termed stout Dragoons have been trained to fly fair distances; but these are not such birds as we have to consider here.

Few pigeons are so fascinating as the Carrier, when once thoroughly understood and appreciated. First of all, there are so many points or qualities, or "properties," as the old fanciers called them, required to make a model bird, and which *in combination* (for any one of them, except a good beak-wattle, can be obtained with comparative ease) are so difficult to obtain, that no one has ever yet possessed a perfect bird, and very few have obtained specimens even approaching perfection. Secondly, from this cause high-class birds are so exceedingly valuable that they are usually in the possession of men of means—the very aristocracy of the pigeon-fancy—which of itself has an attraction to many; though we have also known poor but skilful breeders, by perseverance and judgment, beat the best that money could produce, the very difficulty adding to the charm. Then, again, there are so many attractive points to be seen, even in an imperfect specimen, and so many striking attitudes to be observed in a bird of good carriage, from whatever point he may be viewed—he looks so bold, wild, and daring—that it is no wonder he has so many admirers. We have heard it said that, whether he breeds them or not, "no one is a true pigeon-fancier who does not admire a Carrier;" and it is at least true that nearly all pigeon-fanciers, whatever their own favourite pigeon be, do give a lingering examination to the Carrier pens.

There are three stages in a Carrier's life, in all which, if it be really a fine specimen, it challenges admiration in its own way. The first is when the bird has attained the age of about six months, an age which to many is especially attractive, and when many a young beginner imagines he has become possessed of an almost perfect bird. This agreeable delusion very possibly lasts to the age of nearly ten months, when the beak-wattle begins to break out, and too often so irregularly, or more on one side than the other, or in some other way it is *not* desired to do, that the owner, if a good judge, sees at once his chance is gone. There are, in fact, endless faults in the formation of the beak-wattle alone, which too often vex the most experienced breeders, and dash to the ground all their hopes of a favourite bird. The second stage is from the age of eighteen months to two years, when the bird, having so far matured well, begins to give promise of what it should be, yet is by no means fully developed in all Carrier points. Even at this stage too many disappointments await the amateur; for not unfrequently, even when the bird has shown a well-formed wattle so far, it ceases at this time to grow, and becomes hard, thereby in degree spoiling the pigeon as a show bird. These disappointments chiefly occur with the smaller or late-hatched birds, which, if of good stock, will often go on to develop a large well-formed eye-wattle, but comparatively seldom a good beak-wattle, which is rarely found well-developed except in a large strong bird, with a stout beak, small beaks not seeming able to grow it. In such cases, especially if the parents are good-eyed birds, the chief growth in the young ones seems to go into the eye-wattle, which often becomes what is called "fleshy-eyed," and besides looking too heavy for the rest of the bird, is very subject to inflammation and to those excrescent growths called "spouts," to be hereafter described. Such eyes are also far more subject to colds and other diseases. The final stage is when all the foregoing have been safely passed, and the bird has fully matured, which is from three to four years old. It is then that all his properties are fully developed, and he shows what the Carrier ought to be—not perfectly, for we have never seen a perfect bird yet—but in such fair degree as he is capable of. He is now complete, and all that is required is to watch over him, to breed him with judgment, and to show him with care.

To breed and rear Carriers to the greatest advantage, and to avoid dangers which often cause the loss of valuable birds (as we have again and again witnessed), they should have somewhat different accommodation from other pigeons; in fact, their domicile should be expressly arranged

as a *Carrier*-loft. This arises from the facts that the variety is more quarrelsome and spiteful than all others; that its sight is much obstructed, so that the weaker specimens are often attacked before they know their danger; and, finally, that the eye-wattle, when pecked or injured in such quarrels, is peculiarly liable to become inflamed and develop canker. How many valuable pigeons have been lost in this way it is hard to estimate, but very many to our personal knowledge. It is also worthy of note that Carriers being more liable to running or cold in the eye, which may at any time assume a virulent form (either canker or otherwise), the more apart the birds can be kept the better.

Isolation, then, is what is required, with ample space, yet freedom from draught. And, first of all, the *perches* should be especially adapted for them, Fig. 25 showing the construction we have found to suit them best of all we have tried. It is in the form of a frame, made of boards five inches wide, and dividing the whole range into compartments, each of which should measure nine

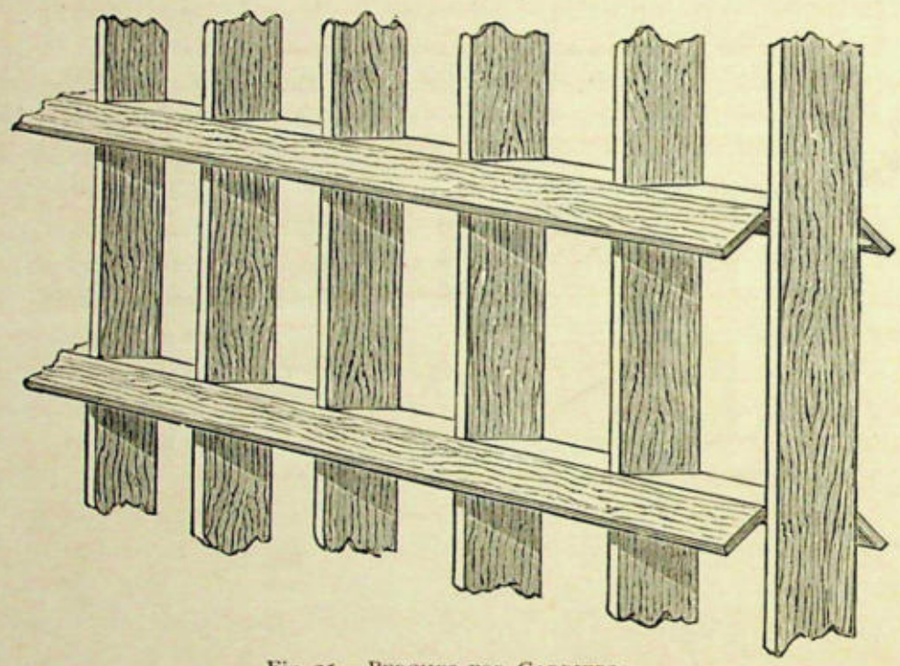


Fig. 25.—PERCHES FOR CARRIERS.

inches wide and twelve inches high. Along each range is fixed, on both sides, slips or narrow boards inclined at a bevel, as in the perches already described, and for the same purposes. Each of these compartments forms the perch for a single bird; and it is strange to see how immediately and naturally they take to these conveniences as soon as provided for them. Every bird almost at once learns to know his own perch, and the owner can catch him at night in a moment, knowing exactly where to put his hand upon him. A bird will defend his place against all intruders, and should another pigeon in his absence take possession, there is an immediate quarrel over it; and here the benefit is found, for there being only room for one the dispute is soon settled, and the parties are unable to do each other any serious injury. The partitions also prevent any domineering pigeon from looking along the whole row, and also from sweeping along it, as he otherwise would, to clear it of all other occupants. All continuous fighting, in fact, is in this way entirely prevented, so far as the perches are concerned. A further advantage is that no bird can get its plumage the least soiled if perched in this manner, which we can most strongly recommend on all accounts as saving an incalculable amount of trouble and loss in breeding and keeping Carriers.

Fig. 26 shows a loft generally resembling that given in Fig. 3, but specially arranged for this variety of pigeon. Around the walls will be seen the perches just described, which must be placed at some little distance from them, in order that the birds may not injure their tail-feathers when turning round. The only other noticeable difference is that not more than three of the nest-boxes shown in Fig. 1 are arranged in one row. The reason of this is, that the sight being so much obstructed by the wattles, Carriers are less able to distinguish objects and positions than other breeds; and if too many places resembling each other are arranged in one row, a bird is extremely

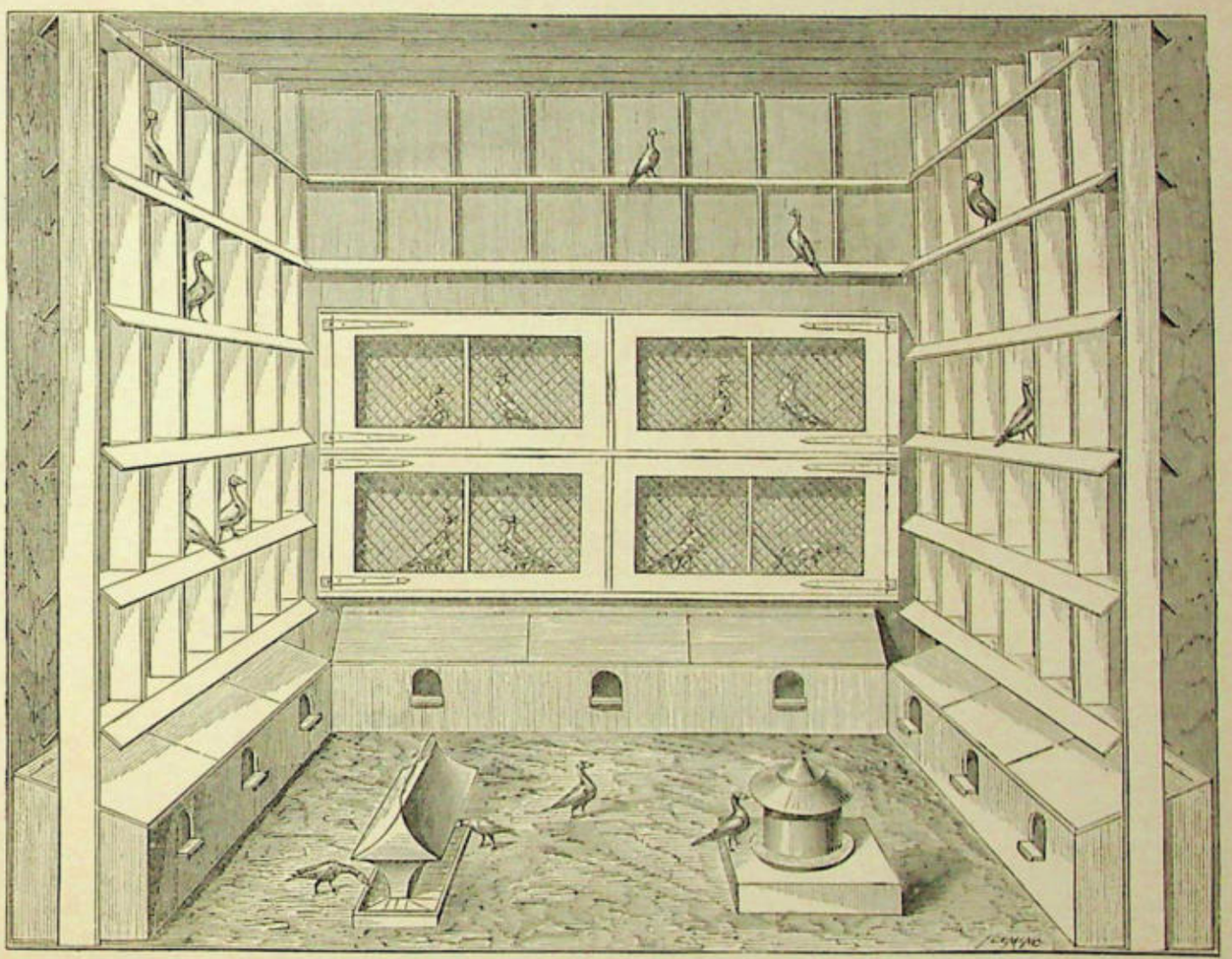


Fig. 26.—Loft for Carriers.

likely to make a mistake and go into "the wrong box," the consequence of which is an immediate fight, to the destruction of the eggs or young, and often the serious injury of the old birds, as Carriers generally fight till quite exhausted. If, however, only three apertures be in each row, the birds can scarcely mistake the middle and right and left ones for each other. Hence, even allowing all four sides of the loft to be occupied, we cannot advise any one to breed more than twelve pairs of Carriers in any one loft, however large; and if possible to keep much less in each compartment, even only three or four pairs, it will be all the better. The most successful Carrier breeders of our acquaintance have done best when only breeding the latter number in each room or even one pair, when a compartment could be given to it.

For another excellent plan of a Carrier loft, shown in Figs. 27, 28, 29, 30, we are again indebted to Mr. Matthew Stuart, of Glasgow. This building is intended to be erected against a garden wall, and to have a southern exposure. The plan as here given shows six breeding compartments, but could of course be either extended or diminished according to the requirements or pecuniary means of the fancier. There is also a spare compartment at one end for keeping food, &c., which should be furnished with a good food-chest in three or more compartments, and lined with tin or zinc to keep away mice and rats. There is also a large table in this compartment, on which to place a "show" pen, or to perform any necessary operations. Each of the other six compartments is divided into an inner and an outer apartment, the size of each being 6 × 4 feet. These are divided from each other by a partition of wood with a glass door in each, which keeps the birds warm and comfortable in wet weather, and yet affords light and heat. In regard to the partitions between the six pens, one half of the section represents this as formed of solid wood, the other of wire-work. Either may be adopted, the wood being of course warmest; but we consider the wire preferable, as where it is adopted the owner can see all the interior and all the birds almost at a glance. All the doors should be made with an India-rubber spring, so as to open and shut both ways.

The foundation of such a house should be concrete or asphalte, the latter being best, as it will entirely keep away rats. There is ventilation at the back, through the wall, which can be open and shut at pleasure. And the dotted line in the plan, and *a* in the cross section, show a stream or run of water through the whole house, just inside the inner flight, which, where it can be managed, will add greatly to the comfort and health of the birds. Where it is adopted this water-run should be raised about two and a half inches above the floor, to prevent dust and dirt getting into it, and should be covered with a piece of wood neatly fitted just at the doors, where the birds pass over. In each of the six compartments three pairs of Carriers may be kept, and if the fancier can afford to keep only two, or even one pair in each, so much the better. If more length of outer flight can be added, so much the better also, as nothing keeps the birds in health more than a good fly, especially while young and growing. The inside compartments should be match-boarded, so as to keep warm and free from draughts, as many good birds have lost their sight entirely from perching for the night near a comparatively slight current of air.

Many, probably, will be inclined to pooh-pooh such plans as we have here given, and to boast how they have kept *their* pigeons in a place "which only cost them" so-and-so. We are not in the least arguing that these or any other plans must be adopted to keep Carriers successfully; and we know full well that poor mechanics, with almost no accommodation, have kept them with credit. Care will do wonders; and, as we have before said, where only *few* birds are kept, this of itself takes the place of nearly all our other precautions. But we do say that the dangers and difficulties we have pointed out are *real* ones, which have to be encountered by the Carrier fancier, and the means of doing which we have therefore endeavoured to point out. It is wisdom to guard against them, and thus avoid trouble; and some of those who boast what common places they keep their birds in, would find, as a matter of simple calculation, that the price of two or three of the really good ones they have lost by keeping their Carriers as if ordinary pigeons, would have more than covered the cost of proper accommodation; while it would have also enabled them to show their other birds in better trim.

With regard to the general management of Carriers, it is only needful to add that they rank among the pigeons known as "bad feeders," so that the owner requires a proportionate staff of feeders or nurses. On account of their size, the best nurses are the stronger pigeons, such as flying Antwerps or common Dragoons. We have known cases where the birds *were flown*, in

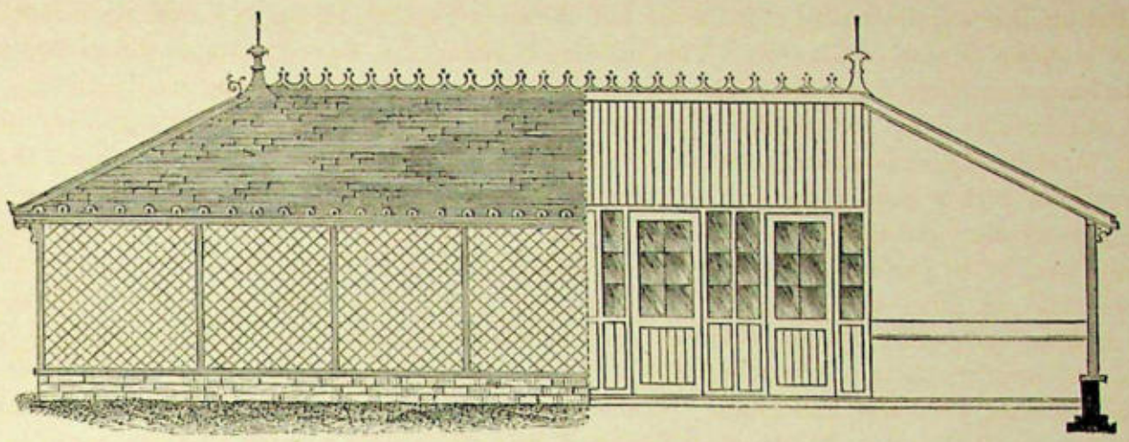


Fig. 27.—Elevation and Section.

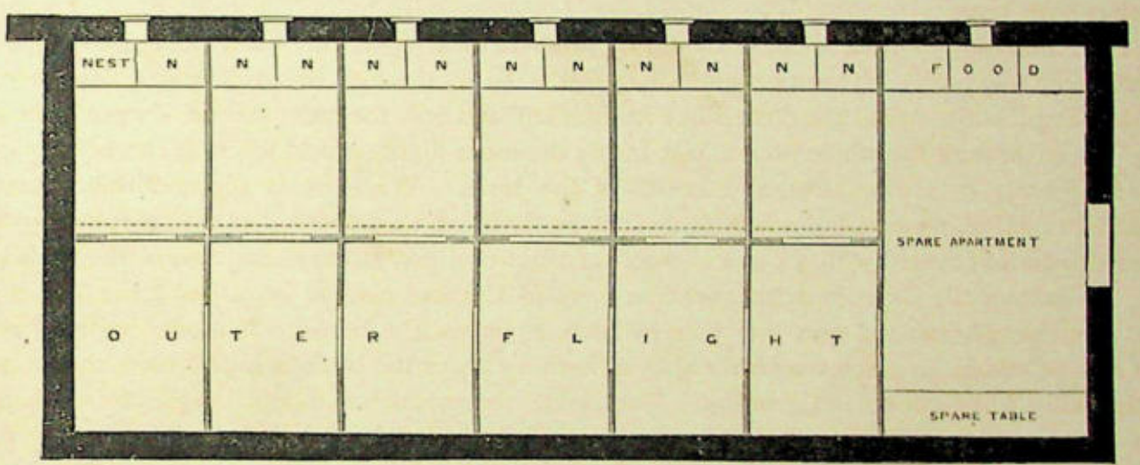


Fig. 28.—Ground Plan.

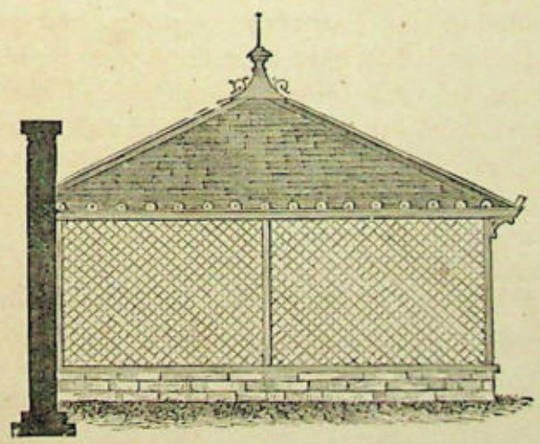


Fig. 29.—End Elevation.

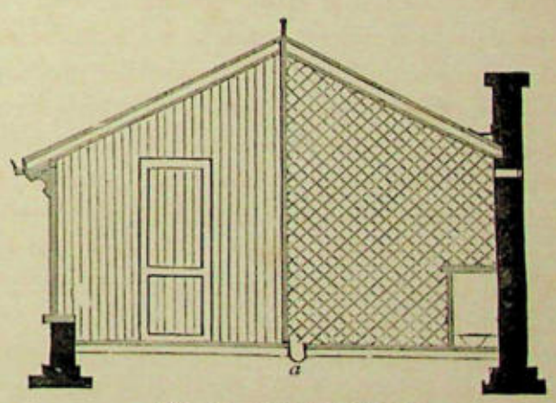


Fig. 30.—Cross Section.

CARRIER LOFT.

which they brought up their own young ones well, proving that the bad nursing is not owing, as in the case of Barbs, to mechanical difficulties, but chiefly to the artificial condition in which they are generally kept. Few can, however, run the risk of letting valuable birds fly, and feeders must therefore be provided. As a rule, the Carriers themselves will feed the young well for from eight to ten days, when they should be transferred to their foster-parents. A few will rear their young even in a loft.

Passing now to the consideration of the Carrier as an exhibition bird, we have great pleasure in giving, first of all, the following excellent article by Mr. F. T. Wiltshire, who is well known, not only as a successful exhibitor, but as one of the very best breeders, and also one of the keenest judges of a Carrier at all stages of its life. In only one point do we take any exception to his remarks—namely, in the opinion he expresses that the Carrier has lately deteriorated. It is true that very lately an immense number of the best birds have been lost, either by death or exportation; but our opinion still is that the fanciers of the present day, owing to the opportunities they have of comparing birds at exhibitions, are now become so much better judges of what a Carrier should be, and there are so many breeding them who are more or less qualified to do so, that the young birds now coming on will, when matured, be nearer perfection than ever; and we think this will be the opinion of nearly all who have carefully examined some of the young birds bred by Messrs. Montgomery, Heritage, Heaton, Ord, Hammack, Mr. Wiltshire himself, and others. It is true that an unusual number of good birds have died, and that fine old matured birds were never so scarce, which will account for the opinion expressed; still, if the young ones now maturing should live and thrive, we expect to see a better class of birds than ever. But without further preface, we will now give Mr. Wiltshire's own description of the points of a good Carrier.

"My opinion of a Carrier is that a full-sized bird should measure from seventeen to seventeen and a half inches in length from the tip of the beak to the end of the tail; but a young bird is very seldom seen of such dimensions until after the first moult, when the tail-feathers grow nearly an inch longer than the nestling feathers. With regard to the shape, a long thin neck, of uniform size, running almost to the shoulders, is a great feature, and adds much to the beauty of the bird, especially if nicely cut under the beak instead of having a gullet similar to the owl, which imperfection I have noticed has of late made great progress. The shoulders of the wings should be even with or slightly in advance of a full chest; and the body long, but not heavy, standing on a pair of stout long legs, without exposing the thigh-joints as with the Pouter. The carriage of the Carrier (which many fanciers consider identical with the shape) should be perfectly upright, the legs and neck being stretched to the utmost tension; the head being well set, with the beak pointed out straight, and the eye in a line with the ball of the foot. By comparing a bird with a pair of short legs with one with the contrary, the advantage in favour of the latter will be readily discernible.

"The beak is a very important point, and the good old-fashioned box-beaks are rarely seen. I am quite content if in my young birds the cocks measure one and three-quarter inches in length, and the hens a trifle less; with age the beak lengthens a little. but birds of the measurements I mention must be considered of more than average merit. A few are to be found to exceed them. The beak should also be thick and perfectly straight, and what is termed 'boxed,' by which I mean both mandibles closely fitting, and the lower, if inverted, appearing almost similar to the upper. I have had birds with beaks two inches and upwards in length, but they have been either thin or the upper part has been formed of an unusually large quantity of horn. As I have before

said, 'box-beaks' are very scarce, and it is only in young birds that the beak properties are particularly noticeable, as when the wattle becomes developed with age many imperfections then become hidden from observation.

"The beak-wattle is, I consider, one of the most, if not the most important property, and the most difficult to obtain in perfection; it is, in fact, the principal feature which distinguishes this variety from all other kinds; hence the bird cannot well be called a Carrier in the absence of the point by which it is identified. I have never yet heard any fancier complain of his birds having too much beak-wattle, although remarks are loud and frequent to the contrary; and as it does not arrive at maturity until the bird is quite three years of age, it is easily understood, considering the high breeding and other ills more particularly incidental to this class, how few attain to perfection.

"The correct formation of the beak-wattle I have always considered to be as follows:—The back of the upper part, nearest the head, to commence about one-eighth part of an inch from the outside circle of the eye, nearest the beak, and to rise gradually forward until the highest part is nearly in the centre, somewhat similar to the head of a cauliflower. To this should be joined a second or smaller wattle, almost similar in shape, falling forward to the tip of the beak; and good old fanciers insisted upon a *third*, in continuation, still less in size, which was termed the rose. The under part, called the 'jew,' or 'jew-wattle,' should be in shape something like to the upper, but of less extent; and when perfectly formed the whole presents a grand appearance to Carrier fanciers, who but seldom differ in opinion on this point when they see an extra good bird.

"I do not like the upper part of the wattle to be formed of one piece with a smooth surface, but prefer it in several divisions, the whole fitting together and presenting a uniform appearance. With regard to size I do not consider it of so much importance as proper formation; and although I have had birds with wattles exceeding four and a half inches in circumference, yet I should have been infinitely better contented had they been half an inch less, but possessing the other points I have mentioned. A bird with a wattle tilting well forward is not likely to be crowded in the eyes, and, further, it has the appearance of being longer in the beak than one with the highest part of its wattle at the back, and touching the eye-wattle.

"Some few years since a strain of Carriers existed having as much wattle on the lower as on the upper mandible. Some of them did not look particularly attractive, although very useful for stock purposes; they, however, are now very rarely seen, and I do not know of one Carrier at the present time I should call 'well-jewed.'

"I consider the 'beak-wattle' takes precedence in importance to the 'eye-wattle,' in consequence of the greater difficulty in obtaining it in perfection, and the length of time which elapses before it is fully developed; whilst I have seen birds with the eye-wattles grown to excess at fifteen months of age, which have become utterly useless before the wattle on the beak had time to mature; hence my reason for thinking that which is most difficult to obtain should be the most important.

"The eye-wattle I regard as an adjunct to the beak-wattle; and although a bird with a mean or small eye (however good the beak-wattle may be) is not generally regarded with much favour, still I consider this property ranks secondary to the other for the reasons stated in my remarks on the beak-wattle. The flesh of the eye-wattle should be perfectly round, and in diameter nearly the size of a florin, and evenly laced, somewhat like a dahlia; without spouts, and rolling well over the head, thus greatly conducing to the narrowness of the skull so much admired. The eyes of the birds of late years appear more fleshy than formerly, and consequently more liable to 'spouts;' and we now seldom have an exhibition without signs of the treatment of skilful operators being apparent in the eyes of the majority of the birds. I have a great fancy for those having what are

known as 'diamond eyes,' that is, the flesh of the inside of the eye shaped like a diamond. I am of opinion they are more heavily bred, and with age generally make the stoutest pigeons.

"The skull of the Carrier should be flat and narrow, but the narrowness is in a measure governed by the size of the eye, which, if of full growth, and properly formed, would roll over the head; and I have seen birds whose eyes have so nearly touched as to render the top part of the head almost invisible. I do not look upon the skull as of so much importance as the three preceding properties, although a bird with a very wide skull has not an attractive appearance.

"The correct colours are a brilliant raven black, a soft golden dun, a sound bright blue with black bars; and a few years since were some excellent white birds with bull eyes, which I regret to say appear to have now become almost extinct.

"To assist the colour in pairing birds, a black cock with a dun hen, or *vice versa*, is considered the most desirable mode of proceeding, the result being generally that the young blacks are cocks and the duns are hens; to this in a measure I attribute the present scarcity of black hens. At the same time, I think the colour is much improved by pairing in this manner; otherwise I fear the blacks would soon become sooty or blue black, and the duns a light washed-out colour, and in both should not be surprised to see signs of a bar across the wings, infallible signs of the hardness of the feather.

"For brilliancy of colour, I consider no birds equal those in the West of England, but I fear

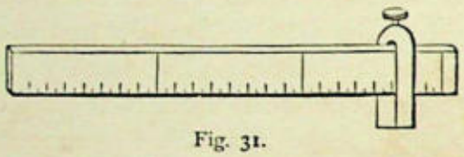


Fig. 31.

they have there become very scarce; and the fanciers, in their anxiety for colour and symmetry, have sacrificed other and more important properties.

"To Blue Carriers I have not given much attention, but they appear to me far inferior to the Blacks and Duns in head properties, although I have noticed the majority are large in frame and long in feather.

"To remark generally, I consider this variety has greatly deteriorated within the last few years; and where I have formerly seen many first-class birds in one loft, it is now almost impossible to find one. The cause I attribute chiefly to the numerous exhibitions held in all parts of the United Kingdom, which greatly distress the birds, and soon cause their death. These exhibitions have also been the cause of numerous persons (who are utterly incompetent to manage their stock) becoming purchasers at enormous prices, solely for the pleasure of gratifying their desire to win prizes. The birds are repeatedly shown without the slightest regard to their constitution, which is often thoroughly destroyed; and even if they still live, their produce are miserably weakly birds without size or strength, possessing none of the vigour which characterised their parents when young."

So far Mr. Wiltshire's excellent description of a good Carrier. But as it is very desirable, for the young fancier especially, to have the various properties described with greater minuteness and detail, we will now proceed to do so, illustrating our remarks by a diagram which has been exactly traced from the coloured plate of the Black Carrier cock.

The first point in order is the beak; or, as many fanciers term it, the face. This, in a good Carrier, must possess three "properties," viz., length, thickness, and a proper shape; and is one of

the most difficult points to get approaching perfection. It must be long and straight, and not only long in actual measurement, but should *appear* even longer than it really is; though this to a great extent depends upon the proper shape and setting-on of the beak-wattle. In measuring the length of face or beak, two modes are in use, the little implement shown in Fig. 31 being used in both. It consists simply of a scale three inches long, divided into eighths and sixteenths of an inch, and with a sliding stop or index, which can be fastened by a screw. In using it, the end of the beak is put against the stop, which is adjusted till the free end of the scale coincides with the other point of measurement. This is with most of the London fanciers, and some others, the nearest edge of the iris of the eye, or inner edge of the eye-wattle; but this mode of measurement is very objectionable. It is fair for most young birds, but most unfair to many good old birds, in which the eye becomes sometimes so open and wide, that though really very long-faced, they would lose at least an eighth of an inch in measurement against a close-eyed bird. The only fair mode for all birds, therefore, is to measure from the point of the beak, at A, to the centre of the pupil of the eye. This mode of measurement, we are glad to see, is coming more into favour of late, and it ought to be that always employed; hence it will be understood that all measurements referred to in this work will be reckoned from the centre of the eye. It is, however, very seldom measurement is required, for, as previously observed, what is of more importance is that the bird *appear to the eye* to be long in beak, &c., compared with its other proportions; and the rule is only to be applied in those exceedingly rare cases in which birds appear so evenly matched that it is really needed to determine their respective rank. For example, a bird that is large and coarse will often measure a deal more in length of face or beak than an almost perfect model of a bird; and the same remark may be applied to length of neck, as a coarse large bird, that has really no length of neck in fair proportion, might measure longer than a fine symmetrical bird. The chief beauty of a Carrier, in fact, in the eyes of good judges, does not lie in the extraordinary development of any one point, or of several points, such as beak-wattle or length of face; but in the symmetry, or proper *proportionate* development, of the various points throughout the whole bird. In regard to actual length of face, a bird measuring one inch and seven-eighths from the point of the beak, A, to the centre of the eye is certainly very good in this respect, and if over this so much the better. Such a bird, measured in the London style, to the front edge of the eye, would, in most cases, be one inch and three-quarters; but those well-known to London fanciers as "diamond-eyed birds," in which the eye-wattle, instead of being round in the inner circle, forms a corner at front and back, would often lose fully three-sixteenths of an inch as compared with the centre measurement, which is, therefore, as we have said, the only mode fair to all birds.

But length alone is not sufficient for a good beak. It must be thick and massive, and a proper shape, which is straight, close-fitting, and blunt or heavy at the point, the lower mandible, C, showing as much substance and being nearly as long as the upper mandible, B. It is these latter qualities together which form the much-desired "box-beak;" and perhaps nothing pleases a Carrier-breeder better than to find any of his young ones possessed of this desirable quality. It is quite an easy matter to breed long-faced birds with what are called spindle-beaks, or with the upper mandible nearly twice as heavy as the lower, and curved so as to show an open space between them, and often projecting and curving downwards. It is also easy to breed thick straight beaks with short faces; but the difficulty is to get the length with the straight, massive, close-fitting beak. And this is not merely a "fancy" point; for the spindle-beaked birds, owing to the dust getting in between the mandibles, or perhaps from the mouth being kept so dry, are very subject to canker in the lower mandible. Old Carriers of good quality may grow thus, if care is not taken, when necessary, to cut the upper mandible back to the lower one. Sometimes the upper

mandible of such birds will get broken also, either by accident or disease, or, more frequently still, through being tampered with to endeavour to improve its appearance; for some people of the scheming sort, when they have such a bird otherwise pretty good, will hold the beak in hot water, or squeeze it into a half-boiled potato for some time, by which it becomes soft and can be straightened. By this means the bird is made to look and measure well, and is quickly sold; but soon afterwards the upper mandible generally breaks off. After two or three months the upper mandible will often grow again, but is generally *twisted* and *deformed*, after which the bird is almost useless even to breed, as it can neither pick up small seed or gravel, nor preen itself properly, but huddles about in obvious discomfort and misery. We have seen birds measure as much as two inches and three-eighths from point of beak to centre of eye, but they were old birds, with such spindle-beaks as we have described, and with about three-eighths of an inch of the upper mandible projecting over and beyond the lower mandible. We have also seen birds free from this defect fully two inches in face, but these too were birds which had been manipulated in the nest-pan by their owners to straighten the beak. This is done on the fourth, fifth, sixth, eighth, and twelfth days, the beak being gently straightened by the fingers on each of these days, by which it gains an eighth of an inch in length, and sometimes more. But in every case of this kind we have ever seen, though length of beak was gained, the shape of the wattle was spoiled, the bending upwards at the point of the upper mandible, with the pressure downwards farther back, stopping the growth of the middle portion of the beak-wattle at B", which never develops so full and round as it should do and would have done had Nature been allowed to take its course. Now this very portion of the wattle is just what is the most difficult to breed of the proper figure; therefore fanciers will do well to avoid such methods of making a long beak. There are, of course, many birds so tampered with that never would have had much more wattle than a heavy Dragoon. These are those most frequently operated on; and as there are generally a number of persons willing to purchase what they think middling specimens of Carriers at a moderate price, and who do not know what the points of a Carrier are, the neighbourhood of London especially swarms with these "made" birds, as they are called. But very seldom have we known any really good fancier tamper with his birds, knowing as he does that a really good bird cannot be improved by it, but that what he gains in beak he will lose in wattle; and knowing, also, that meeting as he does with good judges, he could not show such a bird before one without being detected.

We have had pass through our hands more Carriers than probably any one else, and can safely state that to the present time we never saw but *one* bird with a good honest box-beak that measured two inches from the point to the centre of the eye. This bird was bred by Mr. James Montgomery, of Belfast, and was not only such a great length by measurement, but looked a great deal more. This, as we have tried to explain, is what should be sought; and a bird only moderate in actual length, but which is of such fine proportions as to deceive the eye and look long, should be considered superior to another bird which has more, but appears to have less. And the birds which show best in this way are those which have a good length of mandible in front of the beak-wattle. Birds in which the wattles come close to the point of the beak are not only inferior in appearance, but especially if heavily "jewed," as it is called, that is, if the under wattle comes too far forward, though such are often exceedingly valuable for keeping up certain points in breeding, are liable to the lower mandible shrivelling up into almost nothing; in fact, few such birds reach the age of three years without suffering in this way, or becoming cankered. The farther, therefore, the jew-wattle is back from the point of the beak the better.

The very best box-beaks will scarcely ever remain perfectly close-fitting after the age of three



POINTS OF THE CARRIER.

years. Generally even earlier—say about two years—they become less so, if left alone; but may be preserved much longer if the portion of the upper mandible which overhangs the lower one be cut off level and carefully pared, so as to enable the mandibles to close together. Even a bad beak may be improved in this way, which is considered legitimate by most fanciers, and adds greatly to the comfort of the bird. It also keeps the mouth from becoming so dry, and prevents dust from collecting in the lower mandible, as already mentioned.

Lastly, a massive, straight, well-formed box-beak is not only good and attractive in itself, but it is a good guarantee to the fancier, if in a young bird, that in due time the bearer will develop the highest and most rare of all the properties in a Carrier in a reasonable degree. We refer to a good beak-wattle, which we have next to consider.

Some profess not to consider the beak-wattle in a Carrier as of so very much value, but these are generally those whose birds are deficient in that point; and we can safely say we never knew any one possessed of a bird really good in this point who was not very proud of it, and who did not breed as many young ones as he possibly could from the bird while in his possession. The reason of this value being placed upon it is its extreme rarity. We have seen many birds with good beaks, and still more with good eye-wattles; but a bird with a perfect beak-wattle—that is, which it was not desirable to alter in *some* point or other—has never yet come before our eyes, and in a long experience we have not seen more than perhaps twenty birds which even tolerably approached the standard shape as shown in the diagram; and a great portion even of these had undergone certain *alterations* to suit the views of the persons possessing them. If one part of a wattle is too full, it is very easily removed; but so far it has puzzled every one to add any. Should this latter degree of skill ever be arrived at, we shall no doubt see plenty of Carriers perfectly shaped in the beak-wattle.

The first year a well-bred bird very often has the promise of a perfect wattle, and it may even retain this, and begin to "break" all that can be desired the beginning of the second season; but as the three portions of the upper wattle marked in our diagram B′, B″, and B‴ begin to form, in almost every case faults begin to appear. In most cases the front portion, B′, appears to stop growing, while B″ will come out a great deal too full; or the largest portion, B‴, will come up so full by the end of the second season as to appear three times the size of the middle portion, B″, and thus show that "dent" or depression in B′ and B″ which is so often seen in Carriers, and spoils the look of the wattle completely. Again, the back portion, B‴, which ought to arch or tilt nicely away from the skull towards the beak, often grows highest at the very back towards the skull, which used to be called a peg-wattle, and looks clumsy and bad. And even when all these points are obtained in profile, too often when looked at from the top there is a great deficiency on the right, left, or both sides of the wattle.

In a properly-shaped wattle, the three portions, B′, B″, and B‴, ought to rise, nicely proportioned, one above the other, each being well filled out or rounded on the top. There are lots of Carriers not possessed of the three portions of beak-wattle, and which only show B′ and B‴, more especially those that have had their beaks tampered with in infancy, as already described. The formation should resemble that of a cauliflower, and not be in smooth masses like putty; and the back portion, B‴, should be well arched, so as to keep it forward and free of the eye-wattle. In a good wattle, the highest part will stand up nearly half an inch above the top of the skull, and if well curved away from it looks much higher. The freer it is from the eye-wattle the better, as it both shows the shape of the beak-wattle to greater advantage to be clear of the other, and also gives the appearance of a longer face.

The wattle on the lower mandible should be somewhat similarly formed; C′ being small,



Vincent Brooks, Day & Son, Lith. London, W.C.

DUN CARRIER COCK.
(WALNUT SHAPED WATTLE)

almost like a small pimple, C″ being about double the size, and C‴ about double the size again. When the beak is close, both upper and lower wattles should appear as if united. We may here remark that C‴, although it appear as being attached to the lower mandible, is not so, but is a part of the upper beak-wattle which hangs down over the lower mandible, and will be seen to be so when the beak is opened. Many birds even at mature age do not have sufficient upper beak-wattle to show the appearance of the three portions of lower beak-wattle, C′, C″, C‴, but only show the two portions C′ and C″. Those showing the three portions are generally heavy-wattled birds, and those with two portions large fleshy-eyed birds, which never show enough of beak-wattle in comparison to the amount of eye-wattle. The lower is less full than the upper, and seldom so wrinkled; but it is a curious fact that if the upper wattle be well shaped the lower will be so too.

The whole, when properly shaped, bears a considerable resemblance, with the beak, to a boy's peg-top, whence many fanciers call it a "peg-wattle;" but as this very word was used by Moore and others to denote a Dragoon-like shape, pointed in front and peaking up behind, we prefer to call it a "peg-top" wattle. The circumference in a really first-class bird, when in his prime at three or four years old, should be four inches, and even three and a half inches is good, providing the wattle be well formed. Four inches is extra good in measurement, though we once saw at Birmingham three cocks together, of which one measured four and a quarter, and the others just over four. The most extraordinary birds in this point we have ever seen were one bred by Mr. George Ure, of Dundee, which measured fully four inches and three-eighths, and another we once measured in the possession of Mr. Wiltshire, which reached the same. But only *one* of all these could be considered as nearly approaching perfection in proportions and shape, which are of more value than even size of wattle.

Besides the "peg-top" wattle, there is another recognised type known as the "walnut-shaped" wattle. In this, instead of the three distinct portions, there is one roundish mass only; and if this is symmetrically shaped, nicely arched at the back away from the skull, and well filled up all round, especially in the front part, with a good cauliflower surface, it is as much valued as the shape before described; but is, alas, equally rare and difficult to produce. This kind of wattle will be seen represented in our plate of the Dun Carrier; while the Black and Blue show "peg-top" wattles. We may remark here that all our plates are given as ideals, not as portraits. We have chosen this plan on account of the almost impossibility of finding perfect pigeons; at the same time, while such *combination* of perfect features is rarely or never seen, every single point may be and has repeatedly been attained as we represent it: it is the combination of them all causes the difficulty. Hence we prefer to give *types*, rather than portraits which must be faulty in many points. The cock is always selected as presenting the points in greatest development; the hen should be of the same model as nearly as can be obtained, except where otherwise expressly mentioned.

A Carrier never reaches perfection in its beak-wattle till the age of at least three years, and sometimes it will go on improving up to six or seven. This is more often the case with late-bred or weakly-reared birds; and it is a singular fact that the best of these will often produce young ones that show hardly any signs at all of the high-class parentage from which they were derived. Such birds Mr. E. L. Corker, to whom we were first indebted for a sound knowledge of Carriers, used to call "birds with the breed *inside*," and they will not unfrequently produce again young of surpassing quality—that is, if they *have* "the breed" inside, on which all of course depends.

The next point is the eye-wattle, the chief property of which is regularity of build. It should be of a pale flesh-colour, covered when in health by a white bloom. It should be thin in substance, though there are many thick and fleshy-eyed specimens to be seen. The diameter in a good cock should be an inch and an eighth; it should be circular, and equidistant at all points

from the pupil of the eye, the most prevalent fault being a want of width behind the eye, which is called being pinch-eyed. The outer circle, G, should be regularly indented all round, and the inner lacing, F, runs about midway between the circumference of the wattle and the eye-ball, but this depends upon the eye of the bird. In some the wattle is built so as to appear like two small rings placed at each side of the head, and when come to maturity standing up above the skull; and this class of eye-wattle both looks best and is best, being generally more evenly built, more regularly laced all round, more lasting in shape, and less subject to inflammation. The other class of eye-wattle is what we have already alluded to as the soft or fleshy eye, and has many admirers among Carrier-fanciers, especially those *who have had but few birds possessing it*, and therefore have not had to mourn their loss—for few of them ever live to a mature age. The reason of this is, that birds with such eyes are very subject to colds, which result in inflammation. This class of eye-wattle is, however, most attractive in young birds under twelve months old, on account of being so soft and regular in build; but as the second season comes on the top part becomes much thicker, and inclined to roll over the top of the skull, which looks well when viewing the bird in front, and makes it appear to have a narrower skull than it really has, on which account some people "assist" the eye-wattles to come even closer together by a few stitches, plaster, or even by cutting out a strip of the skin from over the centre of the skull, and then bringing the edges together by stitches. Such trickery will often make a bird appear to have even a suspiciously narrow skull, but it quite spoils all regularity in the eye-wattle, and can always be detected by a good judge at a glance. We do not think we ever saw a bird with this class of eye that possessed a good beak-wattle; and when even the best of them is penned in the same pen with a well-wattled bird, it will look like a hen compared with it, these fleshy-eyed birds having always a feminine appearance. In fact we have often and often, with others, been defrauded of prizes justly due to us for hens, because these feminine-looking cocks had been shown as hens, which is a weakness with some exhibitors, even of some who have such good birds they really could afford to show honestly.

We have said there should be a white bloom upon the wattle, but this is not generally found upon birds which have their liberty, these being subject to a tinge of red in both eye and beak-wattle, caused by exposure to the air. Such exposure also checks in some degree the growth of the wattle, and makes it harder in character; and birds so kept always take longer to develop the wattle than others kept free from cold and well sheltered, which encourages wattle. In our opinion, the pinky cast, being a natural result of liberty, should not count against a bird; but some judges are so fond of a white wattle, that birds which have been flown require a little treatment to please them. This is easily given by carefully washing the wattle, and then dusting over it a little violet powder; then, a few hours before sending to be judged, gently rubbing the wattles and blowing all the loose powder off. If the powder be put on three days before being sent, it can hardly be detected; and this expedient will allow a red-wattled bird to be shown successfully. But as the very same birds, if kept up in a small place, and kept clean, will need no touching, we certainly think the simplest way would be for judges to lay less stress upon merely whiteness of colour in the wattles of good birds. A white wattle, however, certainly looks more showy; and we do not know that there is much fault to be found with the use of a powder-puff, which certainly stands on a different level to some other "dodges" we shall have to mention.

The greater the diameter of the eye-wattle the better, if accompanied with regularity in build and length of face sufficient to carry off in effect the size of the eye-wattle. This latter point of excellence is common enough in birds under twelve months, but it is rare under eighteen, as most birds after that age will be found to have become much thicker over the eye than beneath it,

especially those of the fleshy-eyed sort, or which do not show that evenly-wrinkled appearance, or lacing, which looks so well. An eye-wattle, *well laced*, is in fact not only much better-looking in itself, but much more likely to keep the true shape, and less liable to inflammation.

The diameter of eye-wattle should not be less in a fully-matured bird than we have stated, and we have had birds with a great deal more, even as much as an inch and a half in diameter. But none of these immensely-wattled birds, according to our experience, have ever had enough beak-wattle or length of face to carry off the enormous quantity on the eye, or have had the fine thin texture that is so much valued. A bird, in fact, which at twelve months old measures three-quarters of an inch across the eye-wattle, an inch at eighteen months, and an inch and an eighth at two years, has as much eye as most birds have yet been seen with, combined with the other requisite head properties to set it off; and we have never yet seen one case in which these dimensions were exceeded but what the eye and beak-wattle were what is called crowded together. To remedy this, some cut off a portion of the eye-wattle, and even of the beak-wattle; while others cut the beak-wattle at the root, and then by continually working it towards the beak, as the wound heals, cause it to tilt more forward and retain the desired position if properly done; but, besides the pain, such doctoring gives more trouble than it is worth, or than most fanciers care to take. A little simple cutting off, however, though it will never make a bad bird appear good, will often so improve a really good one, and make it appear so nearly perfect, that very few can resist the temptation.

The skull of the Carrier should be as narrow as possible, and of the same width throughout from front to back. The upper edges of the eye-wattle, looked at from above, will then appear as two parallel lines, and the measurement across the skull, taken at the points D and E, will be alike. Should a bird be to any considerable degree broader at E than at D, and another bird shown against it be alike in width at those points, though not so narrow at D as the first bird, the latter bird is the best-skulled. There are lots of birds the top of whose skulls almost resemble the letter V, the width of the back part, at E, being nearly double that of the front, at D, especially at mature age; and this form of skull is the worst of all, being most difficult to breed out of a strain. It is also the distinguishing point between the skull of a Carrier and of a Dragoon.

This narrow skull, however, though a most important property, is sometimes made too much of. Some judges are so exceedingly fond of this one point, that we have seen birds with bad beak, bad wattle, short face, thick gullet, short neck, Dragoon-shaped body, short flights and tail, and so low on leg as to appear quite deformed, because they had this one point of narrow skull, beat birds that possessed good box-beaks, well-formed wattles, long face, good gullet, fair eye-wattle, long thin neck, good shoulders, and symmetrical in body all over, and which were very fair in width of skull, though not so exceedingly narrow as the winning bird. Such judges know nothing of a Carrier, and in several cases the very narrowness for which they have rejected birds good all round we knew to have been fraudulently produced in the manner already described.

Another important point is the gullet, the extent of which is shown by the bracket I. It reaches from the back of the under beak-wattle to the commencement of the neck proper, and the thing desired about it is that it be well curved inwards, so that the *depth* of the head, measured from the top of the skull, at E, to the gullet, be as little as possible. This is one of the most beautiful points in a good Carrier, and without it a bird can never look first-class, however fine in other points. When possessed, it makes a bird appear longer in the neck than it really is; and in fact, however long the neck may be, if the gullet is full it can never look well. Some birds are so full in the gullet as to almost appear to have a dew-lap, which we have known removed in the same way the throat is "dubbed" in a game-cock. Such a strain is almost hopeless, the

fault being so persistent that it is nearly impossible to breed it out. A well-formed gullet also improves the apparent length of face.

The neck should be long, and slender throughout its entire length. If the neck be measured at all, the measurement should be taken not only from the back of the head, at H (level with the eye), but also from the gullet, at E, to the shoulder, K; for a bird which appears long if measured only from the back of the head, will appear short if it is full in gullet. But, in reality, we do not consider length of neck a property which *can* be measured, except, perhaps, in very rare cases, or in such as are so evenly balanced to the eye that the judge really wants something to give as a reason; but, as a rule, the bird that appears to have the longest neck is to be considered the best in this point. Shape of the neck is also to be considered; for it must not only appear thin and snaky when viewed from the side, but still thinner when looked at in the front. The neck should also appear to "come small from the shoulder," or look nearly as thin at the shoulder as at the gullet. This is often seen in young birds, but few show it when three years old; and, indeed, very few even of the best birds show this feature quite so perfectly in later life as when from twelve to fifteen months old.

A fine neck, though not nearly so difficult to breed as good wattle or beak, is perhaps the most *attractive* amongst all the properties of a good Carrier. For you may have a bird good in all points but this, which is short and thick in neck; and if such a bird is penned by the side of one only middling in other points, but which possesses a long, thin, well-shaped neck, the latter bird will look the "race-horse" and the other the "cart-horse" style; especially if, as is generally the case, the longer-necked bird has the longest legs as well. We of course suppose old birds shown against old ones, or young against young. It is also of importance to showing off the full length of neck that the bird carries its face or beak fully level, or even slightly pointing upwards, which gives the last finish and grace to a good neck and head, and makes the whole look bold and upstanding, which a down-faced bird never does.

The shoulders of a Carrier should be wide, in fact, the wider the better, in reason. They should project or stand well out, so that a line or rule held across the front of the breast stands but little in front of them. It is better if, in measuring across from L to M, there be between the shoulders a slight hollow or depression, which sets off the neck and whole body; whereas some birds carry the butts of their wings in so close that the shoulders appear rounded, which is termed by fanciers being "hog-backed," and looks very bad.

The wings should be well tucked up, so as to show but little depth from K to N, and show off to advantage the form and length of the thigh. If the bird carries the wings loose from the shoulder, it veils the thigh, and causes the body to appear too low on the legs; but some good birds will show this fault when out of condition.

The thighs of a Carrier should be muscular and nicely rounded, covered with soft, short feathers. The length is to be measured from N to the front part of the hock-joint, R; and this should give a good length. Some birds are not only short in this part, but badly formed, showing a projection at the hock behind, and far too much of an angle in the front. When this is the case, however fine the neck and upper carriage may be, the bird never looks well, and cannot stand tall and upright, but is said to "squat." Some acquire this fault in the nest-pan; but in others it is congenital, and if so it is a serious fault in a strain. A good straight thigh, coming down tolerably perpendicularly towards the hock-joint, is almost sure to carry with it a thick, well-shaped, and well-set leg, which measures well from R to the sole of the foot, S. We can conceive of a Carrier being too long and upright in thigh and leg, but such a bird has never yet come before us.

The flights and tail, measured respectively from the ends of the wing-coverts at O to P and Q, should be as long as the bird can carry well; that is so that the thighs and legs be long enough to carry the body so upright that the tip of the tail just touches the ground. Nothing can be more out of place than a bird with more tail than he can carry, almost as long as a Pouter. We have seen birds which measured eighteen inches from the point of the beak over the head to end of tail; but we have never seen one yet more than seventeen inches that had thighs and legs to carry the tail well. Indeed, it is very obvious that a bird with a tail of exaggerated length *cannot* stand well, as the tail touching the ground must tilt the head down; and though good length of flight and tail is a great recommendation, we have seen some birds which were really prevented by too much of it from standing so well as they would have done if they had less; at least, on the floor. The end of the flights, at P, should reach nearly, but not quite, as far as the end of the tail.

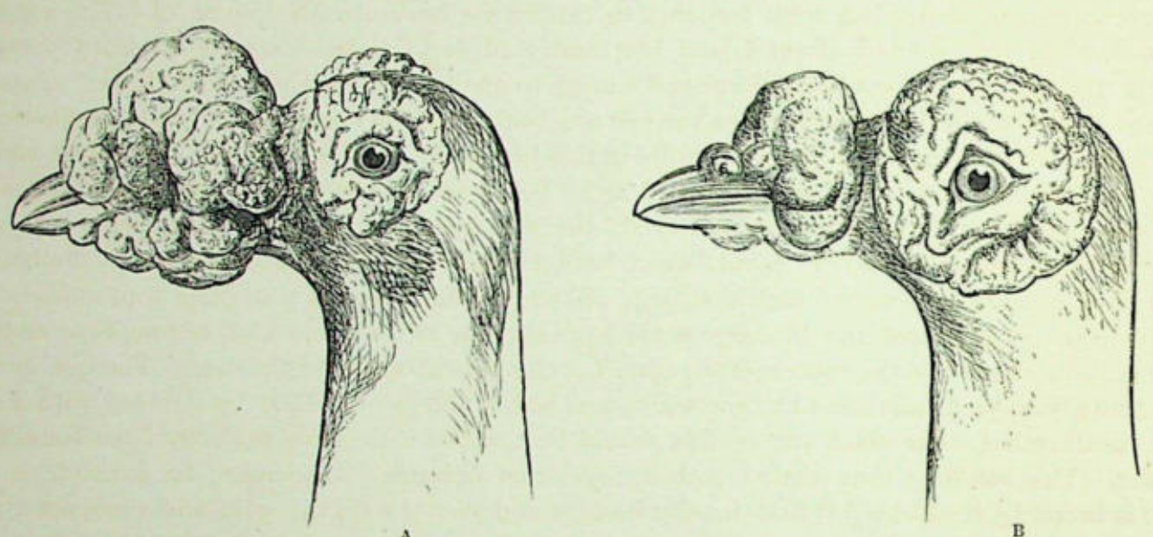
The colour most prized in a Carrier is black, which sets off best the colour of the wattles; but dun is little inferior. There are also whites, but the most marked advance of late years has been in blues, of which hardly any good ones were once to be seen, but which are now to be had of very fine quality. The beak is most prized if flesh-coloured, or flesh-coloured with the upper mandible stained with black on the top, which is quite as valuable. A black beak is not nearly so much esteemed; still, it is so easily got rid of by crossing with duns, and the black-beaked birds are often so good in other points, that this is not to be regarded as very important, and a well-shaped black beak is infinitely preferable to a badly-shaped light one.

Considering the whole, and arranging the various properties according to the difficulty of producing them, and their consequent value, we would rank then, thus:—1. Beak-wattle. 2. Beak. 3. Eye-wattle. 4. Neck. 5. Legs and thighs. 6. Narrowness of skull. All the other points are comparatively easy to produce. Colour should, however, come after length of tail and flights. But, as we have before said, it is the *whole* that is to be looked at, and nothing has done the pigeon-fancy so much harm as the widely-different ideas according to which birds are often judged; a bird being unnoticed at one show and given first prize at another, even by the same judge, who will run after one point on one occasion, and another at another, till all but old breeders, who have an opinion of their own and know their own minds, are inclined to give up in despair of ever learning what a Carrier should be. The best Carrier-breeder we ever knew—the late Mr. Colley, of Sheffield—was driven out of the fancy in disgust by the ignorance and changeableness of such men; and while on this point, once for all, we would suggest that in asking for the services of a judge, he should be *asked* what varieties he considers himself a competent judge of, and not be requested to arbitrate on any more. This would tend to produce some little feeling of responsibility, and, we sincerely believe, remove much of the evil complained of.

In the breeding of Carriers, the great thing is to know how to mate the birds together; and this we will now endeavour to explain, illustrating our remarks where necessary by diagrams of heads drawn from living birds which at one time or another have been actually matched up in our possession; so that the inexperienced reader may see, on the one hand, how a very faulty bird may be so matched as to produce valuable stock; and, on the other, may know the class of birds which rarely or never comes to any good, and may be, with a saving of time, discarded at once.

First of all we may take the two heads in Fig. 32, A representing the cock and B the hen. Looking then at the cock, A, we see at once that he was a bird possessing a very large beak-wattle, coming very nearly too to the desired shape both above and below; but what we have already described as "down-faced." It is, indeed, very seldom or never that a Carrier possessing such a quantity of beak-wattle as this bird had comes to the end of three years without becoming

down-faced, the very amount of wattle weighing it down gradually, especially when, as is almost always the case, there is a good heavy beak as well. The beak-wattle again, it will be seen, is far too much in comparison with the eye-wattle, which is small and irregular in shape. Now such birds are often discarded by breeders on account of the great want of eye-wattle, and are indeed valueless for exhibition; but we have seen lots of them, falling into the hands of those who knew their value, produce such stock as fairly astounded the very persons who had cast them off. Such birds, in fact, are some of the most valuable a fancier can have; for by showing so much wattle on the beak they prove that they are well bred, their fault being that they show too much on one place and too little on another. No fancier, then, should cast aside as of little value a bird which has a large amount of beak-wattle, merely because it is deficient in eye-wattle, even though that deficiency, as it usually does, makes them appear broad and round in the skull as well. This



A B

Fig. 32.

last is, however, deceiving; for it will often be found that if the eye-wattle were more developed, so as to come up to the top of the skull, the latter would really seem narrow; but even if really wide-skulled, such birds are still valuable, if possessed of good massive beaks, and when mated to hens which possess those points the cock is deficient in. And both cocks and hens of this description are on the average the most easy to procure.

Such a bird as we have now described is usually a large one; and this also is so much the better, since Carrier hens as a rule are too small, and large cocks are needed to throw strength and vigour into the progeny. And as large birds, which grow these large beak-wattles, are usually early-hatched ones, the bird is also likely to be a good length in flights and tail. It is, in fact, rarely that a good large-framed Carrier is not long in flights and tail, unless hatched late in the season (in which case, indeed, he is unlikely to be large at all). Late-hatched birds do not moult their quill-feathers the same season, which the early-hatched ones do; and even in after life, however well cared for, rarely get the same length of feather as early-hatched birds. Hence, it will readily be seen, though few amateurs ever think of it, that to breed together two birds both hatched late in the season is almost of necessity to breed for short flights and tail; so that it is desirable to avoid this when possible, though length of feather is so much easier got than head and beak properties, that we would not wish an inferior bird to be used solely on this account. Conversely,

by breeding from birds hatched early in the season, length of flights and tail may be recovered when lost.

Having thus described the cock represented, we will now consider a class of hen to mate with such a one in order to produce first-class stock, for which purpose we give the portrait B, also taken from a real bird. The beak in this head will at once be seen to extend for some distance in front of the beak-wattle, which makes the face appear very long—even longer than it really is—and the bird will also be seen to have apparently a great deal too much eye-wattle compared with the beak-wattle. Looking at the beak-wattle particularly, the first portion, marked B′ in the diagram (page 61), will be seen to be well formed; but the second portion, B″, is much too small. This is the great fault of this wattle; but in addition it will be observed that the last and largest portion, B‴, seems all of a piece, standing high up, and not nicely indented in the build. On the lower mandible the first portion of wattle, C′, will be seen to be well back, the advantage of which, both in appearance and in freedom from tendency to canker, we have already spoken of. The second portion, C″, is very similarly formed, and, like nearly all *hen* Carriers, there is no third portion visible, the upper wattle not being developed enough to *appear* as if attached to the lower. Again, a good clear space will be seen between the eye and beak-wattle in consequence of the smallness of the latter. But the most conspicuous feature in this hen is the great size of the eye-wattle, which is of the class we have previously described as a "fleshy-eyed" one, and so soft in texture as to easily become what is known as "spout-eyed," the substance becoming so overgrown as to get wrinkled into a doubled fold or "spout," which both irritates the eye and causes a watery discharge, and itself collects and carries such discharge off, whence the term is singularly appropriate. If such spouts are neglected, the discharge is apt to so increase as to form a kind of fungus or matter, and actually to corrode the corners of the eye; but this should never be the case. The eye should be carefully washed from time to time with warm water, and gently dried by dabbing with a soft silk handkerchief, after which the eyelids should be touched with some perfectly fresh (unsalted) grease. This will for a time prevent such an eye from becoming dangerous; for example, if the bird is breeding, it will keep it from leaving its eggs and young with the pain and annoyance, and suffice till more effectual measures can be taken: but this should be done on the first favourable opportunity by *cutting off* the superfluous growth in the manner to be presently described. We are aware some consider such treatment wrong, and say that such birds are not fit to be kept: but all who breed know their value, and we do not hesitate to say that we hold a totally different opinion, and consider it perfectly legitimate to perform an operation which gives little pain, and enables the bird to live for years afterwards in comfort, which it could not otherwise do. Neither do we consider it fraudulent to show such a bird, since the operation is perfectly open and honest, and manifest to the eye of every good judge; who can therefore deal with it as he pleases. A badly-bred bird never requires it: but we would earnestly advise every fancier to do it *at once* on the very first appearance of a defined spout; since, if done carefully and properly in early life, very little suffices, and the bird will never require treatment afterwards.

A bird of this kind almost always appears very narrow in skull, owing to the growth of eye-wattle; but however this may be, this great growth of eye-wattle, as is readily seen, makes up the great deficiency in the head A, and is in nearly every essential point the class of head needed to mate with him. Hens of this class, again, are as a rule better formed in the gullet than those possessing more beak-wattle. It is, in fact, very rare to see a good Carrier hen with a very good beak-wattle; and if extra good in this point they are almost always heavy in gullet. Again, there are more hens of this class with finely-shaped, long necks than can be found among the large-wattled hens; and this too is of great value to breed with such cock-birds as shown at A in Fig. 32, for these

nearly always become rather heavy in neck as they mature. Even if the hen be not extra good in neck, if her gullet is good, there is a great likelihood of obtaining progeny with fair necks from such matching as we have described; and if not, we would then select one of the best-shaped birds in this particular from the progeny to breed from again, giving the preference to a male bird, from whom the shape and carriage are principally derived. This is especially the case if the cock is not over two years old, and the hen from one to four years old; and we take this opportunity of saying that, if a strong, healthy bird, we prefer in general breeding from a hen at three years to any other age, mated to a cock bird of one-half the age. If the birds be both strong and unrelated, we would not, however, be over particular about age; but a breeder should never cross from a bird weakly or unhealthy, however good, as one such cross may ruin the most promising strain.

We will now consider another pair of heads, represented by C and D in Fig. 33. The first head, C, is that of a hen at nine or ten months old, and such as, if all goes well, is very likely to be

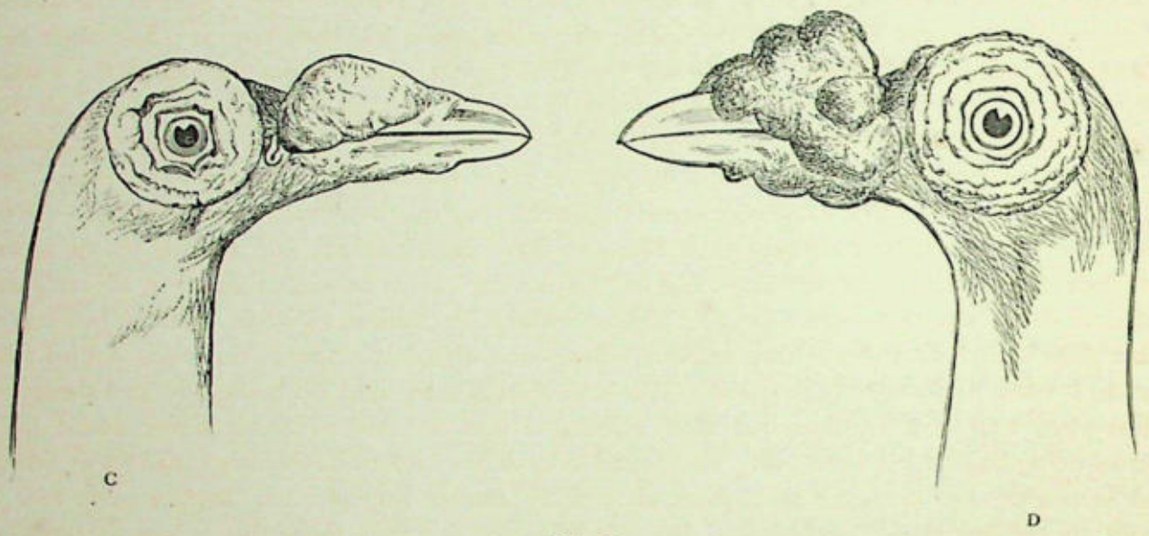


Fig. 33.

the produce of the two heads shown in Fig. 32, and we give it as the type of what a *first-class* hen Carrier at that age should be. The first thing to be observed is the shape, length, and thickness of the beak; the shape being nicely proportioned, so as to look the very utmost length possible, and thus deceive the eye. This will be seen on measurement, by which it will be found that in actual length it is nothing extra, being only one inch and three-quarters to the centre of the eye; but the fine shape causes it to look a great deal more, and this is just what the fancier should aim at, and is of more value than a greater actual measure which does not look so long. If measured in the London style, such a bird will often lose in measurement when older, owing to the expansion of the inner circle of the eye-wattle, though if measured to the centre of the eye it is the same as when young, or even longer, owing to the growth of the beak; and this is another example of the unfairness of the London style of measurement. The apparent length of beak is also partly owing to the beak-wattle not coming too near the point, which we have spoken of before. Looking again at the beak, it will be seen that the lower mandible has as much substance as the upper, or very nearly so, and is of the same length, while the two mandibles close nicely and closely together, causing the line dividing them to appear very nearly if not quite a straight line. This is the well-known, always coveted, but so seldom seen, "box-beak" of the

Carrier fancier. One great advantage of such a beak is that it always grows the beak-wattle much fuller and faster than a bird with a spindle beak. Nearly all Carriers, with age, become more or less faulty in this point, and show more or less of what is called being spindle-beaked; and we may lay it down as an invariable rule that if a Carrier—hen or cock—does not show this point of excellence when young, it will *never* show it, the beak being a point that always deteriorates with age, but never improves.

Considering next the beak-wattle of this bird, it will be seen that at the back it arches nicely off towards the beak, away from the eye-wattle, so as to prevent the two from becoming what is termed crowded together when the two wattles become developed, but leaving a space between one and the other. The more space is there to be seen the more attractive does the bird look, and one thus formed never becomes crowded together unless it is a very extra beak-wattled bird, when it may probably become so between the bottom part of the upper beak-wattle and the eye-wattle. Even in this case, however, such a shape as here represented will keep the upper part of the wattle free of the eye-wattle, and the higher the wattle the more space will thus appear; and thus the more beak-wattle there is the *longer in face* will the bird appear, which is not the case if the wattle be badly shaped, so as to crowd upon the eye-wattle. Some fanciers, whatever the shape of the wattle may be, never allow it to become crowded, but prevent this by cutting off a portion, which they consider improves the appearance of a bird in the same manner as dubbing a game cock. As a rule, a bird really bad in this particular is not improved very much by such an operation. As to the morality of it we will say nothing save this—we have heard many, and known many more, express their disgust at such proceedings, and at "improving" birds in such a manner, who *did not know how to do it;* but these same people, almost without exception, as soon as they *had* learnt how, lost their scruples; and we have seldom known one who knew how to improve a bird who did not do it when he thought it required. We have seen a man hold up his hands and shrug his shoulders when told how another had thus assisted a bird a little, which *he* never would have thought of doing had he not been told; and we have known a bird from this very man's loft, which we had seen with our own eyes to possess an exactly similar imperfection, mysteriously lose it before his appearance at the next show. We will, however, say that these things are as often as not overdone—often done when they would be far better let alone, and still oftener overdone when a very little would have been far better; for it is like altering an ugly face—it may be ugly, but if you try altering any single feature you are apt to make it worse instead of better.

Another fine point in this head is the regularity in build of the eye-wattle. It is round, with the eye in the centre, thus showing the same amount of wattle all round. This good quality is rather the rule with young hens under twelve months, though not so with young cocks, which are very apt to fail behind, or be "pinch-eyed," as it is termed; as are most hens after the age we have named, and especially if they have the best class of eye. This is the wattle *thin* in substance; which, if regular in build and nicely laced, looks so well, gives so little trouble, and causes a bird to look thin in cheeks and narrow in skull. The thick, fleshy-eyed birds, on the contrary, while far less likely to become pinched behind, become at last so thick that they make the bird appear thick in the head and cheeks, like a Barb, the wattle hanging over the eyes also, which fault, when owing to this cause, of course increases with age. It is singular, but true, that hen Carriers are not generally either so narrow or so well-formed in skull as the cock birds, that is, if good ones. There are some of the little, thin-beaked hens that have the one good point of narrow skull and nothing else; but amongst *good* birds the cocks are mostly narrower in skull at three years than hens at the same age.

Another good point in this head is the formation of the gullet, which curves well from the

back of the lower mandible to the top of the neck. This adds as much to the appearance of length of face as the well-formed beak, and without it really great length of face can never appear. Such a curve shows a small distance from the gullet to the back of the head, or, as it may also be reckoned, to the nearest edge of the eye-wattle. Without this point, however good otherwise the head may be, it will never appear a very long-faced bird.

In the companion head, D (Fig. 33), we represent, at the age of twelve or fifteen months, a young cock which we may call the brother of the head C, and such as we have seen bred —or something very near it—from two such heads as shown in Fig. 32. We say "very near" it, because we do not pretend that we have been able to obtain for portraiture a bird quite so accurate in every point, but have improved upon the actual model a little, in order to show what we could consider an all but perfect young cock at that age, so that the young breeder may know, when he gets a bird approaching such a model, the value of his specimen. But we have seen *very* near it, indeed; and, with such slight improvements, this head too is a portrait. It will be seen to resemble the preceding head, C, in the shape of the beak, being, however, as a cock, rather longer, and showing rather more substance in both mandibles, and the same general remarks will apply to it. We have purposely shown this head at a rather more advanced age, in order to convey an idea of the manner in which a first-class wattle first "breaks out" at the change from the smooth appearance presented at first, and shown in the preceding head, but which in a *cock* would of course represent a bird rather younger, say at six to eight months. There are lots of young Carriers which show the desired shape of wattle in the early stage, but when this stage arrives, in which the three different portions of wattle clearly seen in this head, D, begin to break out or appear, it is always an anxious time. The first portion, nearest the beak, will often not show enough fulness, and sometimes (though not so often) too much; but the middle portion, B″, is the greatest difficulty of all, as we have before said. If a bird at fifteen months old does not show this middle portion of wattle properly it will never do so later, this part being the slowest to grow in later life; but, on the other hand, if the front and back parts, B′ and B‴, be scanty, they often *will* become fuller, and cause all to appear proportionate. Hence it is no disadvantage in a *young* Carrier for this middle portion, B″, to be too much developed, but rather the reverse, as the bird is then almost sure to come right in the end.

If the fancier has a young bird with this class of beak-wattle and a good beak, he has attained the *most difficult* points; and we may add that we never have met with such a wattle but the under wattle was good also. As a rule, indeed, the lower wattle very seldom is badly formed in comparison with the upper. We may go further, and add that when the first portion of under wattle, C′, is much too large—say three times the size of C″ or C‴—and even if, besides this, the upper wattle be faulty, if the beak be good, such a bird is often of the greatest value for breeding with a thin or spindle-beaked hen; for such a bird, thus "heavily jewed," as it is called, is rarely seen without a heavy under mandible, which is of the greatest value with such a hen as supposed. We never yet knew one case where two spindle-beaked birds produced good beaks; but we have known many in which such over-jewed cocks have been bred with some of the worst spindle-beaked hens we ever saw, and have produced very extra beaks indeed. On the whole, in fact, we would prefer to mate a hen faulty in this point with a bird thus heavily-jewed, than with a *perfect* beak-wattle, even though accompanied with a perfect beak; our experience being that such a bird will often produce in one cross what a perfect bird would take two years to accomplish, so far as regards quality of beak. Other points of course must be considered on their own merits.

Looking again at this head, the length of face will appear wonderful, almost as if no Carrier was ever seen so long. This is, however, not so; it is only a *fair* length of face for a bird of good

quality, for measurement will show that it is only one inch and seven-eighths from the point of beak to centre of the eye, which has been frequently surpassed for length alone, but seldom in birds with other qualities combined. The appearance is owing, as in the former case, to the length of beak in front of the wattle, and the fine build of the latter, showing a good space between the upper part of the beak-wattle and the eye-wattle. We need not go over this again in detail, and we only refer to it in this example as proving still more conclusively to those who are all for mere measurement, and will not be satisfied without it, that such regularity of formation is of far more value than mere dimensions. Of course if a bird possesses both these qualities *and* extra measurement, so much the better; but one reason for thus representing the heads of these birds full size has been to *show* fanciers the great value of due proportion in every point, and that it is *not* wonderful dimensions that are needed to attract the eye of a good judge, or to make an almost perfect specimen. We have here represented all that a good judge would wish for at the age stated, and have had and seen others in the possession of birds closely resembling all these heads, which are not impossibilities, but only fair dimensions, owing all their attractiveness to symmetry and due proportion.

This bird also, like the hen, is remarkable for the perfection of its eye-wattles, being the same in diameter and thickness all round the eye, and evenly and beautifully indented or laced. These perfections are much more rarely seen in cocks than in hens, as was previously remarked; the male birds being strongly inclined, as they grow, to fail or become "pinch-eyed" behind or under the eye, while the top and front part, on the contrary, become too full. To avoid this, many fanciers, before showing the bird to any one, with the finger and thumb pull and work the lower part of the eye-wattle down, in order to increase the apparent surface of the faulty part. Some dislike the fault so much that the scissors are brought into play to remove a portion at the top, or front, in order that what is left may appear more symmetrical. The operation is, if performed when young, often beneficial; for by cutting off a portion towards the front, where it is too thick and large, it not only removes this, and helps to preserve the desired space between the eye and beak-wattles, but during the few days the wound is healing the growth on that side seems to be suspended, and to be thrown into the side which is faulty. This, however, depends chiefly on the fault being discovered and operated upon sufficiently early, and before growth has ceased. The soft fleshy wattles we have already mentioned are much less likely to produce these irregular eye-wattles than the thin, hard-textured ones; and yet it is a singular fact that most of the best beak-wattled birds are hard, and apt to be ragged in eye-wattle, similar to the head A, in Fig. 32. Such raggedness of texture increases with age; and hence will be seen again the great value of the large fleshy-eyed hens to mate with the heavy beak-wattled cocks.

The gullet of this bird will also be noticed, adding, as in the hen, to the apparent length of face. In this case it looks even better, or nearer the eye-wattle, than in the younger hen; but this arises from the eye-wattle itself being shown as in a more developed state. It looks so full, indeed, that some fanciers would at first sight call it a very large eye-wattled bird; whereas the eye-wattle is simply the fair average size for a good pigeon, being just under one inch in diameter. We do not represent a wattle larger than this advisedly, though many have such, because if the bird has an eye-wattle too large in comparison with his face, it appears too crowded upon the beak-wattle, and gives the face the appearance of being shorter than it perhaps really is, which is just what we want to avoid. Later on, the size increases somewhat, as we shall presently see; but we have never, even when thus fully matured, ever yet seen a Carrier with length of face and shape and form of beak-wattle to carry off to advantage more than an inch and a quarter diameter of eye-wattle; and we have seen many with more, which had to have a portion removed by their

owners to make them appear to the best advantage. We therefore prefer an inch and a quarter to an inch and a half, and if regular in build and lacing have no hesitation in saying it sets off a bird to more advantage than the larger size. We have seen birds with as much as an inch and three-quarters of eye-wattle, but their other qualities were very poor, so that an extra large eye-wattle alone is no sign of a good bird, though it may sometimes be valuable for breeding.

Although the bottom and hinder portions of the eye-wattle are those which, as a rule, are most deficient, the top part also has much to do with the value of the bird. We have seen many with a great deal of extra substance at the top, standing up above the top of the skull, which look for a time very well; but the wattle as it grows will often drop, and instead of rolling over the skull to make it appear narrower, rolls over *outwardly*, so as both to make the wattle itself appear ragged and the head wide. Such a bird as here represented, however, though of the regularly-formed and soft class of eye-wattle, shows a tendency rather to lean inwards, and as it grows such a wattle will tend to roll over the skull itself, and thus add to its apparent narrowness.

The formation of the eye-wattle in a Carrier, though it grows in *size* afterwards, is complete as regards build at the age of twelve months. If at that age, therefore, the back part appear pinched, or the bottom part irregular, the fault will be sure to increase rather than diminish as the bird advances in age. It is quite common for fanciers to remark, when looking at a young bird thus faulty, "Oh, it is only a young bird, and will soon make up;" but if the fault be in the build, it will *not* "make up," but retain the fault as long as it lives, unless the owner takes such steps to remedy it as we have already spoken of. Hence it will readily be seen that a bird may have a very large eye-wattle, and still be a bad-eyed bird; and it is far preferable to have a moderate-sized eye which is well-built, and remains so without assistance, than a wattle half as large again, and of irregular build.

The lacing of the eye-wattle, which is so beautifully regular in this head, and when thus perfect sets off the eye-wattle to such advantage, begins to appear in young cocks of good quality at the age of nine to twelve months; but birds not so well bred do not show indications of it until two and sometimes three years old, and many of them not even then. Hence these "half-and-half" birds, as they are called, always look best at the age of six or seven months, and often at that age deceive even good fanciers who have not seen the parent birds from which they were bred. Nay, we have often known one of these small and smooth-eyed *hens* bought to introduce into his loft by a good fancier, under the representation (and belief on his own part) that she was only six months old, when in reality three years! Such a class of birds is especially to be avoided; and as constitution comes far more from the hen than the cock, we would strongly recommend every one *never* to purchase a diminutive hen at all, unless from actual personal knowledge he is assured that her parents were large and strong, and that her want of size is the result of circumstances and not from constitutional weakness. It is the more necessary to explain the quality and youthful appearance of these small smooth-eyed birds, because there are always a number of persons who breed chiefly for sale, and who care little about their stock if they can only get it cheap, and it will produce what they desire; and as they know their birds look best at four to six months old, they always endeavour to sell at this immature age, before the real quality can be discovered by a novice. Such young birds are easily bred enough, and being thus moderate in price, are largely purchased by beginners; indeed, we might say that perhaps three-fourths of the so-called Carriers in the fancy are such "half-and-half" stock; and up to the time at which we write, we have never at any time known of more than *fifteen* cocks, and about the same number of hens, being in existence at the same time which deserved to be called first-class, or in a fair degree

approaching perfection. There is, therefore, an ample field for any patient and persevering fancier to produce as many as he can of this fascinating pigeon; and if breeders would only abandon this wretched "breeding to sell" system, and breed from *fewer* birds of their best quality, we should soon witness such collections as have never yet been seen. There has already been great improvement, as we remarked some pages back; and what a few have already done by adopting this system, and by carefully matching their birds, is proof of what can be accomplished. It is to promote this state of things that we go so much into detail; and though what we here lay down may be needless to some, who already know all that we could tell them, and there is ample room for difference of opinion on many points, so that we cannot pretend that even what we do give as general rules are perfectly correct in every case or in every point, still we do hope to teach many what it might otherwise take them years of very unsatisfactory experience to acquire.

We will next follow the same pair of heads to full maturity, and refer to Figs. 34 and 35 as

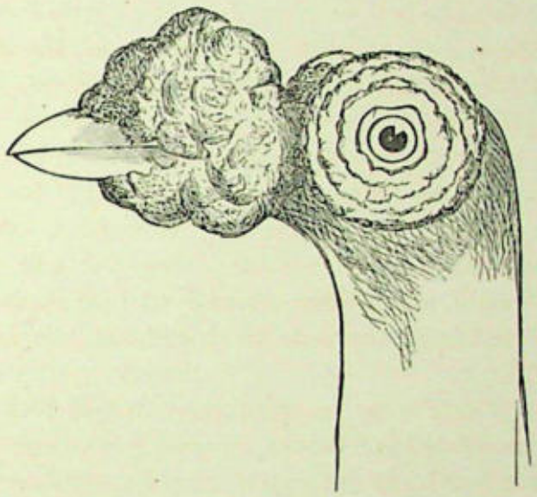


Fig. 34.

representing the same birds at their best development. Fig. 34, then, represents the young cock, D, at the age of three years, when the beak-wattle is fully developed. The first thing to be said is, that if the beak-wattle be of the desired shape at eighteen months, as in D, there is no fear of its becoming unshapely afterwards. Few have been seen so well formed as this without being a little trimmed off or altered; still, we *have* seen a few quite as good in shape, and even more in diameter, which had never been trimmed at all, and the figure is, therefore, no exaggeration in that point. We cannot, however, assert that we ever yet saw such a wattle as represented here, with a *beak* so good as here shown, since, at the age of three years, when matured, however good the beak may have been, it will have shrunk and curled a little as age comes on, so as to show more or less space between the mandibles, and so lose the solid, close-fitting appearance. This, we say, is the present experience; but we do not believe even this point to be at all an impossibility, and as we have already stated that in our judgment great progress has very lately been made in the improvement of the Carrier, we do expect yet to see better-formed beaks in old birds than any yet shown. Still, we must see them first before we can represent them as positively attained, but in the hope of what may be done we confessedly show an ideal beak, that it may be seen what the *standard* of perfection is. In judging between two birds in this point, we need hardly say—as it necessarily follows from what has been said already—that should an old bird show a beak even a little better,

or merely as good, as that of a younger bird, the old bird must be considered a *great deal* the best in this point, after making due allowance for age. Thus, if one bird be a year older than another, and have a beak as good, the older of the two must be credited with the points for best beak; or, again, if of the two birds competing, and looking at the first glance about equal, one have evidently a manufactured or improved beak, while the other is genuine, the genuine beak must of course be given the preference. A judge—if he is anything of a judge—who has once been shown a few "made" beaks by a skilled breeder, can almost always detect them afterwards, except where a very skilful operator, whose bird already had a good box-beak, has taken a notion to make it *perfectly* straight, in which case it is hard to detect it. It can indeed be hardly detected until at least eighteen months old, when it can often be seen in the deficiency of the second portion, B" (page 61), of the upper beak-wattle; but in the case of hens, which seldom show this portion of wattle, it can hardly be detected at all. But hens as a rule are also straighter in the face; and it is so very seldom a good fancier who has a fairly well-formed beak cares to meddle with it, from fear of spoiling the upper wattle by the operation, that in a beak really heavy and good, the possibility or probability of an operation having been performed need give little concern unless the signs of it are clearly apparent. We have seen a spindle-beaked bird which measured as much as two inches and five-eighths to the centre of the eye, having been thus straightened, and the upper mandible projecting three-sixteenths of an inch; but the produce of this bird was entirely valueless, although he was bred with a hen of much better quality than himself. This being almost always the case, no value whatever should be placed upon an obviously "made" beak. The "made" beaks have, however, one advantage when carefully done, viz., that the mandibles keep close and straight so long as the bird lives, so that it is not teased by dust or air getting in between the mandibles.

The beak-wattle in this diagram of the full-grown cock will appear at first sight to be of extra dimensions; but this is not so, for actual measurement will show it to be really less than many birds that have been actually seen, or than some which are to be found at the present moment. Very few, however, we must say, have quite such a good shape and build; and we would strongly advise any one possessing a Carrier cock with a beak-wattle at all nearly resembling this, to keep and breed from him till he has enough to spare, before being tempted to part with him. We are fully aware that some birds with the best-shaped wattles will not always produce the same wattle as they themselves possess. Much depends upon the hen, and even with a good hen they will sometimes throw plain-looking offspring, no man being able to assert that such and such birds *will* produce a certain result. But the best specimens are likely to produce the best; and when such a class of bird as this does produce young not so good as was expected, even these are not be despised, and are eagerly caught up by the "old hands," who know well enough that *their* produce often reverts to or resembles the nearly perfect grandparents. If there were too much certainty and ease in breeding, all the charm of it would be gone, and there would be no room for the time, and patience, and *thought*, which successful breeding demands. The circumference of the wattle here represented was three inches and three-quarters only, which we have stated to have been surpassed; and though on the paper it would appear to be more, this is entirely owing to the good formation, which is such as a bird should possess to be considered first-class; while in proportion as any actual bird comes near it, its wattle may be considered good.

On comparing this head with the representation of it at a younger stage, D in Fig. 33, the latter will be found to appear longer in face, although both are in reality the same. The reason of this is that the younger one, having so much less beak-wattle, allows more space to be seen

between it and the eye-wattle. We have, in fact, scarcely represented the eye-wattle so large as it really is, finding that the effect on paper, when drawn of the exact dimensions, though by rule correct, gave a false effect and conveyed a false impression. The eye-wattle, here drawn one inch in diameter, was in the actual bird an eighth larger, but when drawn that size produced such a really false effect that it had to be reduced. In regard to the texture and build of the eye-wattle we need not add to our previous observations on this bird, the fine gullet of which will also be recognised.

In Fig. 35 we similarly represent such a head as C in Fig. 33, supposed to be fully and perfectly developed in all points, so as to represent a really good ideal hen. The age is supposed here to be four years, as it is seldom, if ever, that a hen becomes so developed in a less space of time. It is, indeed, very rarely that a hen, however well bred, can be seen with a beak-wattle so fully developed and so well formed as this, but we have had a few very nearly approaching it in

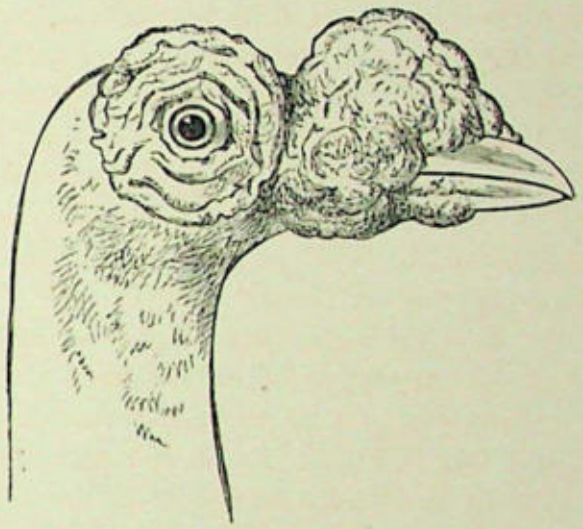


Fig. 35.

both points; and one bird in particular, which once belonged to Mr. Wiltshire, and which was known amongst his acquaintances as the "eighteen bob" hen, on account of the ridiculously low price at which she had been picked up, came so very near the drawing that we may fairly say it is no exaggeration, except somewhat in the perfection of beak, which, as we observed in speaking of the cock, can rarely be found at mature age so straight, massive, and close-fitting as we here show. Hens, however, come nearer to perfect beaks than cocks as a rule, and we quite expect to see better beaks in old birds than any yet shown. Another grand Black hen, which came fully up to our diagram, was the property of Mr. F. Crossley, of Yorkshire, and we never remember her being exhibited without winning. We have had, as already remarked, several others in our own possession closely resembling it; and as for Dun hens, we have had and seen many of that colour which far surpassed this drawing in all but beak-wattle, and indeed possessed measurement which could hardly be believed without seeing the birds; but as a rule Duns are not so perfect as Blacks in shape and fine proportion, so that we cannot remember seeing a Dun hen so fine in these points as here shown.

On a closer examination of this mature hen's head, the texture of the wattle of the upper mandible will appear finer, and showing the three divisions, B′, B″, and B‴, less full and projecting than in the cock bird; but still the same formation of the three portions can be traced, and the finish at the back part of the last portion, B‴, is even better, if anything, than in the preceding head.

With the exception of these differences, the upper wattles are very similar, and the greatest difference will be found in the wattle on the lower mandible, which, as we have already explained, very rarely shows the three portions, C′, C″, and C‴, so distinctly as in the cocks. The cause of this we have also mentioned, though this diagram will explain it more fully. It lies in the fact that the last portion of wattle, C‴, really grows upon the upper mandible, but hangs so low over the lower mandible as to appear to belong to it; and hence the hen, being almost always a little less developed, rarely has this portion of wattle so large as to come down low enough to give this appearance, but even in the best birds almost always appear as in the figure. We might go further, and add that it is very rare to see hens with more than the two portions, B′ and B‴ (omitting the middle portion, B″), on the upper mandible, and C′ C″ on the lower. This is owing to so many fanciers being fond of what they call "a pretty little hen;" but when they see one with all the making of a grand bird, they are apt to exclaim, "Too coarse!" and, if their own property, often part with it. But these very "coarse" birds, when mature, will often cause the very people who sold them to "wonder where they came from," little thinking it was from their own loft. The "pretty" hens, on the contrary, we never yet knew to improve to any such degree as to be unrecognisable; but, on the contrary, they look their best at eighteen months to two years old; whereas those grand birds so foolishly termed "coarse" go on improving till four, five, or even six years of age. They are also, as a rule, fit to breed all that time, whilst the "pretty," delicate-looking hens, reach their best and cease breeding too, generally, in one half the time. A hen is also, of course, naturally inclined to develop less than the cock, so that more under-wattle than here shown is very rare.

We never knew any single fancier breed so many grand Black Carrier hens as the late Mr. Everet, of Brighton, who obtained some of Mr. Corker's best stock at a time when the latter had the best stud of Carriers we have ever yet seen in any one man's possession. Mr. Everet kept this strain some years, and bred as we have stated; but, singular to relate, during this period he bred but few particularly good cocks. The best of this stud ultimately found their way back to the old neighbourhood by passing into Mr. Wiltshire's loft, and we were interested to find that the strain still retained its distinguishing property, being the best we even yet know of for breeding good Black hens. The strain of Mr. Colley, of Sheffield, to which we have before referred, possessed precisely similar peculiarities relating to the opposite sex, being so far as we know unequalled for producing fine cocks. As regards Dun Carriers, for at least the last twenty years no one has been able to equal the breeders of Plymouth, from which neighbourhood the best Duns we know of traced their origin. One hen in particular, bred by Mr. Squire, was the most wonderful Dun hen we ever saw; and Mr. Holman and other Plymouth breeders have also produced grand birds. We have sometimes thought this may be accounted for by the fact that Duns have generally wattles considerably softer in texture than the Blacks, and that the warm and rather moist atmosphere of Plymouth causes a better development. Of late, there has been such a demand for Plymouth hens by those who knew their value, that the stock in that neighbourhood has been sadly weakened, and we fear it will be some time before it breeds as strong as it has done. The Blacks bred in Plymouth are usually of a raven depth of colour, and the Duns very rich and soft. The hens as a rule have wonderfully good eye-wattles, good length and shape of beak, fine long necks, and stand well on their legs; their most usual fault being the want of a well-shaped beak-wattle; and when this class of bird is mated, as we have described, with a bird having large beak-wattle, but faulty in eye-wattle, the very best results are often produced, the great difficulty being to obtain *both* wattles good in one bird. It is scarcely too much to say that the Plymouth blood has had a share in nearly all the best Carrier strains of the present day.

The eye-wattle of this hen's head will perhaps appear at first sight rather large, but this too

is an ocular deception, for measurement will show it to be less in diameter than the wattles of lots of hens which are to be seen. It is, however, as large as could be placed on such a head without crowding the two wattles together, which would cause the whole face and head to appear short; so that we see again how a well-built eye-wattle not of extraordinary size, well placed and combined with the rest, gives most perfectly that appearance which is so much admired. The gullet will be found much the same as at an earlier age.

To have a thorough idea of a good head, however, a front view is also needful, and this we give in Fig. 36, which represents the cock bird looked at in this direction, at the mature age of four to six years. We put the age loosely, because, as we have before observed, some really good birds take much longer to develop than others; but the diagram will show pretty well how the beak, beak-wattle, eye-wattle, and skull will appear relatively in a really good bird. The length of beak in front of the wattle appears here as in the side views before given, but of course little of



Fig. 36.

the under wattle can be seen; it can, however, be readily perceived that it is well formed, and "comes up" well to that on the upper mandible, so as to appear almost as if in one piece. It will also be seen that the sides are well filled out, so as to preserve very nearly the same "peg-top" shape as appears in the side views; and we hardly need remark to any one who knows anything of Carrier pigeons, how very rare it is to find any wattle so regularly filled out all round, and showing both sides alike, with no dent in one part or excess in another. Excess is easily removed; and hence a bird which has *enough* in its least developed part, and only fails by too great development in some other, can readily be made all it should be by a little amputation; but for defect there is no remedy, even for the most unscrupulous fancier.

The eye and beak-wattle may appear to a careless view crowded together in this diagram, but this is only from the point of sight bringing the beak-wattle partially in front, and thus hiding the space between the two wattles; the view being drawn from one of the same heads as the side views before given. This view, however, shows the thickness of the eye-wattle much more than the side views can do, these last appearing thin as in a young bird; whereas we have never or hardly ever seen a bird possessing such a grand beak-wattle as here shown, fully developed, which did not after the third season become thick and more or less ragged in the eye-wattle as well, which only this front view can adequately represent. Some fanciers, it is true, never allow the

eye-wattle to appear thus thick and ragged, but as soon as ever it shows any inclination to become so, remove all the offending portions, which is by them termed "smoothing" the eye-wattle. Such an operation certainly makes the eye-wattle more attractive to look at, and also, by reducing it in thickness from the outside, makes the skull appear narrower; but it can generally be detected by a good judge.

As here represented, the wattle rolls inwards over the skull, so that the two come nearly close together. Some might suppose the back of this skull to be wide, owing to the middle of the two eye-wattles coming so close; but it will be seen on examination that there is the same space between them at the back of the beak-wattle, in front, as at the back. Examination of a good bird will show an inexperienced amateur what is meant by this, and what we wish to convey by this equal width of skull. We could have avoided this appearance by showing the skull of a younger bird, but this would not have conveyed a proper idea of *full* development, when the top

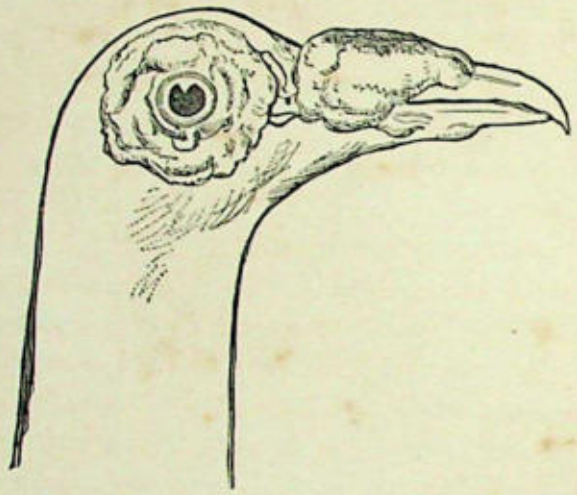


Fig. 37.

or middle portion of the eye-wattle has attained its full growth, and approached the nearest together.

We have thus endeavoured to show in detail what should be looked for in the head of a good bird, at different ages, and the stamp of birds that may rationally be expected to produce it, even if faulty themselves. It will readily be understood that to some extent the imperfections of the parents represented in our first pair of heads may be *reversed* in the two sexes, breeding from a cock resembling the hen, and a hen resembling the cock; but such birds are so much rarer that this is not of practical importance, the heavy beak-wattles nearly always appearing on the cocks. We shall be prepared to find that, while many will agree with what we have said, others will more or less disagree, for all fanciers do not think quite alike; but we do not think very much exception will be taken, and we can assure inexperienced amateurs, that if they can breed or otherwise procure birds whose heads nearly approach those we have now represented, that they have succeeded in obtaining what hundreds have been seeking, and what the best and most experienced breeders will most value. But we will next endeavour to show what kind of birds should *be avoided* or discarded, as not likely either to come to any good themselves, or to produce anything worth keeping if allowed to breed. Such birds should be no less carefully studied than the preceding, since the introduction of one such into a good stud would (and often does) cause results which may be regretted for years; and

birds are far more abundant and more easily procured which resemble in their *faults* the one now to be described than which approach in merit those we have given as models. In Fig. 37, then, we give such a head, and will endeavour to specify its many faults, and the reasons why they are so pernicious.

Firstly, although a young bird at the age of four to seven months, when the beak should be at its best, it will be seen to be what is termed hooked or spindle-beaked, especially in the upper mandible. Not only so, it has not nearly so much substance in the lower mandible as in the upper, and although at an age when both should be alike in length, the upper mandible is longer than the lower and overhangs it considerably. When such faults as these are seen in a young bird they will only become worse and worse with age, and all the "dodges" in the world cannot give such a beak the appearance of a good one. This is, in fact, the class of bird (though perhaps most of them are hardly so bad as this) that generally undergo manipulation of the beak while in the nest; but though this may so far succeed as to give some appearance of length of face, the shortness and little substance of the lower mandible alone, apart from other signs, reveal the trickery to every good judge.

The next great fault to be noticed is the formation of the beak-wattle, which is not only low, but flat from front to back, showing no inclination to rise at either the middle or back part, while yet what there is of it comes up square at the back, without any inclination to arch forward towards the beak. The only place where such a wattle as this ever becomes well developed is at the part which overhangs the lower mandible; and the older such a bird grows the more unsightly does it become in the eyes of a real fancier, making the skull appear *higher* than the beak-wattle, than which nothing can more disgust a good Carrier judge. This fault, once imported into a good strain of birds, will take a lifetime to "breed out" again, and cannot therefore be too sedulously avoided by any one who has reason to set any value upon his stud.

The bad form of the gullet will also be noticed: and if this fault be visible in a young bird, which looks its best, it is sure to become worse as time goes on; and such is one of the most unsightly faults a Carrier can have; for, as we have already explained, however good it may be in other points, if it is full in the gullet it can never appear to have a handsome, long face.

Finally, though the eye-wattle of most young birds is pretty regular in build round the eye, this one will be seen to be ragged and quite irregular, even at such an early age.

Each and all of these faults, though they may not be more conspicuous, or even so much so, as some others to a careless eye, have this peculiarity, that they become worse or more apparent as age comes on, never by any chance becoming less so. Birds which manifest them should therefore be discarded.

Before dismissing the question of good and bad heads, it may be as well to say a few words respecting what fanciers call a "walnut" wattle. Instead of the three portions B′, B″, and B‴, this form of wattle exhibits a tolerably regular walnut-shaped formation; the chief point in which is that, like that we have been describing, it arches nicely away from the eye-wattle and leaves a clear space, as we have so repeatedly described. A wattle of this class should be matched with a *good* peg-top wattle, when it may be expected that the young will resemble the parent of the same sex. This wattle is well represented in the plate of the Dun Carrier.

The next point on which it is necessary to say a few words is that of breeding for colour. In breeding Blacks, the general experience of Carrier breeders is, that if this colour is constantly bred together the metallic brilliancy is lost; and hence most prefer to breed a Black cock with a Dun hen. But to get satisfactory results both Black and Dun must be of the proper shade. Some Blacks are so bad as actually to show an appearance of bars, with other traces of having been

at some time crossed with the Blue; and there is also what is called a "hard" Dun, which has an almost bluish shade, and which has the peculiarity of never altering by exposure to the sun, on which account some fanciers rather like it. Unless for some extraordinary points in other respects, which cannot otherwise be obtained, it is not well to breed with such colours as these; but the deep metallic black, and what is known as the rich, "soft" dun, will always produce good colours. Still, we would never advise any one to lose such points as good beak or beak-wattle, eye-wattle, neck, or legs, for such a point as colour; for while it takes a lifetime to get some of these near perfection, the worst colour can be bred up to a good one within three years. Even change of *food* will often work a wonderful improvement in the colour of Blacks, faulty specimens of which will generally be found to improve in colour on being fed upon old tick beans, especially if they have previously had none of such grain.

It is better in most cases, if it can be done, to breed a Dun cock with a Black hen, colour as well as shape seeming to be most derived from the male bird, and constitution from the female. This is, however, often very difficult; for as most fanciers breed Black cocks to Dun hens, the progeny is, in nine cases out of ten, also a Black cock and Dun hen, which is the reason why there are so very few good Black hens, and so many Duns. It is very desirable this state of things should be altered; and if the breeder can pair a Black hen with a Dun cock, both mature and about equal age, he will probably get Dun cocks and Black hens. Another way to get Black hens is to pair a young Black hen, say fifteen months to two years old, with either a Black or Dun cock five or six years old, if strong and vigorous; by which means it is often found the majority of birds are hens.

But in all these cases, as will be seen, the first thing is to get a *Black hen*, the larger and stronger the better. Unfortunately, very few seem to know, or at least to follow, the plan we have pointed out, of withdrawing the first egg and substituting a nest-egg till the second is laid, but leave the first in the nest; whence the first bird hatched, being so many hours older, gets most food, and the second, usually the hen, is more or less stunted. By hatching together this is avoided, and still more if, by providing *two* pairs of feeders, the young hen can have the full nutriment from a pair of birds. In this way, and by a little forethought, it is generally possible to obtain one or two fine Black hens, when all the rest is plain sailing.

It is curious that most of the largest and heaviest-wattled Black Carriers are bad in colour, not only of the plumage, but also of the beak. This adds to their coarseness of appearance, which often causes them to be condemned; but to the breeder they are almost invaluable. Their colour is soon improved by the soft Dun, as already stated, and they are so large and generally so strong in constitution as well, that they furnish the very best of material for a loft.

These birds bring us naturally to Blues. It is often found that when one of these blue-shaded Blacks is crossed with a good Black, the produce is one bird either black or dun, and the other blue. When this is the case, such a Blue is sure to be what is rather rarely seen in that colour, well barred with distinct black, and is most valuable to a breeder of Blue Carriers. These black-bred Blues are also more likely to develop plenty of wattle, being from birds which, as a rule, are far more developed in these points than the Blues themselves. The usual plan, with at least many breeders of Blue Carriers, is to cross with the Silver; but we would far rather advise a breeder, if his Blues are of a good sound colour, to cross a fine large hen of this bad, or bluish-black colour, with either a Blue or Silver cock. This will always be found to answer; for even if the desired shade of colour is not produced at once, a second cross back to the Blue will do it; and, meantime, the Black hen will have thrown more wattle into the strain than could be got by three years' breeding of the Blues alone. Both the best-coloured and the best-wattled Blues we have ever



Vincent Brooks, Day & Son, Lith.

BLUE CARRIER COCK.

seen were produced by this style of cross. To improve *mere* colour of Blues, Silvers are perhaps best, but we have never seen these so good in either beak or eye-wattle even as the Blues. Hence the progeny, though they make nice long-looking birds at the age of eighteen months, and some of the hens have been seen very fair in beak and beak-wattle, never, as regards the cocks, become developed to any great extent in these latter properties; and Silvers should be therefore restricted to improving colour alone. The worst-coloured Silvers have often the best head-properties.

Another method of improving Blues when they have become what is called "too fine"—that is, when they show too little of wattle points—is to cross a very light-coloured Dun hen with a Blue or Silver cock, preferring the Blue. Should the produce not be the desired shade, then *re-cross* the offspring in the same manner, which scarcely ever fails. Sometimes a Chequer will appear, in which case pair the Chequer with a Blue or Silver, when the produce will not unfrequently be a fine blue-rumped* bird, which is rarely to be found, comparatively, of the *right shade* of blue. It is comparatively easy to breed dark rumps when the body-colour looks as if black soot was mixed with it, but the clear bright blue, both in Carriers and Dragoons, is generally found combined with a white rump, and such birds are thought of comparatively little value. Still, we would by no means despise a good Blue Carrier, whose only very evident fault was a white rump; for if a bird be so good all over that it needs handling him to see his defects, as is the case with a white rump, such a fault is only to be taken into consideration when points are required to decide between two birds. Again, we should never allow a bad, sooty-coloured Blue, merely because it was blue-rumped, to gain the points of colour over a well-coloured Blue that showed the white rump. But if we find a fair Blue, with blue rump and clear black bars, such is to be regarded (so far as colour alone is concerned) far before a white-rumped bird. What we mean by a fair or good blue, is a clear colour like the Blue Dragoon, perfectly free from black or sooty tinge. We regard this freedom from black stain as far more important than white rump, for *all* blue pigeons have *some* white feathers; it is only to lift the wing and they can be seen at once.

Blue Carriers are very handsome birds, being, as a general rule, longer in face, and also longer in feather than the Blacks and Duns. This gives them a very stylish appearance, in spite of their slight deficiency in other head properties. They are also of a stronger constitution, and therefore less liable to disease, and there is usually less trouble in rearing their young; why we know not, unless it is that the colour is a more natural one. There have been marvellous strides made lately, and some few Blues are now to be seen very little behind the Blacks, even in the higher properties; and as this has been done almost without any encouragement at shows, we hope now that some few exhibitions encourage them, they may be bred up to the same standard as the Blacks. A good Blue Carrier is certainly one of the most attractive of all the varieties of pigeons.

The White Carrier, we are sorry to see, seems nearly to have died out altogether, from some unaccountable cause, as about twenty years back there used to be grand specimens exhibited. We remember two hens in particular, which we saw in the possession of Mr. Carrol and Mr. Corker, that have seldom been surpassed in head properties by either Blacks or Duns. We believe both these were bred by Mr. Potter, to whom many of the best birds of the present time owe their origin. He had a grand stud of both Blacks, Whites, and Duns, and it was a sad loss when he retired, in consequence of being *robbed of the whole of his stock*, which so discouraged him that he had not the heart to begin again. The birds thus heartlessly stolen were probably all killed, for none of them

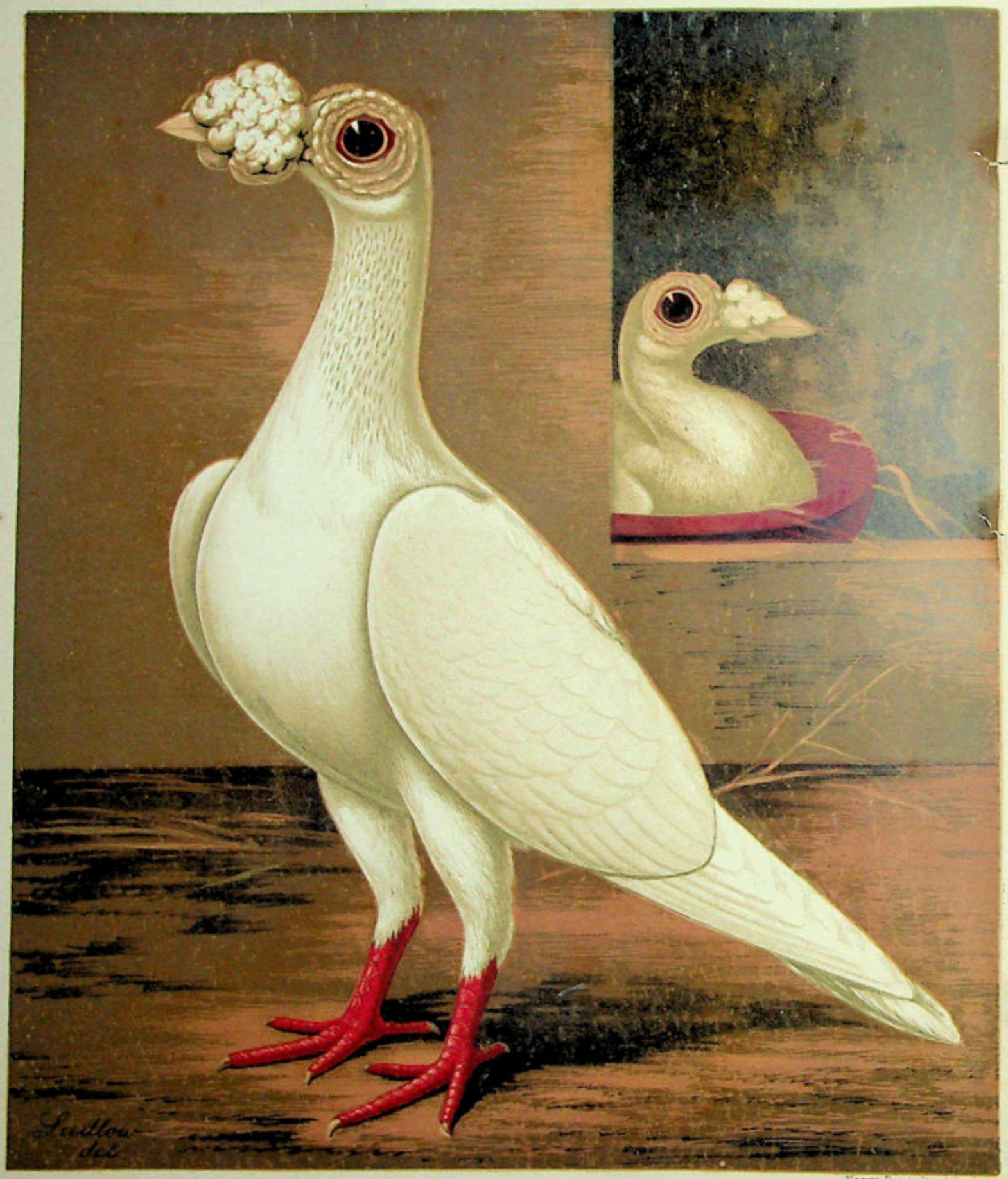
* The rump of a pigeon is what many, ignorant of technicalities, would call the lower part of the back, just in front of the insertion of the tail. The wild Blue Rock, from which most naturalists consider domestic pigeons to be derived, is whitish in this part; and it is peculiarly difficult to obtain blue pigeons free from this feature.

were ever seen afterwards but once, when they were offered to a well-known dealer, in Club Row, London, who recognised them and refused to purchase, after which they were searched for, but never discovered. Since then we have never seen but one really good White Carrier, and even that was not quite pure white, though nearly so. It was bred by Mr. Volckman, who, by the way, bred that season the three most extraordinary Carriers we ever yet knew one man breed and rear in the same year; one of them being black, one dun, and the other the nearly white bird we are speaking of. *All* these birds were the narrowest in skull and largest and most regular in build of eye-wattle we have ever seen. The Black, a cock, before he was eighteen months old, won first at Birmingham, Manchester, and Halifax, each time under a different judge; and the Dun, a hen, won nine prizes and four cups. The head of the White, a cock, was so remarkable that at the age of two and a half years the eye-wattle was as large as a five-shilling piece. We may also add that the same gentleman once took a fancy to breed *Yellow* Carriers, and made more progress towards his object in one season than we ever knew to be made before; so much, in fact, that we regret he gave it up. Yellow Carriers could easily be produced from Yellow Scanderoons, Yellow Dragoons, and Dun Carriers, especially if a Yellow Scanderoon cock could be procured.

The White we have here referred to was bred from a large splashed, almost white cock, mated to a soft dun hen. The produce of these birds were some light Mealies, one Dun, one Black, and the White bird in question. The white-splashed cock, we believe, was bred from one of the heavy, old-fashioned White Dragoons, mated to a heavy-wattled Carrier. This shows that, as with most other birds, white is the most pre-potent colour; and, indeed, it is always found that when birds are once obtained *all* white, they are much less likely to throw back to different feather than any other colour. So that no matter how bred, if a bird be once obtained pure white all over the body, with a beak pure flesh-colour and free from black spots or dark stains, and, above all, what is termed "bull-eyed," or both eye-balls black and free from specks of red or orange, there is no more difficulty in keeping up a strain of white birds. As long, however, as there are any ticked or coloured feathers on the body, stains on the beak, or light specks on the eye, the progeny will be likely to be more or less splashed; but by steadily selecting the purest-coloured, this may gradually be weeded out till the desired *pure* white be obtained, after which, as we have said, there is no more real difficulty. In thus breeding up for any scarce colour, it may be necessary to breed together near relatives. In such a case it is much better to breed parent and offspring together than brother and sister; but we would not shrink from even the latter in case of need, though care should be taken not to repeat such a mating in the next generation.

This White cock of Mr. Volckman's came afterwards into the hands of Mr. Wiltshire, who mated him to a pure white hen, a little better than a Dragoon, and obtained thus several pairs of pure Whites, which *some* fanciers would have called first-class Carriers, even if Blacks or Duns; they were not, however, up to the mark in all points, though they showed what might be done, and what a promising field is open to an enterprising fancier.

We may suggest another plan which we believe would produce very fair White Carriers in about three seasons, which might afterwards be perfected. There are numbers of White Dragoon cocks to be had, showing too much length of face, and too much eye and beak-wattle. If such a bird be mated to a *white-rumped* Blue Carrier hen with a long face (this length of face is necessary to counteract the Dragoon blood), and as good in flights, tail, and all other Carrier points as can possibly be had, the progeny will be very likely to be more or less white; and if the hen be a light-coloured blue so much the better. Those nearest approaching to the desired colour should be mated to Silvers of good quality; and some of these various crosses will be sure to produce one or two all-white birds. To obtain fresh crosses and keep up the strength of blood, the fancier



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith

WHITE CARRIER COCK.

should further look out for Dun-*pied* or Black-pied birds. If the tail and flights of these are white, so much the better; but it matters little, and there are lots of Blacks and Duns to be found, really good birds, with a deal of white on both the belly and round the vent. These birds are generally well-bred, being as a rule the produce of good soft-eyed Duns or white-beaked Blacks; and by matching them with the Whites the stoutness of breed may be kept up, and by these means we feel assured that in a few years a fine strain of White Carriers might be produced. We tried the White and Blue cross ourselves, and in the first year obtained one pure white bird; but having no opportunity or space for systematic breeding, we could not keep it up. We believe, however, that one of the old Carrier fanciers is turning his attention to Whites, and has already produced some very fair birds.

In all breeding for rare colours, it is best to select the *cock* of the colour desired, and to let him be a young and vigorous bird, in order that the produce may tend to "take after" him rather than the hen. There are other crosses that might be tried for Whites, but we think the Blue far the most promising: first, because we know it to produce White easier than other colours; and, secondly, because, as a rule, Blue hens are larger in body, longer in face, flights, and tail, and of a stronger constitution than Blacks and Duns. Some would put the White Dragoon first to the Black or Dun-pied birds; but for these reasons we would far prefer the Blue cross first, and then putting the nearly white birds thus produced to the pied birds.

A fault not nearly so much looked to as it should be in breeding, is want of leg. A bird standing low can never look well, however good; and we would advise any one to get rid of such a bird, unless really extraordinary in some other points which he needs. If this be the case, by mating the short-legged cock with a strong young hen, straight and tall "on her pins," the fault may be greatly improved; but care must be taken to select the ages, so that the hen be the most vigorous of the two.

In fact the *ages* of the breeding pair, both absolute and relative, have much more to do with the character of the produce than is generally supposed. *The same birds will not produce the same young at different ages.* We have often noticed that the progeny of two young birds bred together never attain a proper development of wattle, however good the parents may ultimately become. Many fanciers breed two handsome young birds together for the sake of getting the fine shape, and they get their wish; but the produce preserve their "fine" looks to the end, and always look young, never fully developing, and often showing no more wattle all their lives than they attained at nine months old. To keep a proper balance of points, therefore, it is best to breed from a matured bird on one side at least; on the other hand, except for some particular object, it is equally undesirable to breed from *two* Carriers that are more than three years old; for after that age the very weight of the wattle causes them to lose their free upright carriage, and often become more or less down-faced; and these faults tend to appear in the progeny, though these latter certainly do develop more weight of wattle in a given time. Again, while in case of equal age it is generally found that the cock has most influence upon both the colour and form of the produce, yet if the cock be much older than the hen, this rule will be reversed. This must be carefully considered in breeding, for colour especially, since it will be seen that the same bird will breed a different colour when put young to an older mate, to what it will do in later life with a younger mate. So much is this the case, in fact, and so strongly does the progeny of pigeons tend to follow the more vigorous bird, that we have known many cases where a cock of five or six years old, mated to a fine young hen, has produced a *pair of hens*, while a young cock with a hen almost on her last legs as regards breeding, has produced a pair of cocks.

Another point necessary to keep in mind is that excessive development of wattle (and

this remark applies equally to Barbs and Dragoons) being an artificial point, and needing vigorous growth to keep it up, all wattled breeds require more *frequent crossing* than others. We have known many fanciers who started with really good stock, who by neglecting this consideration have found their birds dwindle down in head points in spite of all they could do, they could never tell why; while in other hands the very same strain, judiciously crossed, has produced marvellous birds. A well-known good breeder can almost always exchange a bird as required; but in any case, we have no hesitation in saying from experience that most breeders require a cross every three years or thereabouts, to keep up the strength of blood. Of course, there are some who have such an extensive stud that they do not need this, having enough different strains of their own to give them all they want for a long time; but even these will do well, whenever a handsome young cock or a fine large hen offers, to secure it for the improvement of their stock. Such a bird will always pay for keeping a few months, and as it is very seldom they can be got just when wanted, it is best to secure them whenever they "turn up." More especially should a good large hen be thus snapped up "on sight." We are more and more convinced that the weak point in the Carrier fancy is the want of such birds, and that, if breeders would pay more attention to their hens, and especially if they would study, by getting them *hatched together* with the cocks in the way we have pointed out, and giving a promising hen squab *alone* where possible to a good pair of feeders, to rear their best hens fine and strong, we should see a vast improvement in the general carriage, size, and constitution of Carriers, and might soon have a race of birds that could rear their own young, though it is not advisable that first-class Carrier hens should be allowed to do so.

We hardly need urge that birds should never be bred from while in a diseased state. This would apply to *all* pigeons, but especially to so highly artificial a bird as the Carrier. Canker in the mouth or ear, the disease called "small-pox," disease of the lungs (known by the panting and croaking of the bird), wing disease, and gout in the legs, are especially to be avoided, as birds bred from in this state are almost certain to impart the disease to their progeny. Disease of the lungs, indeed, for most obvious reasons, should discard a bird altogether; but most of the others can often be cured, though it is doubtful if even then some constitutional taint is not imparted to the offspring, and any one who has a strain which he knows to be free from disease will do well to be *very* cautious what birds he crosses from, lest he impart to them what he can hardly ever afterwards *thoroughly* get rid of again.

The more general diseases of pigeons will be treated of separately; but there are some which are either peculiar to Carriers and other wattled birds, or at least to which they are so much more liable than other breeds, that it will be useful and appropriate to treat of them in this chapter.

And, first, to speak of the wattle itself. We have already mentioned the peculiar risks to which it is liable, from fighting, from draughts, and from overgrowth; any or all of these leading to inflammation and discharge, which, if not properly attended to, soon becomes matter, and finally often degenerates into obstinate canker, which sometimes extends to the ear, the worst place of all. The thick, fleshy-eyed birds are most subject to these contingencies, and a constant watch should be kept upon them. In any case of injury, the first thing always to be done is a very gentle bathing with warm water, pressing, but not rubbing, a very soft sponge against the injured or inflamed part and then squeezing the water out, after which the wattle should be gently dried with an *old* silk handkerchief in the same way, and then anointed with perfectly *fresh* grease (*i.e.*, neither salt nor rancid; fresh lard answers well, and oil will do if nothing else can be had). For actual injury, a little zinc ointment instead of the grease will help to heal the torn part; but in all cases, when the immediate symptoms have passed off, the wattle should be carefully examined to see if there be a "spout-eye." This arises from a good growth of wattle, naturally tending to

form into a spout or fold under the eye, and which frequently occurs of itself as the wattle grows; but when the tendency exists, the "spout" itself often owes its immediate origin to another bird pecking at the wattle, and thereby causing injury and inflammation, which swells the part and causes the wattle at once to form a spout to carry off the discharge. What is meant will be seen in the head B, Fig. 32. A cold will also cause it; but, as a rule, most heavy-wattled birds become spout-eyed sooner or later merely from the growth of the wattle, which by degrees presses on the eye-ball, thus causing some degree of irritation and watery discharge. As the wattle still grows, it *must* form into a fold somewhere, and the discharge running down causes this fold to appear at the lower side to carry it off. As it is the very best birds which show this tendency, we cannot at all agree with those who would discard them. We certainly have seen a very few large-eyed Carriers which never had spouts; but they are *very* few indeed, and many which are thought such have simply been operated upon in early life, as we have already advised. We do so openly, as we do not wish to lose the sight of nearly all our best birds; or think it wrong to perform an operation which enables the subject to live in comfort afterwards instead of misery. On the contrary, we would have it performed early, which in most cases permanently saves further trouble, as there is no longer any loose projecting part for another bird to catch hold of and drag at, which is perhaps the most frequent cause, and often produces such severe inflammation as to cause actual loss of sight. Excision of spouts also preserves a bird as a breeder; for in bad cases the constant discharge from the eye weakens the bird so much as to cause a sickly progeny. We should not have said so much had we not heard the operation spoken of as if a fraud, which we distinctly say it is not; we openly and avowedly recommend and practise it, and enter into the matter here that the proper mode of procedure may be known to all.

First of all, the bird to be operated upon should have the whole side of the neck on the affected side well oiled or greased, as also the shoulder. This is not so much to prevent any blood that may flow adhering to the plumage, but in order that when the bird rubs the wounded part on the shoulder, irritation may be avoided and the part get a fresh anointing, which will tend to heal it. If this is not done, the dry plumage will not only irritate, but may even re-open the partially healed wound, and when well the grease is easily washed off. Next the legs should be tied with a piece of soft rag, after which a piece of cloth should be rolled round the bird at the shoulders, so as to keep it still, or, what is best of all, a stocking with the foot cut off may be pulled over the bird. The proper instrument to use is a pair of surgical scissors, shaped like ordinary nail-scissors, but with *curved blades*, by which the blades can be got close to the eye without *pointing* at it. Before cutting, the spout should be drawn away from the eye, and the inside very carefully examined. The inner surface will generally be found studded with small red points or nodules, which cause the irritation, and these must be so mastered that *every one* of them may be removed, by cutting away the spout a little beyond them. It is necessary to be sure of this, because if any of these little pimples are left, it will never make a good cure; and, on the other hand, there is not very much fear of cutting off too much, as it is wonderful how the gap fills up and heals, so that the worst cases are well and healed within a week, while we have known some, in which the eye-wattle was thin in texture, to be healed in two days.

The scissors should be dipped before using into Condy's Red Fluid, which will tend to prevent the wound both from bleeding and festering. As soon, also, as the spout is cut off, a small sponge should be dipped into the fluid and held against the wounded part with a gentle pressure, repeating the dipping for a few times, which will be found soon to stop the bleeding, and is to be continued till this is effected. As soon as the flow of blood has ceased, a portion of zinc ointment is to be placed on the *top* part of the eye-wattle, above the wound, so that the heat of the eye may cause

it to gradually melt and run down on to the wounded place, which will keep it soft, and prevent the wounded part and the edges of the eye-wattle sticking together. This must be watched, for if suffered to occur it is not only likely to cause the wound breaking out afresh, but may cause the formation of matter inside the closed lids, which greatly endangers the sight of the eye. If zinc ointment is not at hand, fresh butter or lard will do; but the ointment having a cicatrising effect is much the best, and by a little care all danger of the eyelids sticking together is easily avoided. Till the bleeding is stopped the head should be held downwards, so that no blood may run into the beak of the bird.

When all flow of blood is stopped and the ointment applied, the bird should be placed (still bandaged) in a narrow box or basket for a few hours, till the wound is a little hardened. The place should be only just wide enough, so that it cannot twist about, which might open the wound afresh. After this the stocking should be slipped off backwards, or the bandage undone, and the legs untied, re-tying them in such a manner that the bird can just walk in his pen, but *not* lift either foot so as to scratch the eye, which he otherwise might do. Next morning another portion of the zinc ointment should be placed on the wound itself, and also applied all round the eye-wattle and on the shoulder of the bird, so that if he rubs his head it may come in contact with the ointment. In a very few days all will be right and sound, and the bird will be relieved of a permanent annoyance or suffering at the expense of very little pain.

If it be found that the operation is not quite thoroughly done, but that any of the irritating pimples are left, the wound should be allowed to become *quite* healed before anything more is done, when the slight further portion required may be removed. If both eyes need operation—unless they are so bad that to operate on both at once might be too much for the bird—it causes least suffering, and gets the whole over at once, to remove the spouts from both, and then with a needle to pass a silk thread through the root of each eye-wattle, where they roll over the skull, tying it so as to draw the eye-wattles nearly together over the skull. This will quite prevent the upper lids of the eye-wattles closing upon the wound below, and hasten the cure materially. We hardly need say that care should be taken to remove the thread as soon as its purpose has been accomplished. Before leaving this subject, we may remark that for all wounds and injuries to the wattles zinc ointment is the best application we are acquainted with.

The foregoing mode of treating spouts in the eye-wattle naturally leads us to the worst, most prevalent, and most troublesome of all diseases prevalent among Carriers, though it is not peculiar to them, as it attacks all pigeons possessing wattle round the beak and eye, the Barb being as much subject to it as the Carrier. We refer to *canker*. This assumes various forms; but we know for certain that nearly all, if not quite all, cases are caused by either cold or irritation in some form or other. In the few cases where no such direct cause can be traced, we believe it to arise from the birds being bred from parents which were cankered; as we have noticed several times, that though such parents may not always infect their young while in the nest-pan (which however they generally do), the young are almost certain to develop it at some period in later life. It is these *hereditary* cases which are worst, and indeed often incapable of cure; but nearly every bird which is attacked from cold may be cured if taken in time.

Canker in the ear is first to be traced by the swelling of the part, after which it may assume either of two forms. The worst is when the ear actually discharges offensive matter. In this the treatment is to bathe, as hot as the bird can bear, with water in which some soap and soda have been boiled, squeezing a sponge gently against the ear, but on no account rubbing it. In such operations the bird's head must be so held that the water cannot run into the mouth, which might occasion sores there also. This bathing must be done every day, and, if a mild case, will be

sufficient to cure it If not, a pencil of lunar caustic should be procured, and gently inserted, like a gimlet, into the ear—that is, turning it round as it advances, till it reaches the bottom of the cavity. Then the ear should be carefully dried, and solution of gutta-percha, warmed into a fluid state, dropped in till the cavity is filled, and pressed with the finger so as to adhere to the edges of the aperture. The ear should then be left till the plug drops out of itself, which it will do in time, and in many cases the canker, being thus protected from the air, will be found to be cured; or if not, it will often assume the other or "dry" form within a few weeks after, after which recovery is pretty certain. After thus passing from the moist into the dry form, it must not be touched or treated in any way, as it will then cast itself off in one mass of indurated matter; but care should be taken to give the bird only the soundest and best food. This touching with caustic, and subsequent keeping from the air, has been the most successful means of stopping the discharge of any we have tried; but we would in all instances try bathing first, which if persevered in often leads to good results.

In the other form the swelling is not so bad, and the ear remains dry, what matter there is visible being hard and flaky. All that is necessary in this case is to mix some fuller's earth with water rather thin, and paste or fill the ear up with this, by means of a brush, every two days. This will soften the matter and enable it to be detached, and heal up the place, by protecting it from the air. Some cases of this kind will be better within a week, and others will take months; but it cannot be forced, and except when there was hereditary taint, this form of the disease has with us always yielded in time. The dry form of canker will indeed often get well if left alone, with sound good food and air; and, in fact, if nothing goes wrong we believe it always will; but at any time the cold air may irritate the ear, and cause the other and worst form of the disease to come on, which the fuller's earth prevents. It also absorbs any little moisture, and seems to have a slight healing effect of its own. Slight cases may sometimes be cured by giving two capsules, three times a week at night, of castor and cod-liver oil.

Canker often appears in the inside of the lower mandible. When thus occurring, if not too far gone, it is generally easily cured by cutting off the tip of the tongue, which in these cases is usually found abnormally long, and by its constant irritation and movement against the delicate surface causes the malady, which, if unchecked, will sometimes cause the mandible to break quite off. The length that should be cut off is generally about an eighth of an inch, and the amputation gives no pain, the part being horny and devoid of feeling. The tip of the tongue having been removed, the cankered part must be cut out, and, if a severe case, a hole also cut clean through the lower mandible at the place. The wound is then to be washed with Condy's Fluid, after which a caustic pencil is to be turned round inside the hole, and applied to the whole of the wound. It will rapidly heal, while the hole, as soon as it has fulfilled its purpose, will also fill up and become as solid as before. A more troublesome case is when the canker breaks out at the soft part of the jaw, when the irritation caused by the continual opening and shutting hinders recovery. In this case, the part should be thoroughly scraped, all the corroded matter being either cut or scraped carefully off, when the wound is to be painted by a camel-hair brush with oil of vitriol, and the bird put into a small box or basket, with a gag or ring upon its upper mandible at least a quarter of an inch thick, so as to prevent the opening and shutting of the beak, and consequent flow of saliva diluting the vitriol. It is best, for this reason, to give each dressing at night, when the bird will remain more quiet, and the vitriol will act upon the seat of the malady till morning; when the pigeon can be set at liberty till night, at which time another dressing of the vitriol should be applied. Some use caustic, but we prefer vitriol in this form of the disease. Slight cases may often be cured by the application of lunar caustic, or even of common black ink.

Sometimes canker will come out at the side of the eye-wattle, or at the top or back of the skull. In such cases it is best to let it "come to a head" and break out of itself, when it almost always comes out externally in one hard solid mass, which finally separates, after which the bird recovers, and is troubled no more. If it be the eye-wattle that is affected, frequent bathing with warm water will hasten this natural process, but it should *not* be lanced as long as there appears any hope of its breaking out on the surface of its own accord. Such an operation frequently causes it to assume a more violent form, and spread all over the skull; whereas, if left alone, this form of canker rarely fails to make a good cure of itself.

Sometimes young Carriers suffer from canker in the mouth while in the nest-pan, from either a diseased state of their parents, or from these latter becoming disordered in their crops through unwholesome food or water. In such cases the best plan is to tie a piece of sponge on the end of a stick, and sponge the mouth of each affected bird with a strong solution of salt and water. Some use alum, but we prefer the salt. If not too far gone, three or four applications of this kind will generally stop this form of canker, and is in itself good for the birds besides.

The worst form of canker in pigeons is what has received of late the name of "small-pox," owing probably in part to the time which elapses before the terrible nature of the malady is fully apparent, and partly to its virulent and contagious character. It seems to occur most frequently just before the bird goes into moult, from which we incline to the opinion that the primary cause is a stagnation of the blood. This is to some extent confirmed by the fact that birds are also frequently known to develop it when confined, and also after removal to a new place, where they are fed upon different food to that they have been accustomed to previously. Foul water, or a bath allowed to remain stagnant, will also cause it, and so will overcrowding, or want of ventilation. The first symptom is a red pimple upon the edge of the eye-wattle, or sometimes on the beak-wattle, which resembles a small red wart. This gradually swells, and becomes a tumour filled with matter in a nearly solid form, which if opened appears full of roots, resembling sinews, but with little pus or other fluid matter. This terrible disease is the most infectious of all we are acquainted with; and should a bird affected with it fight with a healthy one, or even perch beside it, it is almost certainly communicated, which will often also occur if the healthy bird be placed in an infected pen, unless the latter has been purified from the contagion. If allowed to run its course, the whole wattle becomes affected and swollen to a frightful extent; but this should never be the case, and if taken in time, it can almost certainly be cured.

Directly the first pimple is seen, the bird should be placed in a pen alone, the pen being well sprinkled with Condy's Red Fluid, which if repeated daily will prevent any infection being communicated by the pen to other birds. The part affected is first to be cut off, and liberally, so that every particle of diseased structure be removed, and the cut show only healthy growth. The wound should then be well washed with the Condy's Fluid, and afterwards thoroughly rubbed all over with lunar caustic, for which a "caustic pencil" is best. Should another place break out after the first has been thus treated, which is very possible, apply the same treatment immediately. After the operation, give the bird two capsules of castor oil, and entirely change its food for a while. This treatment we are happy to say scarcely ever fails, though we lost terribly by the disease until we had discovered it. It is the *only* treatment we have found to have the slightest effect; but we can say positively that treated in this way it may be mastered with ease and certainty, and we have by this method saved at least some hundreds of cases.

Should the disease break out, as it sometimes will, inside the mouth, it is to be treated in the same way, first bandaging the bird, and placing on the upper mandible a small but thick ring of india-rubber to keep the mouth open, while the scissors or lance are used to cut off the infected

parts. The bird in this case will have to be hand-fed while the wound is healing, using soaked beans and peas, and rolling them in gravel before giving, to assist digestion. Pills made of boiled rice and bread, similarly rolled in gravel, are also excellent food for birds in this or any other diseased state which requires hand-feeding, as is also a drink of good milk. We should also advise the whole inside of the loft, wherever this disease occurs, to be well sprinkled with Condy's Fluid, to prevent infection spreading, which it is otherwise very likely to do. Great care is required not to handle healthy birds after treating diseased ones, without first washing the hands in some effectual disinfectant.

We next have to consider what is so well known as "*wing disease.*" The original cause of this has been a puzzle both to us and many others. From its sometimes appearing suddenly in what have previously seemed most healthy birds, we have thought that, at least *sometimes*, it may be caused either by fighting, or by striking the wings against some obstruction. It does appear that in lofts where sharp obstructions abound the disease is more frequent than in others; but many cases appear to arise from constitutional causes, and to be of a scrofulous character. It appears in the form of a soft lump or tumour, usually on the shoulder-joint of the wing, which, if it be opened, is found to consist of matter of a cheesy consistence. If treated at an early stage it can generally be cured, as follows:—Strip off a few feathers round the place, and by means of the ordinary glass, get a leech to fasten on the part. As soon as the leech drops off, the place is to be held under a cold-water tap for at least five minutes, after which a piece of soft string or tape should be tied round the shoulder close to the root, and then crossed round the outer flights, so as to form a sling, and keep the wing from getting into a hanging position. This is especially necessary, for if it be neglected, even though a cure be effected, the wing often remains useless, and if a cock, is useless both for show or breeding; while a sling prevents this, and if all goes well with the cure, preserves both the use and carriage so well that the effect of the disease can hardly be detected. The place should be held five minutes under the tap every morning for at least a week, and afterwards touched with citron ointment, which will usually make a good cure.

Another very good mode of treatment for wing disease is to paint the place every day with the strongest spirits of turpentine, using a camel-hair brush. This is to be continued until the swelling has disappeared. Some lance the tumour, but this we have hardly ever known to produce any good effect, and even if it does, the bird can never fly, and the wound can always be seen. In all cases the bird should be confined, since attempts at flight only irritate the part, and make recovery longer than it would otherwise be. Wing disease should always be treated as soon as it is clearly apparent, for when of long standing it seldom can be cured. We may add that it generally, but not always, prevents either sex from breeding till the cure is effected.

A somewhat similar disease is known as gout in the legs, but is chiefly to be found in birds of mature age. It is also as a rule, amongst even these, confined to birds bred late or of weakly stock. The symptoms are swelling of the legs about the joint; and a flannel bandage soaked in spirits of turpentine, and renewed every day, will often cure if applied early; but later on, when the swelling has developed into hard excrescences like warts, we believe there is no cure. This disease we believe to be hereditary.

Other diseases, to which the Carrier is not especially liable, will be found treated of elsewhere.

JUDGING CARRIERS.—We have already hinted briefly at the inconsistencies in judging which are so frequent in this variety of pigeon. We say in this breed; because while in pigeons generally the judging is by no means so uniform as at most good poultry shows, it is in the Carrier especially that decisions, flatly contradictory, at times provoke a fancier almost past

endurance. Almost every judge seems to differ; and not only so, but we have repeatedly known the very same judges judge the very same birds, as nearly alike in condition on the two occasions as could possibly be, in a totally different manner; and not only Mr. Colley, but others we could name who would have been an honour to the pigeon fancy, have been driven out of it by such ignorant and contradictory awards. This state of things causes at times much ill-feeling and unjust suspicion; for if a young beginner is thus unjustly disappointed, he is often apt to dispose of the bird cheaply to some one who knows its value; and if the new owner—especially when a dealer—wins with it at the next show, as is very likely to be the case, it is at once said that he has "got the bird up," and thus deceived the judge. At times perhaps a little "improvement" *may* have been effected; but very often this is not the case, the bird being shown in the precise condition in which it was purchased. We have known a judge describe to a loser the sort of Carrier he professed to admire, and when this exact pattern was put before him pass it unnoticed, yet give it first prize the next week; and we have known such a one, when charged with the inconsistency, state that the bird was either not the same or had been altogether transformed, when we have *known* it to be in precisely the same condition as when shown before.

The chief cause of these ridiculous vagaries is, no doubt, that having no thorough knowledge of the variety, the judge is led away at one show by some fine property, and at the next by some other. Thus, at one show there is a bird with an extraordinary beak-wattle, and his eye being attracted by that, the bird wins. At the next, the first that "happens" to strike his eye is another with beautifully narrow and regular skull and fine eye-wattles, with perhaps good neck and carriage; so, though the first bird is there, this *second* bird wins. And so on. No doubt there are cases of collusion, if not of actual fraud; and no doubt also, many judges, if they remember a bird, will sometimes make really erroneous awards to preserve consistency; but, as a rule, we believe the case to be pretty much as we have stated, and to be the result of honest ignorance.

The drift of our general remarks has already been to insist on the Carrier being judged, not by any one point, however extraordinary, but as a *whole;* and to lay stress upon the general harmony and just proportion of all the points in any given bird. This one principle will nearly prevent such gross errors as we have alluded to; and it now only remains to give what we consider the proper relative value of different points or properties in estimating the show rank of a bird, with such remarks in explanation as may seem proper.

POINTS IN JUDGING CARRIERS.

Beak: length, 2; shape, 2; thickness, 2; colour, 1	7
Beak-wattle: shape and form on upper mandible, 6; ditto on lower, 2; circumference, 2; texture, 2	12
Space between eye and beak-wattle	2
Eye-wattle: regularity of build all round, 3; diameter (without manipulation), 3; softness and texture, 2; lacing, 1	9
Skull: narrowness, 3; flatness, 1	4
Gullet: well curved in	3
Neck: length, 3; narrowness (especially near shoulder), 2; thinness (from side to side), 1	6
Width and flatness of shoulders	2
Width and fulness of breast	2
Length of flights and tail	2
Length and form of thigh	4
Length of leg (considered both from side and front)	3
Colour	2
	58

It has been impossible to *derive* these values from any recognised judging; there being none such, uniform enough to be of service, accessible for examination; but we have carefully tested them practically, both upon birds we have considered correctly judged, and the reverse; and can affirm that they do, practically and really, represent what *our* judgment would be between competing birds.

It will be seen that we differ seriously from the values given by the "National Columbarian Society," who have attached the greatest number of points to eye-wattle, whereas we have given that priority to beak-wattle. We can only say that the "National Columbarian Society's" values, if applied honestly, will utterly fail to give satisfaction *in practice* to any good judge or fancier of Carriers. All such practically lay the most stress upon beak-wattle, as we have done, being most difficult to produce, and the longest in arriving at perfection. We should have allotted more than two points for space between the eye and beak-wattle, but that we found it held out practically too much encouragement to an *artificial* production of this point, and we have desired in our scale not only to afford sound material for judging, but to guard against a bird artificially got up having too much chance against another. In this very case, for instance, the two points allowed for the clear space are sufficient in the case of genuine birds; and yet, although in the case of a genuine bird competing against an "improved" one, the latter might gain either one or even both the points for this property, the genuine one having both wattles crowded together, yet the genuine one, if really the best, would more than gain the lost points in size of wattles, as it takes a considerable quantity cut off to make the desired space; and if a bird can stand this, and yet have enough left to show large and well-formed wattles, he is probably *really* the best, and ought to win, as regards beak-wattles. The same remark may apply to narrowness of skull, to which we should have given somewhat more value, but that we found on application to certain "doctored" specimens, it gave them an unfair advantage. We mention these things in order to show that the scales here given, though not *formed* from recognised judging (since there has been none), have really been carefully tested in every practicable way. Judging would, however, give more satisfaction if the public could always feel assured that the *birds* were judged, and not their owners; and it is only when the judges are compelled to state what values they have given for each property, that some of them will be able to convince careful students that they have no favourites among the exhibitors.

As we have often said, and shall always think, a judge who cannot give his reasons is no judge at all.

The values we have given to length of legs and thighs we have found by constant experience to be necessary. It is for want of due stress on this property that we see so many bad-carriaged birds; and we have preferred to divide "carriage," as too indefinite, into its component parts, which can in this form be much easier judged and estimated.

In all judging by such a scale as this, the judge should carefully estimate what he thinks that point actually deserves, as compared with a bird supposed to be perfect, and deduct one or more points accordingly. This will be the easier, in that the *real* judging will almost always be found to lie between a *few* specimens, which are readily picked out by eye even from a large class, without attempting to judge the whole by scale. The few selected for honours, on the contrary, however the judge may proceed, should be most carefully compared; and the best plan we are acquainted with, whenever the class is large, is to have a large pen or cage of at least three feet square, at the height of about four feet from the ground, and mounted on wheels so as to be readily moved. In this cage two birds at a time can be placed for comparison, point by point; and if committees would provide such a pen for their judges it would really save much time, and enable

these latter, when asked, to give at least their reasons for any particular award. Such a plan has been in use for some time at the best Scotch shows, and the results of it fully warrant us in recommending it for more general adoption. Indeed, we are not going beyond the truth when we say that, in any case of at all good competition, it is absolutely *impossible* to judge Carriers properly except in actual juxtaposition, and judging in any other circumstances is a farce. But let a judge see two birds of high merit side by side; and whether he judges by any scale of points or not, he is at least compelled to form some definite notion as to *why* he prefers one bird to the other; and it is both for his comfort and his credit that he should be able to state these grounds for his decision to dissatisfied or inquisitive competitors.

The above, then, are the conclusions we have come to during many years' experience, as to the points of a perfect Carrier, and the relative value of the various properties. We have been urged to modify them, so as to make a total of 100 points. We would gladly have done so, but that such artificial symmetry must have been attained at the expense of what we have found and believe to be the *real* comparative values according to good judging, which it will be our object to present throughout the present work, as most likely to be of practical use to our readers.





Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith.

BLUE POUTER COCK.

CHAPTER VII.

THE POUTER.

THE Pouter Pigeon was our "first fancy," and we have never lost our partiality for it. When about nine years old, it was the fancy of a parent, and of a friend who soon after "came into the family" by marriage, and who will be known to almost all old Pouter breeders as the late Mr. James Miller, of Glasgow. Hence we literally "grew up" in the Pouter fancy; and even now, if really compelled to keep one variety, this would be our selection. The birds we saw in youthful days made an indelible impression upon us; and we have often noticed that many breeders have carried this feeling so far, and retain such a vivid idea of the first birds which aroused their dormant tastes, that although these may have been really very middling, they will often declare in after days that they "have never seen birds which come near" to those they thus saw in early life. Such are apt to forget that when these paragon birds were seen they were really not *able* to judge fairly of their various properties; and in actual fact, we have known opinions of this sort expressed by good fanciers, not quite so old as ourselves, respecting certain birds we had perfectly well known personally, and which had been very middling indeed. However, the Pouter early seized hold of us, and we really had every opportunity of seeing good ones, and were brought up in a good Pouter school.

As to the origin of the Pouter we shall say little. Probably the Dutch Cropper had most to do with it; but then, where did the Dutch Cropper come from? All we shall say is, that we believe the modern Pouter and the Runt have also much in common, if, indeed, they have not descended at no very distant date from one stock; and the Runt still makes almost the only available cross. It is well-known that the late Mr. Samuel Bult, a good Pouter fancier, crossed his birds with the Runt. We saw the very bird; and as it was mottled or splashed, and had a crest, many would not believe he ever crossed with it; but we did, as we could see the Runt blood plainly in the shape of the head and wattle round the eye, and also the form of the back, want of crop marking, and bad carriage on the legs. By this cross he got length of feather and limb, but had to breed carefully after to get back the true Pouter markings and shape, in which, however, he succeeded, and bred some very fine Blue-pieds. Another gentleman well-known to us—Mr. Hayne, of Croydon—also made good progress by a cross with the Runt, crossing a Blue with a Blue. The Blue Pouter being rough-legged, this cross produced three well-marked Blue-pieds, all of which fell into our hands. One of these half-bred Runts was a winner of eleven first prizes and several cups, the first being at Birmingham, and changed hands several times, winning in all until he came to be shown at Glasgow. This was against our advice, as we had expressly counselled the owner, if he wished to keep up the bird's character as a winner, *not* to show him in Scotland, where they knew a Pouter too well; but he did, and the bird was passed over as being—what we must say he *was* to a good Pouter fancier—"an ugly brute." Bad as he may have been, however, the progeny of this very bird are still to the fore, and some of our best breeders are breeding from his descendants now. Another case we may give is the crossing of a Silver Runt with a White

Pouter by ourselves, the result being three splashed birds, and one cock nearly white, all four fair-shaped birds.

This latter bird sometimes *moulted* (perhaps he had a little assistance; but he really needed very little, and it was impossible not to draw a *little* hard on the feather that had no business to be there) pure white, and won us several prizes as a White Pouter. We give these instances to show how very close the relationship almost certainly is, since otherwise birds fully half-bred would not come so near the desired model.

The Pouter is the most familiar of all pigeons, which may be one cause of its popularity. It likes to be talked to, and allows itself to be stroked or handled; and will fly on to the shoulder of its master on his return with evident joy, even from the top of the house. This familiarity of course depends mainly on the breeder, and the bird ought to be familiarly dealt with from infancy; indeed, if the fancier wishes to gain prizes he *must* have his birds tame, and responsive to the well-known call. Of all sights in the pigeon fancy, we think the most attractive is that which may often be seen at the leading Scotch shows, when several of the best birds are put into the large show or judging pen by the judges for comparison, and stand together showing themselves off. We cannot but think that if this privilege and pleasure were allowed to exhibitors at all large shows, it would advance our pursuit more than anything else, and perhaps bring back the Pouter fancy to its original home.

We say the old home, because there is not the slightest doubt that we owe the cultivation of the Pouter to the silk-weavers of Spitalfields, who brought this pigeon to perhaps as great perfection as was ever reached; in which, indeed, they had an advantage in the greater *number* of them who bred and cultivated it. When, however, the ruin of what was called the "heavy" trade in London occurred, these poor weavers were unable to afford the keep of their pigeons, and their best birds fell into the hands of a few Scotch fanciers, but for whose efforts there is no doubt we should not now have a Pouter worth looking at. Amongst these Scotch fanciers there are four especially to whom it is hardly too much to say we owe the preservation of our bird. Foremost of these were, and still are, Mr. James Huie, of Glasgow, and Mr. George Ure, of Dundee, who have been breeders of Pouters for considerably more than forty years. Mr. Huie, having frequent occasion to visit London, had special opportunities of selecting birds; and not only often supplied Mr. Ure from birds he thus selected and brought home, but occasionally sent birds to Edinburgh fanciers. The late Mr. Wallace, of Glasgow, also kept up a collection of Pouters for over thirty-five years, besides being the oldest fancier of pigeons *generally* throughout Scotland. And finally we may mention the late Mr. James Miller, also of Glasgow. He cared for Pouters alone, and to him many of the present fanciers owe nearly all they know, while he was certainly the best *judge* of a Pouter we ever yet met with. Many others have been good supporters and skilful breeders of this grand pigeon; but to these four belongs the chief credit of taking the bird from the old Spitalfields fanciers and handing it down to the present generation. At the present time we do not know one single fancier in England who has not obtained his birds from Scotland, whence the bird is sometimes called the "Scotch" Pouter; but it is undoubtedly of English origin. It is to be hoped the bird will be again naturalised in London; and with many others, we deeply regretted the retirement of Mr. Volckman from the list of Pouter breeders, in which he at one time seemed likely to take the place of Mr. Bult. Every one who had seen the collection of Pouters he used to show at the great meetings of the Philo-Peristeronic Society, must afterwards have sadly felt the absence of this fine variety, without which no show can be considered complete; and it is a subject for congratulation that of late Mr. Gresham and others have restored to London circles this grand bird.

In entering upon the consideration of the Pouter pigeon, we cannot do better than commence, as we did in the preceding chapter, with a full and critical description by one of its best and oldest breeders, Mr. George Ure, of Dundee, to whom we are indebted for the following exhaustive article:—

"This bird, Moore says, was originally bred by crossing the old or Dutch Cropper and Horseman together. He is, no doubt, a good authority, but I must confess I never could see how such a cross could produce a bird like the English Pouter. There does not appear to be a trace of the Horseman left in the modern bird, though there might have been when Moore wrote his excellent work, in 1735. The Horseman could not add to the length of limb or feather, and, in place of adding to crop, would tend to do away with it. The same may be said of slenderness of girth round the shoulders, but it is possible he might assist in marking, as we frequently read of Pied Horsemen, though this would go but a very short way in making up such a noble bird.

"I think, however, the Pouter may be accounted for in a more natural way. From all I can learn, the Spitalfields weavers were very skilful breeders, and whatever they took in hand they did well. Pigeons in particular were great favourites with them, and, of course, received a large share of their skill and attention. They also bred poultry, canaries, and small dogs, and all with success. Some were florists, and here they also excelled; in fact, fanciers in general owe a great deal to them. Moore says it was the blood of the Horseman that caused them to *rump*. This is the only thing like proof of such a cross, but it is quite possible that this fault may have been transmitted by the Dutch Cropper. As Moore does not speak from his own personal experience, but only as a sort of hearsay account of such an origin, I am inclined to think that the improvement had been made by the Spitalfields fanciers solely, by careful selection and skilful matching of the Dutch Croppers. The latter birds I remember to have seen a few of a long time ago, and they appeared to want little but length of leg to make fairly good Pouters. In those days I should think that no one but a genuine fancier kept pigeons. They had no *open* shows as we have now, almost every week, so there was nothing to induce the spurious or 'showing' fancier to go into them. They had their private clubs, where they met to exhibit their old 'cracks' or the young coming 'wonders' that were to knock the old ones off their perches; and I am not sure but these were the right sort of shows after all. There was less vexation to the exhibitors and less tear and wear to the exhibited, as they would only have to be carried along a short way in the careful hands of their owners; whereas now they have often to travel hundreds of miles, and all the *show* is knocked out of them, and the life also, if often repeated.

"As to the origin of the Pouter, it is now impossible to settle it in a satisfactory way, so it is useless to speculate further upon it. The bird, however, is beyond question one of the very finest of all the fancy pigeons; in fact, if those who tell us that *all* our fancy birds are derived from the Blue Rock are in the right, then I would say he is at the very top of the whole, as no bird has been bred showing such a divergence from the original type as the Pouter, and therefore no bird shows the amount of *breeding* which it does. This is apparent whether we look at the extraordinary length of limb, the wonderful crop, the great length of feather, or the thin girth and lightness in hand (this last is a sure test of a well-bred bird, for no highly-bred Pouter carries much flesh); and in addition, the lovely colours and beautifully-arranged markings all combine to form a most beautiful and striking-looking bird. They are also very gentle in temper, and easily tamed, so as to show when called upon, when properly treated. But then it is a bird that requires both skill and patience to breed, and, therefore, comparatively few now breed them. 'They are so troublesome,' they say. This, to a good fancier, is one of the strongest inducements to go into them (for any one can breed duffers, 'comparatively speaking, as Eaton says). Failures, of course, will be

common, but they will be amply repaid by now and then producing birds which are the talk of the fancy. It has often struck me as something very much to be regretted that the London fanciers have allowed this grand bird to pass out of their hands. It was in London, beyond a doubt, that he was first brought up to a very high state of excellence; and I question if at the present day we are equal to the fanciers of fifty or sixty years ago. In some points, I believe, we beat them—in length of feather and in weight, but we have too much of both. We fall short of the elegance of their birds, and also in the correctness of marking, which they appear to have attained with more certainty than we have. When the Short-faced Almond became the fashion, the Pouter would have become as extinct as the Dodo (a pigeon also, as naturalists tell us), had the Scottish fanciers not taken him in hand. They, however, took to him kindly, and have stood by him; and though I will not say that they have raised the bird higher than ever has been done before, still they have done a good deal, and are still improving him, so that I do not think we can be much behind the best period.

"Colour and marking were the greatest failings for a long time; this arose from their having but few birds in Scotland to breed from, and therefore they mixed all sorts of colours together. This produced, no doubt, fine handsome birds, but the colours too often wretchedly bad; and as to the marking, *splashing* would be the best description of it. A craze also for long birds came into fashion, which produced ugly Runtish birds without corresponding length of leg—very well described by an eccentric Glasgow fancier as the 'level style,' since they could not get upright. Nothing could have been thought of worse than this, as the Pouter is essentially a bird of shape or form, with elegance of carriage more than of colour and marking; after that get as much of leg and feather as possible, but they must go together. This pernicious standard had such a hold at one time, that judges would decide the prize solely by the tape-line. A better taste is now gaining ground, and it is to be hoped will continue. Many of the so-called 'Champion' birds not far back were only Pouting Runts. The custom of showing Pouters on a block or pedestal in the show-pen is good in some respects, but it often assisted those long brutes in getting prizes, as they had space to let their long tails hang down; but when the system of the large show-pen was introduced at Glasgow, a good many years ago, the tide began to turn, for when put on the floor of the pen a bird of good style an inch shorter in feather and not longer in limb would stand higher. The tail of the long one is always in the way, and he can't look easy, do what he will. This arises from his length of feather being too great for his legs, and also at times from the legs being badly placed.

"Length of leg is the most valuable property in a Pouter, that is, if they are well-shaped legs; for there are long legs that look short, or are wiry, or frushed or sprouted in place of being covered with short downy feathers—'stocking legs' we call them in Scotland—with long feathers on the toes. Some call them 'grouse legs,' but this is not a good description, as the grouse has no long feathers on the toes, which makes the leg appear short. Length of leg is the property hardest to attain of any, but when got gives such a majestic appearance to the bird that I place it first. Birds over seven inches are very rare, though we *hear* of plenty above that length. I have very seldom got above seven, though I have had them seven and a quarter inches, and once a red cock seven and three-quarters, but then he never could walk, in fact, could scarcely stand, and generally sat on his knees, so I had to kill him. Not one Pouter in twenty has legs that can carry gracefully over eighteen inches of feather. Seven inches will carry a bird of eighteen and a half or three-quarters well, and seven and an eighth or a quarter a bird of nineteen or nineteen and a quarter inches. If over this length, then he loses in carriage, as he cannot get upright nor move about with elegance and freedom. The legs should be placed close together, narrow-thighed, not wide and straddling; the knee-joint as high as possible, and not too

much shown or bent, as then they are 'cow-hocked.' Neither should the leg be too straight, as then it looks loose-jointed, a very ugly fault. The feet ought to be turne a little *out* and the knees *in*, so that the bird in a front view looks a little 'baker-kneed.' With such legs he is certain to walk gracefully, a sure mark of a well-bred Pouter.

"Next to limbs I am inclined to place *slenderness of girth*; it is a sure mark of a well-bred one, and a bird good in this respect is sure to have other good properties besides.

"Crop comes next. Birds really good in this are very scarce, many of the very long-feathered birds especially showing very little of it. Others have it long and rising up at one side, which is very unsightly. Some, again, overcharge it, which makes them uneasy and lean back on their tails, and twist themselves from side to side. Others have a large crop, which they never fill, hanging down as a useless empty bag. The well-formed crop should be as globular as possible, running out or 'pouting' with a graceful curve all round, and showing a little, but very little, at the back of the neck; if too much, the feathers stick out, which looks unnatural. It ought to be full and round, well raised in front, so that the bird's beak is partly hid in it. A bird with this form of crop will show with ease and grace, and can discharge it at pleasure. Hens have the crop, but in a less degree. Their style of showing is also a little different from the cock's, as they move about with a quiet gracefulness with the tail spread, so that a really fine hen is fully as attractive to the fancier as a cock. There are hens now and then to be seen with crops as large as cocks', and they will strut about as if they wanted to be taken for one. Such birds always put me in mind of some strong-minded lady advocating 'woman's rights.' I don't like them, as I never saw any good of them. They are often barren, or if not might as well be so, for they neglect their family duties and go gadding about in a way that must vex their mates sadly, as they want constant looking after.

"Length of feather is the next property. This has already been touched upon when speaking of the limbs, so little more need be said. It is a property that should be regulated by, or wait upon, the length of limb, as it is not so difficult to attain; so that good length of limb being got, feather can be very soon got if required.

"Colour and marking form the fifth and last property, or two properties thrown into one. By neglect and unskilful matching, these have suffered much (I shall speak of them here as two properties). Blues, I think, in colour, have suffered less than any of the others, and perhaps Reds most; the latter, in nine birds out of ten, scarcely deserving the name, the deep glossy blood-red being exceedingly rare, and it will take a deal of time and trouble to restore it; but some of our best fanciers are trying hard, and no doubt will succeed. Reds are very often grand birds in every other respect. Blacks have lately improved in colour. Yellows I am sorry to see not so good in colour as some years ago—it is a difficult matter to keep up this colour, as it has a strong tendency to degenerate into the faded washed-out sort of hue. This is a colour which was almost lost about fifteen or twenty years ago, nothing but hens were to be got, and they were very poor, little of the Pouter beyond the marking. By crossing with Reds (the only possible cross) they soon got better, but for a time *all* the Yellows were *hens*, the breeding cocks being all Reds. When a few good yellow cocks were got, it was then easy. Very soon Yellows almost equal (in a few instances quite equal) to any of the other colours were produced. In bringing this about, however, the writer injured to a considerable extent the very best strain of Reds he ever saw, by using for breeding some of the Reds bred for from the Yellows; the colour of the Yellows improved, while that of the Reds suffered, and to a certain extent their form or shape also. The Yellows were at one time so much in demand that about the beginning of the Glasgow Shows £25 was offered and refused for a cock, and a young pair sold for twenty guineas, prices then thought enormous.

They are lovely birds when good, and it is to be hoped fanciers will see that they do not go down again.

"Colour and marking, though by no means the most valuable properties of a Pouter, give a great deal of trouble to the breeder. They could soon be got alone, but they all the more essential points *must* be kept up; for what would a good fancier care for a Pouter, however perfect in colour and marking, if not well up in the higher properties? It will be apparent, therefore, to all intelligent fanciers that it is a very difficult matter to breed a bird with a fair proportion of all the properties together; but, as before observed, this very difficulty should stimulate, not discourage, breeders.

"The standard colours, as they are called, are black, blue, red, and yellow, pied. They all have their admirers, and are all very beautiful; still, I believe a majority of fanciers will give the Black-pied the highest place, the contrast of colours being so great when they are of the rich glossy black, which shows the better the stronger the light it is placed in. They have, however, in other respects serious drawbacks, being generally heavy birds, and short in limb, though often long in feather. In marking they are often faulty, and in one respect it may be said always so, that is, they have foul legs; a Black-pied, well-marked otherwise, with clean thighs being indeed a *rara avis*. Some, however, have been bred lately with clean legs, and also thin in girth and light in the hand, and of course this can be done again with more ease and certainty, until the fault is the exception instead of the rule as at present. Another blemish to which these birds were subject was the 'snip,' as it is called in Scotland, or white patch, or blaze on the forehead. Nearly all the best birds had it twenty years ago, and many had the 'ring-head,' a worse blemish still; now it is a rarity to meet with either, though the best bred birds will 'throw back,' and at times produce one or other, and, curiously enough, birds having these blemishes are in general very fine in all other respects. The foul thighs, however, remain, and as this fault appears to have beaten the old fancier, we cannot expect to see the last of it for years to come.

"Blue-pied have preserved their colour on the whole better than any of the others, whether by greater care having been bestowed on them, or by the colour being more easily kept—the latter I think most likely, as they have, like the others, been crossed with all colours. A fine, well-pied Blue Pouter is a grand bird, the beautiful black bars being a property none of the others have; and when they are of a jet black, and well defined, they add greatly to the beauty of the bird.

"Red-pied were, until these few years back, very fine birds, many of them being of the deep blood-red so much valued, but now so scarce, and they had in general fine limbs and clean. Now, however, foul thighs seem the rule, and the colour may be described as 'bad and worse,' very few, indeed, being really fine in that respect, and it is high time breeders should direct particular attention to this.

"Last, but not least, come the Yellow-pied. They are lovely birds when nearly up to the standard, but, as before remarked, this colour was nearly lost. At one time, I believe, it would have been impossible to have found a dozen fairly good Yellows in Britain. They were short in feather, and often with heavily-feathered limbs—more of the Trumpeter style than the Pouter, though marking was good, and sometimes the colour also. They had very little crop, and were short in limb, and in place of a rich deep yellow it was too often only a pale straw-colour, with a chequery or dappled appearance. There is nothing to assist the breeder but Reds, and they now unfortunately want assistance as well.

"After the four *standard* colours, the Mealy beyond a doubt deserves the next place. The colour is a long way behind the preceding, but they have always been noted as being generally handsome birds; thin in girth, long in limb and feather, with fine carriage, so that with

the exception of colour they have oftener come nearer the ideal standard than any other. They are, so far as can be judged, as old as the standard colours, and it is now impossible to say how they were first produced. The best, I am inclined to think, are those with blue blood in them, though they are produced by other colours. Some have recently written strongly against them, and other *off* colours, but it is a mistake. We cannot do without them, and, besides, a fine Mealy is a very good-looking bird.

"Chequers come next. They are, I think, originally the result of matching Blues and Blacks together, but this is a mere guess. Now, however, they seem to be more allied to the Blacks. They are often well-marked birds, with cleaner thighs than the latter, though with a tendency to the same fault—heaviness of style—of the Blacks. Those with blue blood in them are not so valuable, as they will neither improve the colours of Blues nor Blacks.

"Silvers I have seen, and bred some, but all were poor in quality.

"Whites I place last, though no doubt many will differ from me in this. They, however, want the great beauties of *colour* and *marking*, which, besides, give so much trouble to the breeder that they must, in the estimation of every genuine Pouter fancier, hold a secondary place. A White, when fine and perfectly clean, is certainly a beautiful bird; but it is only country fanciers who can keep them in good condition, and this is another thing that tells against them. Birds of this colour (though properly speaking it is not a colour at all) ought to be produced better than we generally see them, there being nothing but the shape of the bird to attend to. Legs in particular have of late years got too short, while the other points are often very good, but this fault destroys in a great measure the beauty of the bird.

"I had nearly forgotten to notice the Sandies. They are very useful birds, though the colour is the worst of all, but they are nearly always handsome in shape and of good style.

"Having noticed all the colours, I will now say something of matching, though on this I dare say many will differ from me. I only give them as the results of *my own experience*, which now goes back a longer way than I care to state.

"To begin with Blacks. If birds of this colour were in general long in limb and light or thin in girth, they would require no crossing with other colours; but as they are too often the reverse, the Sandies and Chequers are the best to bring them up in these properties, and to assist in giving clean thighs. When properly selected, the number of Blacks produced will be largely in excess of either of the two 'off' colours. A pair of Black and Sandy birds will often breed pairs of Blacks; and the colour does not suffer as in crossing with Blues or Yellows, and I may add Reds also, as these have now too much yellow in them, and the latter colour agrees worse with black in Pouters than any of the others.

"In breeding Blues again, Mealies are used something in the same way as the Sandy and Chequer birds with Blacks. They give a nice soft blue, and correct foul thighs, and often assist in giving shape and style.

"As to Reds, they certainly have lost colour more than any of the others; and it is not easy to say how this is to be regained. Breeding with Yellows (in my own case, at least) I think has been the principal cause of the deterioration in colour, and also of the foul limbs. Crossing with Blacks will not do it, as the Reds have now too much yellow blood in them. I can see no way but to make a judicious use of the few good-coloured birds now to be got.

"Yellows, as already mentioned, are falling off, and I confess I cannot take upon me to give advice as to how they are to be improved in colour. Matching with sound Reds appears the most likely way; but last season I put a very sound-coloured Red cock with a rich Yellow hen, and it was a failure so far as colour, the young being of a very pale straw-colour, though not chequery.

"Whites, I think, have fallen back a little the last three or four years. They have plenty of feather, but they want legs, and many of them have a *weedy* look. The remedy for this is to breed with strong but handsome Splashes, paying attention in particular to length of limb. Few marked birds will be bred if the Splashes are properly selected.

"A word or two on marking may not be amiss. A bird good in this property has a finished look about it very pleasing to the fancier's eye, but very few are faultless. The *rose pinion* is now very rare indeed; I have very seldom been able to get it—the ugly 'bishop wing' too often coming instead. The 'bib' is another great beauty when large and well-defined, but here again the 'swallow throat' too often comes in its place; clean thighs, also so desirable, are a constant source of anxiety and trouble. To get rid of the brown or kite bars on the wings of the Blue-pied is another of the *minor* difficulties that trouble the Pouter breeder. The black bars are certainly beautiful, and every breeder would like them, but very many fine birds are bred with the kite bars—birds too valuable to throw aside, so they are used to breed from. The red or orange eye is the correct colour, but like the last it is a small fault, as *bull* or black eyes are often found in birds good in all other respects—I never paid much attention to it myself.

"I will only now make a few remarks that may be of service to the young fancier. In the first place, I would advise *perseverance;* without this it is useless to try breeding Pouters, or, indeed, any other of the higher descriptions of fancy pigeons. One will try it for a short time, and finding he does not breed prize birds at once, give up in disgust. 'They are a lot of plaguy brutes,' he says; and then he goes into Antwerps, or *cloud-climbers*, or some sort that requires nothing but food and water. Another, of better material, when he finds he does not get what he expected, says, 'I must be wrong in some way; it has been done by others, and I should like to do it also;' so he thinks it over, and changes his mode of matching, or gets a bird or two that he thinks will assist, and tries again; and very likely he will make a hit, or gain a step in advance. He may, however, fall back a little now and then, but is on the whole advancing, and he will soon see that what he at one time thought impossible or nearly so is not very far off, and as he goes on finds he has in a general way hit the mark. Some begin by selecting the very finest show or prize birds; but this is not necessary, and, besides, it is not in the power of every one, as such birds are now very high in price. Let him, above all, get *well-bred* birds from an old well-established strain, birds whose blood *will tell* in breeding, though they may be faulty in some properties. It has been well remarked, by one of the old writers, I think, that 'a good fancier will rather have the castaways or weeds from a good strain than better-looking birds of which he knows nothing.' The truth of this remark every old fancier must have experienced, as some of the most perfect birds ever bred have been from parents that to all appearance were most unlikely to yield such results. This, however, is only when they have good blood in them, or are 'well come,' as we say in Scotland. Birds of this description can always be got at a reasonable price, within the reach of most young fanciers.

"Another error of beginners is that they will only have young birds. Pouters, I am convinced, do not breed *fine* young birds till three years old, and will go on till eight or ten, and I have bred very fine ones from birds even older.

"Some think it is absolutely necessary to keep a loft full of feeders or nurses. This, however, is not in the power of every one, and my experience is that they can to a great extent be dispensed with, for many Pouters rear their young well, and beyond a doubt it does them good, and they thrive better and live longer if allowed to do so. I have never kept feeders specially for my Pouters, only sometimes making use of my Fantails when I find a pair are careless of their young. If nurses, however, are kept, the Pouters ought to get young to feed for as long as they

will, to keep the hen from laying too soon. Some also think it necessary to separate the birds during winter; this I never had sufficient accommodation to do, though I have tried it to a small extent. The result has been that I would not do so if I could. The birds keep in better health and spirits together, and if all nesting facilities are removed, there will be little or no attempt at breeding.

"As to food, old but well kept tares and beans, with a limited supply of Indian corn, is the feeding I use, with a little hard old wheat when feeding young. Old grey peas are also good, and I have used white peas at times. Avoid hempseed as you would poison. Give plenty of old lime rubbish and gravel, and once or twice a week a little coarse salt, and water to bathe in about as often. Gorging is a nasty habit with some birds, those with large crops in particular being subject to it. The old cure of the stocking is the best, penning the bird for a day or two after with a limited allowance of food and water. This is the only disease (if it can be called so) peculiar to Pouters, the others are shared in alike by all the varieties, and my experience leads me to believe that pigeon diseases are, if serious, very seldom cured.

"It is not often Pouters can be flown, but where this liberty can be given it is beyond question an advantage, only they should not get out in a high wind or on a very wet day. The well-bred light birds fly well, and seem to enjoy it. Another thing I would caution young fanciers against is, when they breed a very fine bird, not to *over show* it. Twice or thrice in a season is enough; many fine birds have been lost to the fancy from this error. A genuine fancier, by which I mean a 'breeding' one, does not care for showing much.

"Before closing, I should like to say a word or two about what I think an error in judging Pouters—in England, I believe, more often than in Scotland—that is, in giving prizes to Whites in a class for *all colours*. Unless Whites are a very long way indeed better than the pied birds they ought not to be placed above them; it is so much more difficult to breed a fine pied bird, and so much more beautiful when of fair quality than the White, which is deficient in the beautiful properties of colour and marking. No one that has kept and bred Pouters will make this mistake, and it is only those who have done so that are fit to judge them.

"There is a wide field for the Pouter fancier, and, however able and skilful he may be, he is not likely to reach its limits of improvement in a lifetime. There will always be some little bit that wants looking to, and so keeps his energies from flagging. There is very little hope for a long time that he can sit down and say, 'There is nothing more to do.' To those, therefore, who are pigeon-wards inclined, I would say, 'Take up the Pouter;' it is a fancy mine that has not been worked for many years so extensively as it ought to have been, but it will amply repay the re-opening to every intelligent, persevering fancier. May their number soon be legion!

"In conclusion, I would say to the jaded and worn professional or mercantile man with over-worked brains, and to the working man with toil-worn body, 'Go into the pigeon-fancy, even if only a single pair can be kept.' The higher classes of birds require an amount of mind to breed them well not to be despised by the greatest; and the cares and anxieties are so different from the cares and worries of life, that they forget them all when they breed a first-rate bird—*especially if it be a Pouter.*"

In our own remarks upon this pigeon we find it most convenient to begin with the crop, as the point which gives the *character* to the whole pigeon, though we fully agree with Mr. Ure that it is not the most important property. All pigeons have some power of inflating the crop, or globe as we would prefer to call it, which is seen in nearly all the cock birds when "playing up" to their hens, just as the Pouter himself makes the most of his when in the same circumstances,

inflating it with conscious pride and pleasure. Some of the Scotch fanciers call it the "blow;" and though, as we have said, not the most important point, or the hardest to obtain, still no bird can be a *Pouter*, however good in all other points, which has not that peculiarity well developed which is the type of his race; and it is the first and most striking property of the pigeon. The young bird begins to show the form of the globe or crop at the age of three or four months, and, strange to say (for, generally speaking, the males show all properties more and sooner than hens; and, even in this case, the cocks show most of it when full grown), very often the hen birds begin to show it before the cock birds. Some young ones will show the crop at first all on one side, which looks very bad, and is called being "tight-cropped." Such a bird appears as if choking, and if it remains so is of course worthless; but they will often grow out of it. What is desired in a fine globe is to be as round as possible, to project well out in front and all round, and just show a little fulness *behind* also, below the back of the head, which adds a great deal to the appearance of smallness of girth. The bottom part of the crop should stand out suddenly away from the breast, like a large bubble. The actual size should correspond with that of the bird; for some have globes really too large for the size of their bodies, and such frequently become what is called "crop-bound," which causes a great deal of trouble, and often death. Such a fault also makes the bird unable to stand properly, from being over-balanced, so that it may even fall backwards. Greatly as a fine globe is to be admired, therefore, excess is not to be sought, nor is more to be valued than the bird can have thorough control of; and in our plates we show the form and size we consider a good Pouter, in "good show," should be possessed of.

Next we will take the shoulders, or rather size round them, which is called the "girth" of the bird. Smallness in this is sought for, and is one of the handsomest and most attractive properties in the bird. However grand the bird may be in other points, if thick and wide at the shoulders the fine effect they would have had is lost. In order not to lose this and the preceding property of crop or globe, some fanciers never allow a good show bird to feed young ones, as this causes the globe to become loose and disordered through the shaking and pumping up of the soft food, while the shoulders also become slack and hanging, adding to the girth of the bird.

Smallness of girth is the property of next value to length of limb; because, if a Pouter be thick in girth, the form of the globe cannot be properly seen, since the *sudden* bulge out of the globe at the bottom depends upon it. The more length of body the bird shows from the bottom of the crop to the thigh-joints, the more effect is given to the slimness in girth of the bird, for if the crop comes down nearly to the thigh, it makes the bird inevitably appear thick, whereas we want to see it bulging out suddenly from the slender body. If the globe be what is termed oval-shaped, or by others tight-cropped, that is, not projecting sufficiently in front, this fault will also take away by absence of contrast from the appearance desired. Another feature necessary to the smallness of girth appearing is the concave curve in the back just below the globe; and without this curve behind, and the sudden bulge in front, neither slenderness in girth nor the true form of crop can be properly seen. When a bird is faulty in this feature behind, it is called by fanciers "hog-backed," and is one of the most unsightly faults a Pouter can have, quite spoiling the fine, straight sweep down from head to tail—a true "line of beauty"—which all breeders so much admire.

Slenderness of girth will also depend very much upon the way the bird carries its wings, especially at the shoulders. Some are loose-shouldered even from the nest-pan, which always makes them appear thick; and not only so, but owing to the flights being carried so low and veiling the upper part of the thighs, causes them to seem much shorter in limb than they really are. This fault is often seen in hens which have been weakened, through their owners, in their eagerness to obtain stock from them, taking from them too many eggs in one season; and, as we have

before remarked, it is also liable to occur from feeding young ones. If, therefore, the fancier possesses birds of fine shape, and wishes to keep them so as long as possible, he should let the hen hatch and feed as few young ones as possible, and only allow them even these for eight or ten days to feed off the soft food, transferring them then to other feeders. Nothing more surely puts a fine Pouter out of shape than free breeding and rearing. For this reason, while Mr. Ure is correct in his statement that a staff of feeders are not absolutely necessary, we strongly recommend them, and they should be of the strong and vigorous kind, such as large Dragoons, common Antwerps, or other large strong birds. Some of the bastard-feathered Pouters, or other coarse and strong products of the loft, will often be found, from their tameness, better feeders than any others, and in this variety it is especially advisable to obtain by care a thoroughly reliable staff of *good* feeders. We have hinted at this in our general chapters; but in the case of Pouters especially, we may say that this point is of nearly as much importance to success as getting a good stock. Nothing is more provoking to a fancier than to see he has got a grand young bird, and then have the conviction unwillingly forced upon him that he will never be able to rear it. Perhaps more have "given up" Pouters owing to vexatious—we were going to say heart-breaking—disappointments of this nature, than from any other cause; and as it is hard enough to rear a good bird of *this* variety, even with the tamest, gentlest, and strongest feeders, all who begin breeding them will do well to spend a deal of trouble on their staff of nurses.

Next we come to the most valuable and most difficult to attain of all the properties, viz., the form and *apparent* length of leg. We are aware that some prefer an extra long leg, no matter of what style, to one of less measurement, although the latter may be nicely formed, and look to the eye a great deal longer. We would simply ask, of what good is a quality that *only* appears under the rule, and *cannot* be seen if no one has a measure in his pocket? We put length of leg first in value among all the properties; but we do most earnestly protest, as will every skilled Pouter fancier, against what has very much been the rule with English judges of this pigeon—giving prizes to mere measurement. No Scotch judge would think of deciding in such a manner; yet in England we have ourselves frequently won prizes with half-bred Runts which no ordinary hand could get round, being not only so wide and thick at the shoulders, but so deep in the breast, as to weigh nearly double what a Pouter should be, but which "measured" well in length of limb and feather. We have sent such birds, knowing what the judges would require, and desiring for our own sake to meet their ideas; and we have often had in the same class with these half-bred Runts really good Pouters, showing to the eye a great deal more length of limb and feather, much finer in globe and marking, and in fact three times the birds all over that the others were; yet found them passed over because showing a little less in mere measurement. We are glad to say that of late English judges and fanciers have shown more signs of conforming to Scotch ideas on this subject, and of considering the *form and style* of the birds more than their mere length. We go so far as to say that the rule should never be used in judging Pouters, unless either to determine a disputed point as to which bird is the longest in feather and limb, or when two birds are so nearly on a par in general appearance and qualities, that some tangible reason must be *sought* for making an award. In measuring length of limb, the thumb nail or blade of a pocket-knife is put close against the upper joint of the thigh, where it forms a kind of notch or opening, and the length then taken to the end of the middle toe-nail stretched fairly out to full length, but not so as to hurt the bird. One objection to mere measurement is, that a long or short toe-nail may make an eighth of an inch difference, while not the slightest importance to the real value of the bird.

It is very difficult to judge Pouters correctly as regards this, or indeed any other point—nay, we would almost say that it is nearly impossible to judge Pouters correctly at all—in the ordinary

small pens of a show, if there are several good birds competing. The reason is that the best birds are *never* thus seen all *at once* in their best or show form. A large pen of not less than three feet square should, or rather must, be provided, as we have already said is done at the Scotch shows, in which the best birds can be placed together for comparison, when they will begin to "play up" to one another, and their points can be seen, if at all in show condition; and if not it is the exhibitor's own fault, and he deserves to lose. Many birds are very sulky at first in a strange place, and perhaps for a day or two would never show at all; but if penned with a hen in good showing order, almost any cock will draw himself together and show off; so that such a large pen soon brings out the real quality of the birds. The breeders of the birds often do not require this, knowing so well all the properties of each; but for a strange judge, this is the *only* way of arriving at a correct decision. In the small pens, if a bird long in feather be seen standing pretty high up on its block, and in good showing order, it is sure to catch the judge's eye and be "booked for a place." Another bird, come some distance, will be seen "in the sulks," standing on the floor of his pen, all down, and showing no style or crop at all; on account of which he is passed over. But put these same birds into the large pen with a rank hen in pretty fair show-trim herself, and all is changed. The fine bird that looked so immensely long while standing up on its block, directly it is put into the level pen appears too short in leg for its length of feather, and its tail sweeping the ground causes it to stand low, when the more showy he is the easier is the fault now seen; whereas, the poor, despised, sulky bird, directly he sees the hen, if a really good one will pull himself together, brighten up, blow out his crop, and at once manifest his superiority, his length of leg enabling him to stand tall, which is one great beauty of the Pouter. By length of leg, then, we do not mean mere measurement, for we have had birds that measured seven inches and hardly showed six; but a form and position of the limb that both looks long to the eye, and enables the bird when on the level floor to *stand* tall and upright without being tilted forward by his tail. Of course, something in this depends on length of tail or feather, but quite as much on the form of the limb.

The most important part of the limb in a Pouter is that from the sole of the foot to the knee or hock-joint. The longer this part appears the better, and it is this upon which the effect of the limb chiefly depends; and no bird short in this portion, whatever the length of thigh above may be, can ever have the appearance of a long limb. Every Pouter breeder of a few years' standing knows this very well, and we think even novices will see it for themselves after a careful examination of the proportions in our coloured plates, which show the pigeon purposely in various positions. The whole leg should appear as straight as possible, with only enough bend at the hock-joint to give a nice easy effect. Some birds show so much bend at the joint, that this alone makes the shoulders low, and the whole bird to appear too "level" in carriage, similar to the Runt; therefore, straightness, or absence of much bend at the joint, is an important property.

The next portion of the limb, or the thigh, should show just enough fulness for its outline to readily appear clear away from the body. Just proportion here is greatly admired, too much spoiling the appearance of slimness in girth, and too little showing no shape in the limb. Something also depends upon the amount of slant or bend, the thighs of some birds coming down almost perpendicularly from the shoulder, and of course away from the body. The effect of this is to make all the "length" of the bird appear *behind* the limb, which looks particularly bad; and such a bird, however fine in globe and other points, can never appear well except on its block, when its tail can hang down and allow the bird to straighten its back, and so bring the body more "into line" with the too upright limb. Birds with this style of limb often measure very well, but almost always look short, and never show much shape in the thigh. To see the proper shape of his limbs a Pouter must be seen on the ground, or in a large pen, when, if a good bird, it will still enable

him to stand up and look tall when in show, and to carry his globe well, with the tip of the tail just touching the ground. In such a position the head should appear in as nearly as possible a perpendicular line drawn from the sole of the foot.

The leg or limb of the Pouter should be covered with soft downy feathers like those of a moor-fowl, with just enough at the hock to hang nicely over. The feet have longer feathers, which should be set so thickly as to allow no bare spot on the toes to be seen, and should curve or spread rather suddenly out from the feet like the base of a column. This is the perfect style for the show-bird, but there are also "thin-legged" birds, in which the feathering is deficient, and others in which it is too profuse, forming often vulture-hocks. These last are said to be "too rough," or "too heavy in limb," or to be "rough-legged birds." Both these kinds of feathering are found most useful in breeding, the thin-legged birds being generally of fine and symmetrical shape, and when mated with the rough-legged ones producing the very finest specimens so far as regards this feature. We will presently enter into the matching of various birds, with regard to limb, with illustrations to explain our meaning. As Mr. Ure has explained, the legs should stand close together; the closer they are the more slender does the bird appear, showing off what style he has to the best advantage. Wide-legged birds are also mostly crooked in the breast-bone, and nearly all such are wide across the shoulders and loose in their flights.

The limb is the most valuable property in the Pouter, on account of the great difficulty in breeding and rearing it. It is this property chiefly that makes the Pouter the most difficult to produce approaching perfection of all the pigeon race; and all other properties can be produced, and the birds possessing them reared, with at least comparative ease. But no sooner do you *get* a really grand-limbed bird in the nest, than your difficulties, so far from being ended, are only fairly begun. The legs are almost as soft as jelly till the age of three weeks; and being so long, in spite of all care, the least cold is liable to render them powerless, which if it occurs at an early age is hopeless of cure. Again, if the bird should get one leg outside the pan, and get the least twist or strain while in that position, it is almost certain, from the extreme softness of the joints, that the limb will become more or less deformed, and if the bird be a cock, he is then useless either for showing or breeding, though a hen may be used to breed from. Besides these and similar chances, good-limbed birds, like all long-legged animals, are almost always liable to great weakness in the legs, which, at the best, does not pass off till the bones are set. The short-legged birds are easy enough to rear; but directly you have really got a fine long-limbed bird, the chances are many against rearing it. Perhaps it is hardly too much to say that the *very* best birds ever bred (as regards this point) have never reached maturity; and it is no wonder that many who began to keep this pigeon have given it up in sheer despair, for no variety gives so much disappointment and anxiety to produce as a really good Pouter; so that any one who has kept on with them like the four we have already named, has a good right to be considered a *genuine fancier*, since otherwise he would never persevere amidst the many cruel disappointments his fascinating pursuit must occasion him. Truth to say, however, we know of really *no others* who have similarly "stuck" to one pigeon. We know many who have done good service; who bred them even earlier, and who still admire them; but who have given them up at different times, though they have *begun again* (a fact which speaks curiously both for the pains and pleasures attending this pigeon); but we know *no* others who have steadily kept them without intermission for such a length of time.

The next property of the Pouter is length of flights. These should be so long as to come nearly to the end of the tail, and fold up closely, so as to look fine and narrow. This point adds much to the slenderness of appearance and general style, as the higher a Pouter carries his flights,

the better does he show off his length and style of limb; but there are lots of short-flighted birds. As a rule these are either bred late, or the produce of pigeons bred too long without a cross—a plan which always produces weakness, of which want of strength in feather is one sign. Birds bred and kept in too confined places are also apt to become short in flights and tail, so that the more liberty can be afforded them the better. Pouters allowed to fly are always better on the average in these points—length of flights and tail—and not only so, but the wings are clipped close up to the body, adding to the slenderness of girth and sprightliness of appearance generally. Short-flighted birds are often what we have already described as "hog-backed," or convex instead of concave in the back, which gives a coarse Runtish look. This fault in the back is also found in birds which have extra deep breast-bones. This last is often a blot in extra-large early-bred cocks; and all birds bred from a cross with the Runt are sure to possess it.

The last general property of the Pouter is what is termed "length of feather," on which we need add nothing to what has been so ably stated by Mr. Ure, with whom we thoroughly agree. This length is measured by stretching a tape from the point of the beak over the head to the end of the longest tail-feather. In breeding, whatever produces length of flights—such as early hatching—will also produce length of feather in some measure. When birds were judged on their blocks this property could not fail to be exaggerated, but, as already pointed out, putting them to "show" upon the level, wherever practised, *must* produce a just balance between this property and length of limb.

In regard to colour, we have nothing to add to the exhaustive observations of Mr. Ure, with whom we fully agree; but it may be well to describe more particularly than he has done the proper markings of a standard Pouter, or, as old Moore terms it, the way in which he "ought to be pied." The head is coloured, and in fact the whole neck, back, and crop, except a crescent-shaped band of white coming round the front of the crop, the points or horns reaching up within a short distance of the eye, but by no means going round or meeting at the back of the head. Should it do so, the bird has the foul marking known as "ring-neck." The bib, or coloured patch coming down from the throat and forming the upper edge of the half moon, should be well defined; and in its absence, or if white appear in place of it, the bird is "swallow-throated." The colour with which the bird is pied extends in Blues and Blacks all down the back and tail, and to the end of the wing-coverts on the wings, except a few white feathers on the shoulders, which are desired as nearly as may be to fall in a small circular patch, which is then called the "rose-pinion." This is, however, very rare, a few white ticks being considered good, if clear of the edge; if the white, however, runs out in a patch to the edge of the wing, the bird is "lawn-sleeved," or "bishopped," as it is more often termed now. Blues should be barred with black across the wings and tail, as usual in all blue pigeons. Red and Yellow-pieds have the tail white, it being impossible to breed them dark as in Blacks and Blues; but could it ever be done, no doubt all Pouter fanciers would prefer it, as keeping up the proper standard by which birds should be pied. The flights are pure white; if not, the bird is said to be "foul-flighted;" and the legs and thighs also must be pure white, any colour making a bird "foul-thighed."

Besides the perfect standard colours, there are those known as Mealies, in which the same colour prevails, but of a much duller and more powdered appearance. A Red Mealy is often termed a "Sandy" in Scotland; and what is called there a Silver-Mealy is little worse than a softer shade of blue, with brown, or what are called by Pouter fanciers "kite" bars. These Silver-Mealy birds are very beautiful, as well as valuable for breeding; and not a few would be well pleased to see them elevated to the rank of a standard class. Mealies, Sandies, and Chequers are



BLACK-PIED POUTER COCK.

usually called "off-colours," when their markings are correct; but if birds have snips, ring-necks, foul thighs, or faults of that kind, they are said to be "mis-marked."

We agree with Mr. Ure in preferring above all other colours the Black-pied, both for the striking contrast of colour, the rarity of birds which really present a good raven black, and above all, the extreme few which are to be seen with *clean thighs*. They appear at shows; but we speak of birds which are clean in their natural state, or *before* the owner has weeded out the foul feathers which more or less disfigure most of the birds. There is also the snip, or white mark just above the beak, which the same gentleman has mentioned. Few, indeed, are the birds free from these various faults; still they have been seen, and we have now to state how such have been bred. We refer, of course, to birds good in other respects also, since we have seen lots of the little Dutch Pouters quite free from foul markings; and by sacrificing the other standard properties it is easy enough to get any colour desired. But all the *good* Black-pied Pouters we have actually known, free from foul feathers on the thighs, were produced in the following manner:—

A good-coloured Red-pied cock was mated in the first place to a Black hen of raven colour, the latter as usual being foul-thighed; the Red cock, on the contrary (as is usual with Reds), was clean-thighed, and the produce of this cross were chiefly Red cocks, and what are called in Scotland Sandy hens, but which in England are termed strawberry-coloured. Some other English fanciers call them Mealies; but this latter term is only properly applied to birds with *bars on the wing*, this being the distinction between the sandy and mealy birds as understood by regular Pouter breeders. A Sandy hen of this produce, clean-thighed (and Sandies thus bred are seldom otherwise), was matched to a fair-coloured Black cock, and the produce of this latter cross were the *only* perfectly-marked and clean-thighed Blacks we ever saw. We knew all the circumstances, having ourselves supplied the Black hen and Black cock for the experiment, and the Red cock being the property of an old Pouter fancier, Mr. Van, late of Winchmore Hill, near London. He bred two pairs in this manner; and these two nests, as we have said, were the only genuine Black-pied Pouters *perfectly* free from foul marks, and good in other qualities, which we have ever met with. No doubt, had this gentleman persevered, he would have acquired the most valuable stud of Black-pieds in existence; but owing to a removal he gave up the fancy, and his stock coming into our own possession, has been the foundation of the best Black-pieds even of the present day. We have often urged others to try the same cross, but so far no one seems to have had the patience for a plan which demands more than one season's breeding to obtain what they desire, however certain in its results, which we have every confidence of. We would, however, say that the Red cock must be of a *deep* and rich colour, as well marked as possible, and free from foul feathers, which is by no means easy to obtain. We prefer the cock to be red and the hen black, on account of the almost impossibility of finding a good-coloured black cock free from foul markings, it being necessary to start with clean thighs on the cock's side. Were it not for this we should prefer for the male bird to be black, though there would also be the difficulty of finding a really good-coloured *deep* red hen, which is another pigeon very rarely to be seen. On the whole, therefore, the plan we have given is the only practicable one. Its success arises from the fact that the Sandy of the first cross being already half-bred black, and almost always free from foul marks on the thighs, is nearly sure in a fair proportion of her progeny to throw some birds with both desired points. Should the produce of the first cross be *both* Sandies, the Sandy cock may also be bred with a good-coloured Black hen, and if with his own mother all the better and the more likely to succeed. It is a curious fact, however, that the similar cross of father and daughter—viz., the young Sandy hen to the old Red cock, very seldom answers, and should never be ventured upon unless the breeder cannot help himself, the produce being generally half *bad* Reds and half Sandies; and as these latter, though

similar in colour to the other, have only one-fourth black blood, they are of little use, and only trouble the breeder who desires to obtain Blacks. As a general rule in crossing colours, in fact, it may be laid down that it is always best to breed only with crosses that possess *half-and-half* the desired blood, which can almost always be depended upon to produce one or the other colour good.

There are other methods employed for breeding Blacks, but so far as our experience has extended, they have not produced birds free from foul marks. For instance, the cross perhaps most usually employed is that of the Blue and Black together; but we have never yet seen one good-coloured bird from this cross, nor free from foul thighs. Still, this method produces fine large birds, and answers well for the improvement of size and general properties only. When Blacks produced in this way are kept till their third season, their colour greatly improves, and sometimes becomes at length really lustrous and good. When bred from at this age, the produce is better than before the colour had become good; so that we do not altogether condemn this method of breeding, more especially when no other seems open. It will not be too much to say that far the great majority of the Black-pieds at present exhibited are birds thus bred, and whose thighs have "moulted" a little before being shown.

Another method of breeding for Blacks is to match a Black cock with a Mealy hen well barred. We much prefer this to the Blue and Black cross; as, owing to the colour being so soft, it seems to give way to the Black more readily, especially if (as we also recommend with the Blue) a young Black cock be put to a Mealy hen two or three years old. As the object of *all* these crosses is to produce clean thighs, it is obvious that either Mealy or Blue must not be faulty in this respect, and in all cases the Black cock must be of a deep raven-black colour. If he is not, it cannot but be expected that such Blacks as are produced will be of a nasty sooty or bluish black; or, as is often the case, will show two bars of *better* black than the body-colour across the wing. Sometimes a chequer is produced, however; and when this is the case such birds are valuable for re-crossing with black, especially if they be clean-thighed. In that case it matters little whether they be cocks or hens; if mated to good-coloured Blacks the produce will nearly always be a good colour, and if clean-thighed, whatever the colour may be, there is the probability of a good bird.

Occasionally there are found amongst Blues birds with a slight chequer through the blue; and as these are generally clean-thighed, we would recommend such a bird, if procurable, to cross with Blacks. Even should the slightly-chequered bird be a cock we would not hesitate to try the experiment, choosing for him a hen younger and more vigorous than himself, which we have already seen causes the progeny to resemble her rather than the male parent; though, as a rule, it cannot be doubted that colour follows the cock, and we would in general prefer in crossing for the male bird to be of the colour desired. But this cannot always be done, and it is well to know what *may* be done in case of need for want of better materials.

In all the crosses we have named, the one great object is, by some *clean-thighed* cross, to get rid of the foul thighs which naturally disfigure the present Blacks. The Red is the best cross, on account of that colour being universally found to cross best with Blacks, and even to add a deep lustre to the colour, while blue has a natural tendency to impoverish it. The Red in Pouters is also more free from foul marks on the thighs. Still, even by the latter crosses mentioned we have known many birds produced which, though not clean-thighed, came so very near it that the few foul feathers were scarcely seen, especially when they came to be exhibited! We hardly ever knew a fancier who—in this variety at least—when only a very few feathers stood in the way of a fine black bird, hesitated to remove them; and, singularly enough, one or two who *were* a little "backward" in this sort of thing would have the offending feathers removed *by others*, in order that they might be able "honestly" to say "*they* had never touched the bird (to improve it) at all."

In fact, it has always been looked upon as next to impossible to breed good Black-pieds free from foul feathers; so that most fanciers have been fully content when they produced birds with so few as to be removable without leaving any indications which could catch the judge's eye. We know, indeed, of no one who at present officiates in that capacity but is so well aware of this difficulty, that unless the removed feathers are so numerous as to be plainly missed, he never dreams of disqualifying for them, and no exhibitor ever anticipates being passed over for a feather or two in this breed. Many yet think that Black-pieds really clean *cannot* be breed, and by the latter crosses we are not sure they can; but we do assert that by the method first described we have known really grand Black-pieds bred, which were, really and honestly, *perfectly* free from foul feathers, and by this method only. No doubt there are others who will declare that they have also bred such; and perhaps by other methods. If so, we do not doubt their word in the least, but we only pretend to give our own knowledge, and this method is the only one *we* ever knew to produce them; and we are perfectly sure that if fanciers will have but the patience and perseverance to adopt it, we should soon see at our shows such an array of the grand Black-pied Pouter as never yet gladdened the eye of any Pouter fancier.

Black-pieds are very often finely marked on the globe, and also upon the shoulder, or what is called "well-pinioned;"—markings which are difficult to get in some other colours. Each colour has its peculiar difficulties, and why in Blacks it should be so exceedingly rare a sight to see a clean thigh we do not pretend to explain.

The next colour we will mention is the Blue-pied. Its markings in general are similar to those of the Blacks, Reds, and Yellows (except that, as already mentioned, Reds and Yellows have white tails); but it has one more property additional which gives it an advantage over all the standard colours—viz., besides its own proper blue colour it possesses the *black bars* upon the wing. When these bars are brown, or what are called "kite-bars," it indicates too much Mealy blood. The Blue-pied is generally of a more strong and vigorous constitution than the other colours—which is true in fact of nearly all blue pigeons, owing probably to its being the natural wild colour—and such is no doubt the reason why more specimens which deserve to be called nearly perfect are found in this colour than any other. This is obvious, since the comparative ease with which they are reared—we say comparative ease, for even they are hard enough—makes them more plentiful, and gives more room for choice. Hence it is chiefly in this colour that birds of wonderful dimensions are found—such as nineteen and a half or twenty inches—and with length of limb to show off to advantage such length of feather, which have rarely been found so combined in any colour but Blue-pied. Many have passed through our hands not less than seven and a quarter inches from the joint of the thigh to the end of the toe-nail, fairly measured, though few looked quite so long; and we have had birds that measured what we have said, and which actually looked less than others which only measured six inches. Our views on this point, and against judging by mere measurement, have been already expressed.

In breeding Blue-pieds there is less difficulty than in Blacks, Reds, or Yellows; this being a colour which breeds true, as being a natural one. If both birds are well marked, or nearly approaching the markings so clearly shown in our coloured plate, nothing more is necessary so far as colour is concerned. If one bird, no matter which, has too much marking—say too heavy a bib—while the other has too little, this also will do; as will too much with too little pinion-marking. But one matching is to be especially avoided—namely, putting together birds *both* "too gay," or with too much white marking on the bib or pinions, or both. From such a cross is almost sure to be produced a lot of birds foully marked with white, or even almost white, as might be expected. But bearing these points in mind, and keeping a proper balance of colour, either by

having both birds right, or one rather too light with another too dark, this breeding of Blue to Blue is the correct and best method of breeding Blue-pieds, provided only birds good enough both in colour, limb, girth, and crop can be so selected, not too nearly related in blood. This last is the real difficulty, since the Pouter *must* be kept vigorous by sufficient change of blood, owing to its long limbs; and the number of good Blues available is at present so limited. Pouters kept at liberty, however, will only need one cross to about three crosses which would be necessary were the same birds kept in confinement.

If a good Blue hen of the proper points and dimensions cannot be procured, we would advise the selection of a fine Mealy hen. Of course, we mean a Mealy of the silver tinge, with good brown bars, and if with a black beak so much the better. Such a Mealy hen will often produce longer-feathered birds than if a Blue hen of the very same dimensions was bred with a Blue cock. Nine of the very best Blue cocks we have ever seen were bred in this way from a Mealy hen, all but one of them being bred in Scotland, the other being bred by Mr. Gresham, of Shefford, who is not only a good breeder, but one of the best judges of the Pouter pigeon we have ever met with. On the other hand, nearly all the best Blue hens we have ever met with were bred from a pair, both Blues. We do not like so well the cross between a Mealy cock and Blue hen, the Mealy being generally so much more vigorous in constitution that the progeny is too apt to take after the off-colour; still, good birds may be got from this too, only we would always, where possible, in such a case, let the Blue hen be young and strong, and mate her with a Mealy cock twice her age, in order to give the Blue a greater chance of predominating over the Mealy in the progeny, since no one wants Mealies if he can get Blues instead.

The Mealy Pouter has been much decried of late, while others, as we have before remarked, would fain have it made a standard bird. We must say that we should prefer to breed Blues from Blues on both sides, whenever there are enough good Blues for a breeder to pick and choose the necessary stock from them; but that time is certainly not come yet, and we fear it will be some time before breeders can do without the Mealy. Many English fanciers dislike Mealies extremely, and the late Mr. Bult sold on more than one occasion such birds, which, passing through our hands into those of others who knew how to use them, bred some Blue-pieds which were long remembered for their extraordinary quality. The great drawback to Mealies is their being so much lower in price, which causes them to be used *where they ought not to be*, viz., to cross with Reds and Yellows. When a Red or Yellow from such a cross falls into the hands of a fancier who has a good stud of pure-bred Reds and Yellows, it makes terrible havoc with it; producing all sorts of odd colours, such as red chequers, dun chequers, and mealy-barred yellows, which very naturally makes him ever afterwards dislike the very name of a Mealy. They are, however, most valuable for breeding with Blues, Blacks, or Whites; and we know for a fact that the first *good* White Pouter ever seen in Scotland was produced from a middling White cock and a fine Mealy hen. These being facts, while we must say we do not much admire the colour ourselves, yet we cannot but speak as we find it of a bird which has done so much for the improvement of the Pouter pigeon, and point out how useful it may be to the breeder of Blacks, Blues, and Whites.

The Mealy is of various shades, but, as a rule, approaches what is often called by fanciers of other pigeons the Silver-dun colour. Often again it is near the colour of a Silver Dragoon; and the best types of it, sometimes called the Silver Mealy, are to all intents and purposes rather light Blues, but with brown bars. Such birds are especially valuable for crossing with Blues.



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith. London

RED-PIED POUTER COCK.

We have next to consider the Red and Yellow-pied birds, treating the two together, because, while they have certainly been a great deal too much crossed and mixed up by breeders, there really is a natural relationship between the two colours which cannot be ignored. We are sorry to have to say that both colours have for years lately almost "gone to pieces," especially since Mr. James Montgomery, of Belfast, gave up breeding this pigeon; for we never knew any one produce so many and so good Red-pied Pouters as he did. We think he bred in two seasons more first-class birds of this colour than we have ever seen elsewhere in the possession of all the fanciers combined; and no one who remembers the collection of Reds he once sent to the Glasgow Show will ever forget the sight. Nay, were we to extend our statement one year more, and say three seasons, we might go so far as to say that he produced more first-class birds of *all* the colours than we ever knew before or since to be bred in the time; and though it is only just to state that he bred from birds procured from the veteran breeders—Messrs. George Ure, James Huie, and others—and was also assisted by the advice of Mr. Matthew Stuart, of Glasgow, there is no question but that to obtain such results in all directions he must have employed extraordinarily good judgment, as well as been favoured with, no doubt, some little measure of "luck;" for which reason we gladly give a few pages farther on *his* method of breeding for various colours, and can but express our deep regret that he so soon left the Pouter fancy for other varieties.

In breeding these birds, the common plan has been to match together a Red cock and a Yellow hen, when almost invariably the produce is the same; indeed, we might almost say it is never otherwise unless the cock is aged and the hen young and vigorous, when, as we have so often remarked, the produce taking after the most vigorous parent, will sometimes be both Yellows. Whenever this is the case, the owner will do well to keep such a pair breeding together as long as ever they will produce young in this manner; because the almost universal rule makes a great scarcity of Yellow cocks. We do not indeed think we ever knew above six really good Yellow-pied Pouter cocks to be in existence at any one time among all the fanciers of the United Kingdom; and we might say the same of Red hens, and for the very same reason; that colour from this common method of breeding almost always throwing to the cock's side. Hence there is ample room in the Pouter-breeding world for enterprise and skill, were it only to produce these two rarities—Red hens and Yellow cocks—of equal quality to birds which are to be met with of the opposite sexes in the same colours.

We do not, however—and chiefly for the reason that it produces such partial and unsatisfactory results—at all approve of this method of breeding; besides which, we have never known it produce such rich-coloured Reds as the proper method, which is as follows:—It will be easily observed that Red Pouters are never so rich and true in colour when young as after they have attained the age of three years, while some will even improve until five or six years old. It will also be found on careful observation, that on the average, and with few exceptions, birds thus *matured* in colour produce much better-coloured young than these very same parents did before their own colour became fixed. Nearly every good-coloured Red we ever saw we have known to have been bred from birds of mature age; and we cannot, during the whole of a very long experience, recall three instances of such birds being bred from parents in their first or second season. To breed good Reds, then, the breeder should breed from parents not less than three years old, if possible, and pair two Reds together instead of a Red and a Yellow. As a really good hen of this pigeon, however, often ceases breeding (especially if not carefully husbanded and looked after) at the age of three or four years, she must often be bred younger; and to make up for this the cock may be older; indeed, we would not be particular about his age so long as he is able to fertilise the eggs. In this way really beautiful Reds may be produced if anything like decent materials can be got to start

with. We admit this is at present difficult; but as the difficulty attaches to getting good Reds at all, all the beginner in this variety can do is, by patience and perseverance, to lay hold of the best to be had.

Two Reds thus bred together often produce a Yellow; and when this is the case that Yellow is almost always a great deal better colour than if bred from the Red cock and Yellow hen, or *vice versa*. Hence, after a breeder has once got a fairly good strain of Reds, he will soon be able to get the right cross for his Yellows; such a Yellow, bred from Reds on both sides, being much more valuable to cross either with Yellows or Reds than the usual half-bred bird; and, if a cock especially, is the very best matching for Yellow hens that can be. As we have already seen, it is the getting of such a good Yellow cock that is the great difficulty in breeding good Yellows, and this is the best method of obtaining such. In breeding Yellows, the same observation as to ages of the birds applies as in Reds. If young birds are bred from, the colour produced will be pale and washy; whilst those very same parents, kept till their colour has deepened and matured, will produce young much superior in tone.

We believe this was the mode adopted by Mr. Ure in breeding Yellows. He tried for many years to breed Yellow cocks, and never could succeed until he finally obtained a Yellow cock from us, and one which has rarely if ever been surpassed. But having obtained this one cock—the grand difficulty—he easily bred more fine Yellow Pouters of both sexes than have been bred by all other breeders we ever knew together. We have had many of this strain in our own hands, and it rarely failed to come to the front in competition. The difficulty is simply the Yellow cock to commence with—that is, not a pale washy buff, but a good, sound, deep-coloured bird.

Should the breeder find that, in spite of all he can do by breeding from sound-coloured birds of mature age, the colour of his Yellows really is falling off, he may then cross with the Red to advantage; but even here such a *purely-bred* Red as we have described will be found far superior to one of the common stamp. The deep Yellow bred from such Reds, if one is obtainable, will be the best cross of all; but one caution is necessary. The Reds bred from such a cross of the Red on to the Yellow should on no account be *bred back to the Reds*. That is what has so nearly ruined the Red-pied Pouter, as we have already seen. They should be kept to breed back with Yellows, for which they are often well adapted, or bred together, so as not to contaminate the Red blood.

In Red and Yellow-pieds, more particularly, when once a breeder has got a strain which breeds tolerably true and produces good-coloured birds, he should be *very* careful, before introducing "fresh blood" into his strain, to ascertain that the birds really are *bred* from Reds or Yellows. A careless selection—and especially if the new stock has been bred from a Mealy—will often cause years of regret. If a fancier has obtained possession of three or four pairs of any colour in Pouters, however, he will be able to go on at least five years without a cross, by carefully matching according to the other rules we will hereafter describe. The most will depend upon his hen birds; it being size and strength that suffer first in this breed; and without much care in this respect great degeneracy will soon be apparent. This has been especially proved by experience in the case of these very colours. We do not believe that the old London breeders who have been before referred to ever had such grand birds in the Blacks, Blues, and Whites as the best Scotch specimens now. We know, indeed, that Mr. Ritchie, of Glasgow, brought from London over forty years ago one pair each of these three colours, the best which could then be had (as he had special opportunities of procuring such), and we have been often assured both by himself and others who saw these birds, that they would certainly bear no comparison with those of the present day. But with Reds and Yellows the case is different; and from many inquiries and facts that have come to our

knowledge, we believe that these colours were particularly excellent, and have never been surpassed. We find reason also to believe that they were very plentiful round and in London. But lately, by such injudicious breeding as we refer to, and will presently more particularly describe, the birds were not only allowed to dwindle down sadly in size and length, but became very scarce indeed. Still these degenerated birds had good blood in them; and no sooner were they properly mated or crossed than they showed their "breed;" and we once purchased the stock (and a pretty good stock too) of a fancier, whose whole loft was bred from a pair of "cast-offs" from the degenerate stud of a London fancier—a publican in Spitalfields—all whose stock were Red and Yellow-pieds. Not only so, but at a sale some more of this same man's stock passed into the possession of Mr. Bult, the celebrated London breeder we have before referred to; and from these crossed with what he had, *he* bred the only really good Reds and Yellows he ever had, having previously turned his attention to Blue-pieds or Whites. At the time of purchasing these small but handsome Reds and Yellows, Mr. Bult had great doubts of producing much good from them; and it was in fact our having sent the same stock to Scotland and being able to speak as to its produce, that chiefly determined him, and was the means of an acquaintance developing into a friendship, so that we knew more of his stock than probably any one else did.

This gentleman was also really *fond* of both Splashed and Grizzled Pouters, some of which he termed "Almond-feathered." We could not agree with him there, never having seen one of the birds he called such with what constitutes the true Almond feather, viz., *three* colours, particularly the yellow ground. Those he thus termed were scarcely possessed of more than two colours—black, and a kind of grizzly white—and we never saw a really Almond-feathered Pouter; but as the same variety of colours that produce the almond-feather are found in the Pouter, we believe that such *could* be bred without any extraordinary difficulty as regards feather alone. The Pied Pouter being, however, as it is, so very hard to produce with fine points and good colour combined, the additional difficulty of almond-feathering would make such a stupendous task that we do not envy any one who sets it before him; and we question much if, even supposing the feather obtained and on good birds, it would appear to *suit* the pigeon well. Still, if any one desires a fancy which is certainly possible of attainment, yet of difficulty hitherto unapproached, we recommend them to breeding Almond-feathered Pouters.

The breeding of Whites gives less trouble than any of the standard Pied varieties, for the simple reason that the difficulty of colour and marking is done away with. Hence it is only right and natural that Whites should occupy but a secondary place in the eyes of true Pouter fanciers, who find their delight in vanquishing the difficulties of the Pied colours. Some would even put it after Mealies and Chequers, but we think they should stand at least on a par; and in a class where both competed, and the prize was given for "the best Pouter," we would certainly give it to the White, if at all better in properties than the Mealy. We have granted that the Mealy-barred is a most useful bird to the breeder, perhaps the most useful there is, breeding back to any colour from which it sprang, and also for breeding Blues with a Blue, Whites with a White, Black-pied with a Black, &c. Still, no one breeds them purposely, if he can produce the proper standard of Pied colour instead; whereas Whites *are* bred for, and therefore should, in our judgment, stand a shade higher. But we think with Mr. Ure, that it is often ranked too high. To many judges there is nothing more attractive to the eye than a White Pouter in good plumage; and if such a one has never been a breeder, so as to know the difficulties of breeding Pied birds, he is very apt to let this fancy for mere "pretty looks" run away with him. We grant that if a White has longer and better-formed limbs, better crop, is better in girth and feather, &c., it may fairly be given prizes over even a Pied, because these points do make it a "better Pouter;" and though the Pied bird

be ever so good in colour and marking, which are no doubt hard to get, yet, if deficient in these, however attractive to the eye of a Pied fancier, it must be pronounced not equal in what *constitutes* the Pouter form. But should the Pied bird be as good, or even pretty nearly as good as the White in these points, unless it be very bad in its superior points of colour and marking, it certainly is superior to the White, and any judge who lets his fancy put them on a level, does great injustice to the difficulties of the Pied breeder.

The breeder of Whites has, in fact, *two* difficulties less to contend with than the breeder of Pieds. He has neither to strive as the latter has to get his *colour* good, nor his *marking* good—both, as we have seen, difficult enough. In the case of the Blue he has almost three less, since he has no bars to look after either, which in birds crossed or bred with Mealies are so apt to come brown or "kite-barred." The White is also naturally more hardy than any of the Pied varieties except perhaps the Blue; and, finally, perhaps no other colour in Pouters is *naturally* so inclined towards the much-desired slenderness of body. The greatest difficulty in breeding them is to get the proper shape and apparent length of limb, and a well-shaped crop, and to keep up the size, which the very tendency to slimness has a propensity to diminish. Whites are seldom seen with so much apparent length of limb as the Pied varieties, partly owing to their strong constitution causing them to be, as a rule, long in feather, which dwarfs the other dimension. But besides this, in White Pouters the leg is very apt to spring from too near the shoulder, which also makes the limbs seem short and injures the carriage. Very few Whites are free from this fault except such as have been descended from crosses with the Mealy, Blue, or Splash birds, which greatly improve the apparent length and setting-on of the limb. Of all these, however, the best cross is with the brown-barred Mealy, which seems to give way or breed back to the White after crossing sooner than any other. In such crosses the Mealy should, of course, be the hen, and if possible have a white, or rather a flesh-coloured beak. If the beak is black, this will cause more trouble to get rid of than the colour of the plumage; besides which, it is always accompanied with an orange-coloured eye. It is not only that these are considered false colours or blemishes in themselves, the proper colour being black, or what is called "bull-eyed," but the stain of black on the beak or of orange in the eye show that the bird is not yet bred *pure white* with any certainty; and as such it ought not to be allowed to compete in a White class. So long as they remain, Splashes are liable to occur; but scarcely ever from birds purely white in body, and having the beak and eyes correct, which hence become valuable signs.

The first cross of Whites with any of the colours we have named will sometimes produce one White and one Splash, but more frequently Splashes. We have often got one White and the other only slightly splashed; but the Splashes of such a first cross being recrossed on the White, will infallibly produce Whites. In crossing with Reds it is easy to choose a flesh-coloured beak, as we have spoken of for Mealies, and so with Yellows; but with Blues it is difficult. Still, some Blues are to be met with which have the under mandible of the desired colour, though the upper be black; and these should be selected. The cross with Blue-pieds will produce the white plumage as soon as the other crosses, unless the Blue be of a sooty or chequered colour; but such a cross gives much more time and trouble to obtain eye and beak right; until which time the stock cannot be relied upon. Being the natural colour of pigeons, the Blue is probably prepotent, as Darwin calls it; which is indeed borne out by this cross often giving a deal of trouble from a grizzled colour in the tail; but still this is the cross which as a rule produces the best-limbed birds. In all these crosses, as a rule, it is best to let the cock be white; but if the breeder has obtained anyhow a fine Splash cock, he may be matched with White, and will very speedily produce fine Whites.



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith.

YELLOW-PIED POUTER COCK.

All the crosses we have given for breeding Whites have been adopted with success; and we have known even Blacks crossed to produce Whites in three generations. It is thus the best Whites are bred, and it is simply because the colour is so very easily obtained that we put it last. But it has its difficulties, arising chiefly from its tendency to delicacy of form. This always tends to diminish the limb ultimately; and a cross now and then, as we have described, not only improves the size, but also the fault in setting-on and carriage of the legs which we have alluded to. A cross also causes the offspring to be more easily reared, the crossing giving more strength and vigour, according to the usual and well-understood rule.

Of what are called "off" colours and markings we need not say much, having already spoken of the proper use of Mealies and Chequers, &c., and described the proper markings of the standard Pouter. We are inclined to think that it would advance the cause of Pouter-breeding were there at most leading shows a special class for Mealies and Chequers, as we believe such a class would often encourage men of small means to enter the fancy, by showing them that birds possessing all the essential properties of the Pouter could be obtained for a comparatively small sum. It would also in many cases provide a market for what older fanciers are very willing to part with. Really fine specimens in all points are so scarce and valuable that no man of small means can start breeding with them; nor, on the other hand, can such often afford the time to visit the studs of eminent breeders; but a show where such off-coloured specimens are to be seen would offer the opportunity desired. The question of "mis-marked" birds is a more difficult one, because it is by no means easy to define the term. There is no doubt whatever that it is *not* Pouters strictly correct in marking which, when bred together, most frequently produce the best show birds; yet so far as any bird departs from the show standard, it is so far "mis-marked." Often have we put into the hands of amateurs such birds, at a comparatively trifling price, and had to pay at a very different figure for the produce of them; so that we are aware from actual experience that it is quite possible for fanciers of little means to acquire birds at prices within their reach which shall amply repay them for breeding. Nay, it is continually found that when a good Pouter *is* produced from a Splash or other mis-marked bird, it is so fine in size and form as to make it the envy of all other fanciers; from which facts, and especially the fact that many humble fanciers, if they are to purchase *at all*, must purchase from such a stock, we do think a class for even these has its place, and would do much to assist the Pouter. We say assist the Pouter itself, because the more breeders and stocks there are, the wider and better material is there for even the high-class breeder to work upon. But, on the other hand, it is to be remembered that when such extra-good size and form as we have spoken of are obtained by breeding from a mis-marked or off-coloured bird, or when a breeder uses one in hopes to obtain such a result, it is not *because* the bird is mis-marked or off-coloured, but simply because there is in the faulty bird such properties of limb or feather, or size, or such vigour of constitution and "change of blood," as the breeder needs, *but cannot get in any standard bird at his command*. Were there plenty of standard birds, and those good enough in what he wants, he would prefer *them* to the mis-marked or off-coloured ones most certainly. Such considerations will help to keep these undoubtedly valuable birds in their proper place, neither to be discarded, nor recklessly bred from and encouraged, but used judiciously in the *present state of the fancy*, in hopes of the time, should it ever arrive, when breeders may have such ample crosses of the standard colours at their command as not to need the foreign element. Only where birds are expressly shown for form, limb, and feather, or for such special reasons, do we think such birds should be allowed to compete on anything like equal terms with the standard colours.

Of course, mis-marked birds especially tend to perpetuate their own faults. This is not to be

wondered at, since even well-marked parents will often produce horrible mis-marks, though this too is often owing to the very fact that there is such mis-marked blood as we speak of in the ancestry. Still, by patience, if the birds are of really good stock, there is a great probability of such birds throwing some young of good quality, which puts the pleasure of breeding within the reach of many who could not otherwise afford it, if they will only have patience to wait for a few seasons. Thus, if the breeder has a bird with too much marking on the crop and too little on the shoulders, he must try to procure another with as little marking as possible on the crop and as much as possible on the pinion, which will, at least, tend to correct it. Again, and coming more nearly to strictly "mis-marked" birds, some Pouters are nearly all white, showing little of the ground-colour. To match these a bird should be selected, if no better choice can be afforded, with little or no white on the crop and pinions. Such birds are often, if not always, foul-marked on the legs and thighs; but this the other bird, being so "gay" as it is called, tends to correct, and will generally make the progeny much more clean-thighed, and not unfrequently quite so. So again, a bird will be seen with far too much marking on the pinion, so as to come out in a patch to the edge, or what is called "lawn-sleeved" or "bishopped." Such a one, crossed with another having as little marking as possible, or even none, will often breed something very nearly right. Of course we cannot say this is always so; were such the case, mis-marked birds would be almost *as* valuable as standard ones. There is a vast difference and a great element of doubt in all such experiments; but still, by care and patience, much may be done in time to build up a stud in this way from very unpromising materials.

Some foul marks, however, give unusual trouble. Such is the ring-neck (the half-moon meeting round the back of the neck), or the snip-mark over the beak. These will often appear to baffle all attempts to breed out, though we have known birds with each fault most unaccountably breed progeny all free from the foul mark during the *whole of one season*, and then the following season, paired precisely the same, breed all with the detested fault again. The *only* way to get rid of them is continual crossing back to birds which, whatever *other* faults they may have, are free from either of these; and it is a curious thing that birds with these two particular faults are often so remarkably handsome in other points that their owners cannot help trying all in their power to get progeny from them free from the foul marks. It is also curious that they are oftenest found in the variety which is hardest to breed in other respects—the Black-pied—from which we believe it has been attached to that variety since its manufacture, and longer than most of us would believe. As will be remembered, it was chiefly to get rid of foul-markings we advised crossing with the Red, which is seldom much troubled with either snips, ring-necks, or foul thighs; and we feel well assured that judicious crossing with *good* Reds will be found the best way to get rid of these troublesome markings.

We do not know that we can add more upon breeding for colour; but since the greater part of the foregoing has been put in type we have received the following paper from Mr. James Montgomery, of Belfast, whom we have before alluded to. In one or two points he differs from us; but as regards the main part of this subject it will be seen he agrees, and his remarks are valuable as *condensing* into a few sentences the main principles we have tried to lay down. His success in breeding for colour particularly, combined with unusually fine development, was so remarkably brilliant for the short time he remained in the Pouter fancy, that such a summary of the principles on which he acted is particularly valuable.

"The Pouter I consider the grandest of all fancy pigeons. The Carrier has been termed the 'King of Pigeons;' but I would say the cock and hen Pouter are the *gentleman* and *lady* of

the fancy—not only from their size, but from the elegance of their form, their graceful carriage, and their 'showing' qualities. They are more social in their disposition than any other. When well trained they take delight in being talked to, and seem anxious to answer you. The hen, when in high condition, will show herself off to her admiring friends, and strut about, seeming to say, 'Just look at me; am not I the lady all over?' I had a Red hen once that would 'show' to me the moment I went into the loft, clap her wings, and fly up on my shoulder.

"*Form* is the grandest characteristic in the Pouter, and is the first thing to be studied by the young fancier. Although there are at present five standard classes, yet the *form* in all is alike, and is consequently the most important to understand completely. The legs should be set close, and well back in the body. The bird should stand erect on them, showing the full length, stripping them well. The girth or waist should be very slender, with crop springing sharply out from it, showing about two inches and a half of waist. The *crop* should be large and round, not over crammed with air, but filled so that the bird can move with ease and use it freely; as some Scotch fanciers would say, 'Like a bladder on the point of a stick.' When on a block, in a pen, the tail should drop below the wing, in the fashion of a Belgian canary. When 'playing,' the cock should be able to pluck up his legs sharply, like a high-stepping horse, and move about with ease. Keeping this in view, I think nineteen inches as long as any cock should be. I have never seen any longer that had the action I like. Seven inches in limb and nineteen inches in feather I consider the proper proportions of a good bird. When we can breed them seven inches and a half or eight inches in limb, it will be time enough to try for twenty or twenty-one inches in feather.

"I fear much injury has been done to the Pouter fancy by the too frequent use of the tape-line by judges. The bird should *look* the thing; better to have a 6½-inch limb, well set and shown, than seven inches with the bird as it were curtseying on its legs, and the wing drooping so as to cover half of them.

"I shall not go into a minute description in detail of each of the five or six *properties* as they are termed, as I know they will be ably dealt with by Mr. Fulton, but confine myself to the subject of breeding, giving the result of my experience. Pedigree I put as an essential to good breeding—that is, birds bred from ancestors of the proper *form*, and true to colour. If you do not know the breeding or strain of the birds you breed from, you cannot calculate with any certainty on the produce you may get. I would here advise all breeders to avoid the idea of breeding *chance* birds. No breeder of horses, cows, pigs, dogs, or poultry acts on the *chance* system; why not the same in pigeons? No true fancier, or scientific breeder, wishes to travel over the ground *laboured* through by his predecessors; his business being to avail himself of what has been accomplished, and try to climb the ladder of perfection one rung higher. There is a great opening for some fancier to establish a *pure strain*, good in form, and true to colour—birds with pedigree. Any one who can accomplish this has his fortune made, so far as the Pouter fancy is concerned.

"As to details in breeding. Get the *eye* made up as to form, then mate up your birds of best form in each colour, seeing at the same time that they possess the necessary qualifications for mating; as regards feather, rose, moon, bib, &c., with limbs suited to throw the right thing. As your birds may not be all you could wish in each of these points, you must act on the principle of counteraction, say, mating a rough-limbed bird with a stocking or grouse-limbed one, a large moon with a small, and so on. Match Blues with Blues, and in *no* case introduce *blue* into any other colour. It destroys the brilliancy of Blacks when crossed with them, and is destructive to perfect colour in Reds and Yellows when crossed with them. Introduce blue into your Reds, and I will give you twenty years to breed it clean out.

"Blacks as a rule should be bred together, but if a cross is really wanted, then cross with Red,

using the produce according to the way they strain, breeding Blacks back to black, and Sandies back to red. Sandies may be bred back to black, but I prefer the other course.

"Reds, again, as a rule breed together, but, if, neces ary, they may be crossed with Blacks as above stated.

"Yellows should, if of a good rich colour, be bred together. When a cross is needed use Reds, which will improve the colour of your Yellows, but the produce is unfit for breeding except back to Yellows, as the introduction of the yellow into your Reds has a great tendency to spoil the shade of red.

"There is no difficulty in feather with Whites, except on limbs, so form alone requires your care. Whites do well to cross with any of the pied colours, having a tendency to get rid of foul thighs in the produce. In breeding the birds from this cross, care should be taken to select the birds with least splash in them for breeding back to Whites, and the reverse in breeding back to the *colours* from which they have been produced, care being taken, also, not to match them up to any other colour than that from which they are descended. This cross is not so desirable in yellows as in the other colours, as it may tone down the yellow. I am aware this cross will take more *time* to get your birds from it well up again to the standard pied colours, and therefore do not recommend it strongly.

"I do not enter into the question of breeding Mealies and Chequers, as I feel quite sure that in the breeding of the five standard classes to perfection, there is room enough for the exercise of the talent of the best and most ardent fanciers, and in my mind these are not required for that purpose. I am aware that some old and good fanciers, whose opinions I am bound to respect, differ from me on this point.

"Be sure to select birds of sound constitution to breed from, and avoid those with 'snips,' 'lawn sleeves,' 'ring-necks,' and 'swallow throats.' In fact every fancier should breed from the most perfect birds he can procure, as regards both form and feather. I would say to a *young* fancier, begin with *one* colour, and when you have produced birds of the right stamp, then you can increase your colours or classes as your taste and circumstances permit.

"I understand many fanciers allow their Pouters to feed their own young. I never did so, although for many years I matched up from thirty to thirty-six pairs. I gave all their young ones to feeders—allowed to fly, and supplied with plenty of sound food, principally peas and beans, and occasionally a little Indian corn or wheat.

"I wish to impress on all fanciers who intend to show their Pouters, the necessity of 'training' them well. After they have got fairly through the first moult, commence training such birds as you intend to be shown. They must be so penned as that they cannot see any other bird; they must be taught to keep their block in the pen, and frequently talked to and handled, to make them familiar, so that they will 'show' when any one approaches their pen. Do not allow them to learn the habit of pecking at your hand, as this spoils their showing. The best bird in a class may be passed without notice if not well trained. Pigeons, like other animals, have got tempers; and a sulky, bad-tempered bird will never be a winner in a show-pen, and I question the propriety of breeding from such birds, as they transmit this peculiarity as well as others."

We have now to consider the breeding of the Pouter in reference to other points; and the first remark it seems needful to make is, that very seldom are good exhibition cocks and hens produced from the same pair. Few amateurs, probably, ever think at the commencement of their career about carefully selecting a pair for the production of cocks and another for hens; but most endeavour to procure a nice handsome pair, just nicely feathered on the legs and feet, and expect

them to produce progeny like themselves. Against this is the fact that most of such fine parents are bred in the manner we presently describe, to one or other of which types they therefore tend to revert. However, we admit it is often found that breeding together such specimens, both slender in body and nicely feathered, does *generally* produce progeny more or less resembling them in these points; but it is too often found they are of *much less size*. Even if this is not found at first, when the progeny is again crossed with birds of the same stamp, the deterioration almost invariably appears, accompanied in many cases by thin legs and feet—we mean both thin in bone, and the feet thinly covered with feather. The flights and tail also tend to become shorter, so as to resemble an Austrian Pouter in size. This was the system of breeding that prevailed in London



Fig. 38.

when we came to reside there in 1852, and the result was the ruin of the breed there, so that in no loft but that of Mr. Bult could we see a single pair of really good Pouters. All had become so small and thin-legged that only here and there might an odd good bird be seen; and the sole reason of this was the aversion of the London fanciers to birds too heavy or "rough" in leg-feather. Not only was size diminished, but constitution also; and the fact that this was only due to the want of proper crossing is proved by the other fact we have already mentioned, that having purchased many specimens and sent them to Scotland for the breeders there, these very same birds, having "good blood" in them, which only needed to be properly crossed, produced in Scotland some of the finest specimens which have ever been seen. The reason of this appears to be, that the Pouter being a long-limbed, and—like all such animals—a somewhat weakly bird when young, a light and delicate specimen seems to want a dash of *coarser* material to supply the framework on which its own stamp of beauty may be impressed. Heavy feather is itself a sign of such rough vigour, as is also great size. There is one case, and only one, in which cocks and hens of the desired stamp of

girth and leg-feather, both shown in the plate of the Black-pied cock, and the leg-feather in Fig. 38, on the last page, may be bred together. It is where the breeder can obtain a real cross of the same stamp nearly every season to keep up the strength of blood. He may do this if he has a very large stud himself, though we doubt if any one has such, large enough. In this case such a plan of breeding will do very well, and produces birds very uniform in leg-feather and other points, and excellent up to a certain point. Were the stock of good standard Pouters large enough, we are not sure this might not be the best way; but as it is, with the limited stock available, this plan is not, even in the most favourable circumstances, that which is likely to produce *extraordinary* birds. The produce will be good—often very good—but is seldom out of the way in dimensions; and a "wonderful" Pouter is hardly ever thus produced—at all events, not nearly so often as by other methods of mating.

Before, however, going into these, it is necessary to describe more particularly the variations which are met with in the feathering of the "limbs." First of all is the "thin," or spindle-legged bird, which is more or less wanting in feather, so as to show part of the feet, and even of the shanks. This may be carried so far as in Fig. 41, or it may be in less degree, only showing a few bare places on the toes, as in Fig. 39. Next comes the proper show limb, as already described, in which the shank is nicely and smoothly covered, and the toes also well-furnished with handsome *spreading* feathers, so as just barely to show the toe-nails. In perfection, this class of limb should be just softly covered at the hock, to attain which many birds are plucked or trimmed before being exhibited. Then there come what are called "too rough" limbs—by others called vulture-hocked—in which both thighs and legs and feet are profusely furnished, the hock-feathers more or less projecting. This fault also may be in various degrees, from a comparatively slight excess, as shown in Fig. 40, to the regular "rough" limb in Fig. 42. The first class will admit of being shown, and even a rough limb often looks well from the front, but a side view of the pigeon always makes it appear short-legged, however really long it may be. The long feathers are also very troublesome when the bird is sitting upon eggs, and often cause breakages; and we have also often seen them cause the cock to stumble when courting his hen, which much disconcerts him. For these reasons, such rough-legged birds of both sexes should always have the long feathers cut short during the breeding season, which will be found to prevent numerous cases of both broken and barren eggs.

There are two general remarks that apply to matching up any description of limbs. The first is, to avoid if possible breeding from any bird, but at all risks never to breed from *two* birds, which are short in the lower joint of the leg, from the hock to the foot. It matters not how long the whole limb may be, if this part be short it can never appear a good length; and as it is the hardest feature to obtain in the limb, on no account must it be sacrificed in both parents. Without it a bird is nothing, since it never can possess the upright and graceful carriage which is the beauty of the Pouter, and cannot look even decent, except for a few moments at a time, on its block, when its tail can hang down below the level of its feet. And the other is, never to breed from two birds, and if possible not even from one, which shows the fault we have already noticed as rather frequent in White Pouters, viz., the thigh appearing to start from the shoulder, or close to the crop, with all the apparent length of body *behind* the limb. Such birds also cannot stand erect except upon a block, and the farther the insertion of the thigh be from the bottom of the crop, or the greater "length of waist" the bird has, the better. It is sometimes difficult to judge of this point, at the moment when examining a bird for choice, on account of his refusing to "blow," and especially if he be three or four years old. In that case the bird should be taken in hand, and by putting the beak in the mouth, the crop is readily inflated, when the precise form can readily be



Fig. 39.



Fig. 40.



Fig. 41.



Fig. 42.

seen; and this plan may also be adopted at any other time when a sulky bird won't "show"—as, for instance, if a judge suspects a bird to be a good one, but cannot "wait his lordship's leisure," yet is willing to give him a chance. Some people think it injures a bird to inflate his crop for him in this way, but this is simply ridiculous; and it is convenient as showing at once the precise size and shape of the crop.

Coming now to details, in mating for cocks there are various good matches, depending upon the amount of leg-feather; but in either case a male bird is to be selected as slender in girth, long in limb, and fine in shape and carriage as can be procured; in fact, in all but the precise amount of leg-*feather*, as fine in all show points as possible. He should not be more than two years old, and if less so much the better, unless the amateur is breeding particularly for *colour*, when he must select his ages accordingly; but as regards the points now considered, a cock not more than two years old is to be preferred, mated with a large strong hen not more than four. Such a bird may have limbs just correct, in which case he will breed well with a hen possessing just a shade too much, for the reasons already given. She must, however, be quite free from vulture-hocks. But it will be even better if the cock be a trifle short of foot-feather so as to show a part of the toes, and just a little spare even on the leg, such as is represented in Fig. 39. Such birds are often very handsome indeed in shape, with fine long limbs, and extra slender bodies; and if mated with a hen possessing limbs like the accompanying Fig. 40—seen at once to be rather too thick and rough in feather, with a slight tendency to vulture-hocks—will generally be found to produce young with fine thick-stocking limbs.

Cocks are often found with still thinner legs, showing more of the toes, and some portion of the shank bare, but still with fine long limbs and handsome shape. These should be mated with a large strong hen of the decidedly rough or vulture-hocked type. Such matching is shown in Figs. 41 and 42, the one bird supplying what the other is deficient in; and this not only in leg-feathering, but in other points. For as the cock is very long and slim in body, he imparts this quality to the young cocks from him, while the large coarse hen keeps up the dimensions; and as a thin-legged bird is generally short in flights and often in tail, so the rough-legged one is mostly long in feather, and supplies these deficiencies also. The most extraordinary Pouter cocks we have met with have been bred from such a cross as this last; and the secret of its superiority lies in the extra or rough feather being a sign of strength and vigour, which are absolutely necessary to produce an extraordinary Pouter, since a bird, however beautiful and shapely, is *not* extra fine if at all small. These large, rough, strong hens, therefore, add to the fine figure and limbs of the cock more leg-feather, greater size, and length of flights and tail; thus often producing a grand bird.

For breeding hens the rules we have given should just be reversed, choosing fine, slim, long-limbed hens, but in this case taking more care to have them as *large* as possible, more or less thin-legged, and matching them with cocks proportionately rough-legged. In either case, the sex not bred specially for most often tends to be rough-feathered, and is then most valuable for re-crossing in the same way.

In this manner have the finest Pouters been produced; and as Pouters with too much or too little leg-covering are of much less value, and if either feature be far from the standard are almost valueless for exhibition, such mating puts the breeding of fine birds within the means of many who otherwise could not enjoy the pleasure. It is perhaps the reason why, even more than in other varieties (for it is more or less common to all) there are two classes of fanciers; those who in this way, by skill and patience, produce the most extraordinary specimens, and find an intense delight in doing so; and others, with ample means but less time, who are willing to purchase such

at very high prices. We have heard these latter sneered at as being "not real fanciers;" but such is by no means true. Many of them would be practical breeders had they only more time; but not having this, they gladly pay large sums for the produce of those who have; and the very fact that they can thus appreciate the fine qualities of an unusually good specimen shows that they have a real right to the name. Each class of men assists the other; for we know very well that many breeders would not persevere as they do, were it not for the opportunity of an occasional sale at a high price to such discriminating amateurs; not only for the remuneration it gives them for their time and trouble, but it is a real *pleasure* to such a poor man to have the produce of his skill and patience thus appreciated by a real judge. It is as great a triumph for him, in its way, as a victory at a great show; and encourages him to persevere in his harmless hobby, as well as furnishes the "sinews of war" for doing so; while it likewise furnishes a kindly intercourse between class and class upon a common ground, which is to the advantage of both parties.

Some fanciers are more partial than others to rough-legged birds, on account of their frequently fine dimensions. They are also often very fine in crop; and though sometimes subject to be rather thick in girth, are not unfrequently almost all that can be desired except for the rough feather. Hence they are very often plucked or trimmed; and certainly if done with judgment a little thinning out does improve the look of such a bird tremendously; but a very keen eye can generally detect the operation through the loss of that beautiful *smoothness* of feather which distinguishes a naturally good leg. The shortening of the feather during the breeding season we have already spoken of; but these rough-legged birds being so frequently extra fine in crop are rather liable to become loose and hanging. They are also subject when old to become gorged with either food or water; and when in either condition, being more clumsy in stepping than stocking-legged birds, are rather apt to pierce the crop with the toe-nail, which, if not immediately seen, is apt to prove fatal. The preventive of such accidents is to fix a small pellet of gutta-percha while warm on to the points of the middle toe-nails.

If we add that, the rough-legged birds being generally rather more bent at the hocks, the thin-legged one must not show much bend there, but present a nearly straight joint, we shall have said all that need be laid down concerning breeding in respect of limb. The necessity of avoiding a pair both of which omit to show a good length of waist from the bottom of the crop to the set-on of the thighs, has been already insisted on. This beauty is often seen in small birds, but seldom in large ones. We have also alluded to the necessity of having on one side at least a good length of flights. No matter how fine otherwise, a bird with short flights never has a "finished" look. To avoid this, some fanciers are in the habit of plucking both flights and tail-feathers from the birds while quite in their infancy, for the purpose of getting the extra length of the second set before the natural time, and thus inducing the spectator to believe, seeing the bird in its nestling-feathers otherwise, that when it moults it will be a wonderful length; a hope never realised. But against *this* dodge we earnestly warn our readers, for the feathers never seem to grow quite in their proper place after such an operation. The outer flight-feathers especially are almost sure to come with either a slight twist, or to appear more loose, as if not nicely and tightly folded up and properly lapping over each other. There is most likely to be actual twist in small birds; but even the larger ones lose in this nice and tight-looking "fit" of the feathers. The only case where we would pluck the flights is when a feather, as sometimes happens, seems to grow double from one root—a malformation which is singularly more apt to occur with good birds than bad ones. Such a feather should be plucked, of course, in hopes that it may grow again of a right shape; and it is also sometimes advisable to pluck a tail as a medicinal measure; but otherwise all plucking of quills is to be avoided.

In keeping Pouters especially, the more space that can be devoted to them the better; as if closely confined they are apt to become loose in feather, and mope about in awkward attitudes, very different to those of birds which have liberty to fly and flap their wings. So important is this, that when space is unavoidably limited, the amateur will do well to throw at least two-thirds of it into his flight or aviary, and so arrange it as to make the flying space as long as possible. A house or loft six feet square will do nicely for six pairs of Pouters. It should contain one or two matching-pens, which ought to be, if possible, five feet off the ground, as a Pouter likes best to be looked as it were in the face when visited by his owner; but on the ground will also do, only it occupies floor space. All breeding and nesting-boxes should, however, be on the ground, unless they are on the floor of largish pens, as in Mr. Wallace's loft. If proper nesting-boxes cannot conveniently be provided, a nest-pan may be put close by the wall, with a piece of board leaning in front of it. The use of sawdust we have already advocated, provided the *coarse* dust can be obtained; the fine "mill" dust is, however, useless, flying up with every movement of the birds. The more common pigeons or feeders the breeder has at command, the better will be his chance of rearing fine young ones; for though many Pouters will feed pretty well until three weeks, very few will rear altogether; and we have also already stated the evils of allowing large-cropped birds to feed for more than ten or twelve days. No better kind of breeding-boxes can be given than those figured on page 14; but for Pouters they should be larger—not less than three feet wide (*i.e.*, the double box), two feet deep, and eighteen inches high, with the partition and entrance eight inches off the ground. The sawdust should be put so deep in these boxes as to nearly reach the edge of the nest-pan, which will both avoid many broken eggs, and in case of a young one getting out of the nest-pan before it has strength to climb, will enable it to get back again without difficulty. By thus filling up the box nearly level, the legs are also much less likely to get outside the pan and become dislocated, or deformed, or chilled, which not unfrequently happens when this precaution is neglected, and of course spoils if it does not lose the bird.

Mr. Montgomery has alluded to the importance of training the Pouter; and we can fully confirm the truth of his hint that birds as tame as possible should even be selected to breed from. The young birds should be accustomed to being taken in hand from a very early date, when they should be talked to and petted, so as to lose all fear of the human form. But to prepare them for being exhibited to advantage something like *regular* "training" is required. The birds should be placed singly in pens about eighteen inches high, sixteen inches wide, and say twenty inches deep from back to front, with a small block of some kind in the centre, about four inches square and five inches high. The half of a brick will answer for the block, or so will a small flower-pot placed bottom upwards. Food and water-tins should be so arranged as if possible to hang outside, or otherwise so as to prevent the bird from fouling them, which would cause disease. Two or more pens should be placed in a row, so as to admit of a sliding division between two, in one of which a cock and in the other a hen may be placed. The oftener the owner can visit the birds the better; and on each occasion he should call to them with a peculiar call, something like "*hee, heep; hee, heep.*" Others make a sound more like "*hooie, hooie;*" and on each occasion the sliding partition should be withdrawn, so as to allow the two birds suddenly to see each other. This will make each bird show its best, as they can hear each other, though they cannot see, before the partition is drawn, and the very instant this is done they will generally put themselves into the best and most striking attitudes. By doing this on each occasion, they will soon learn, every time the owner goes near or speaks to them, to expect to see their mates, and will begin to fill their globes and strut about with delight, unless in the case of a very few sulky birds, which can never be seen to advantage except now and then while at liberty. But especially, as Mr. Montgomery

has said, *never* point the finger at them or allow them to peck at it whilst in the pen, which they will readily do if allowed; as such will quite prevent them from coming into show, and almost ruins them as exhibition birds. The voice is all that is required, and is very soon associated by them with the pleasure they derive from seeing each other, so that at the well-known call they will put themselves into show. Some birds derive a little assistance from snapping the fingers, or gently waving the hand backwards and forwards at the same time; but pointing the finger causes nothing but mischief. While the birds are thus penned it is best to avoid having any others in sight, or it may cause the imprisoned bird to spend its time trying to get out, which also spoils its attitude. If you have one familiar hen, it is also a good plan to train her to stand on your hand, and thus show her in front of a pen containing cock birds. This will set them all into fine show, which should of course be accompanied by the call, and is an excellent way of training Pouter pigeons.

Pouters, like Carriers, have ailments to which they are especially subject; and one of the most common is that of over-gorging, as is natural from the extra development of crop. One means of prevention is to use a hopper, so that the birds can at all times feed at pleasure; since if fed by hand they of course become *hungry*, and are then more liable to the mischief in question. The usual treatment for this complaint has already been mentioned—viz., to draw the bird through a stocking with the foot cut off, tail first, so as to squeeze the crop well up, and then hang it up till the food has left the over-gorged receptacle. But the best plan is to employ a narrow box or basket, little wider than the body of the bird, and sixteen or eighteen inches long. Then pack the bottom with chaff or cut straw, or a piece of cloth, so as to keep the crop well up opposite the aperture where the food passes into the stomach, and adjust the cover so that the bird will have little or no room to move. Before the bird is placed in this hospital it should have two capsules of castor-oil, when the lid should be fastened and the box placed nearly but not quite upright for twenty-four hours. Should not the food then have at least partially left the crop, give a drink of milk with another single capsule of oil, and gently knead and work the contents of the crop so as to soften and loosen it, after which replace as before for another twelve hours. In cold weather the box must be placed near enough to the fire to be comfortably warm, or serious results will follow, but in warm or temperate weather no such precaution is needed. Occasionally, when a bird has become very badly gorged, and has remained unnoticed for some little time, the full crop will feel quite cold and hard, and the bird will be hardly able to stand, but tumble over when set upon its feet. In this case the best thing is a drink of warm milk mixed with cod-liver oil; which, if the bird cannot drink, should be poured down its throat through a small funnel, using not less than half a teaspoonful of oil; after which it is to be put in the box as in the other cases. If there is still little result—which is easily seen by the action of the bowels—some more warm milk should be given with some jalap, which will generally effect the desired relief; but even this will sometimes fail when the bird if filled very hard, and has become quite cold before being attended to. In that case the only mode of saving its life is by an operation, which is, however, attended by little risk when properly done, except so far as the pigeon may have lost strength or health beforehand, or the gorged crop may have already developed a tendency to mortification, in which case little can be hoped for. In most instances, however, the operation is simple and successful enough.

The first thing is to cut or pluck off all the feathers near the incision, so as to see clearly what is done; after which a free incision should be made *across* the crop, near the bottom, in which position the wound shows least trace afterwards. Cut cleanly through both the outer skin and the crop itself; and after emptying the crop thoroughly, wash the inside with warm water, after which

the sewing-up has to be done. Now upon this, supposing no tendency to mortification to already exist, all success depends. Each skin must be sewn up *separately*; and the inner or true crop is best done with a close and fine stitch; it *must*, in fact, be so done that neither food nor water can escape. It must not be sewn "over and over," as most try to do it. Such a stitch fails, because the cut edges are not brought together, but the inner surfaces of the membranes; which take a long time to heal, if they heal at all, and even then always leave the wound twisted or drawn. On the contrary, the stitches should pass "under and over" each edge of the wound, piercing from the inside and then passing over the outside to the inside of the *other* edge of the wound, in the way tailors mend a rent which is in sight, and has to be repaired as neatly as possible. Such a stitch keeps the skin in place, with the cut edges in opposition, in the best way for uniting; and if all the tissues are healthy, healing is easy and rapid. After the crop is sewn the outer skin should be sewn up in the same way, but need not be quite so finely done. Each seam as finished should be smeared with Condy's Red Fluid; and the bird is best operated on if drawn up to the shoulders into a worsted stocking with the foot cut off, so as to keep it still. The first meal after such an operation should be a drink or feed of lukewarm gruel, made rather thick so as not to pass through the stitches, and the bird should, of course, be kept quiet and on rather short allowance till it is supposed to be healed. The operation appears severe, and perhaps is so; but we have been utterly astonished on several occasions, when performing it both in our own loft and for various friends, to see not unfrequently the imprisoned bird put himself into "show" and play up to a hen when in sight the very next morning; from which we should not suppose the feeling in either inner or outer skin was very great. We have also had fowls after the same treatment walk about the next day and appear to enjoy themselves just as usual, though in other cases they have appeared to mope and be in some distress for two or three days.

Some Pouters have the crop always hanging loose or pendulous, which looks very bad. This often occurs from a bird having been over-gorged two or three times, and thereby stretched the crop too much, so that it does not properly contract again. Such a bird can never properly fill its globe, and never looks well or healthy, wandering about evidently in discomfort. The cause of this is, that the crop hanging down below the discharging orifice, the food never *entirely* passes out, but remains in the lower part till decomposed, as is proved by the offensive smell which can be only too easily perceived at the beak of the bird. This can be remedied by a very similar operation to the foregoing; but in this case a piece must be cut entirely out of each skin, in the form of a crescent, so as to reduce the surface and make the crop and skin smaller. This, too, must be done across and near the bottom, and the success of the operation as regards showing the bird will depend on the careful judgment with which the size and shape of the excised piece is calculated. If this is correctly estimated, and the operation well performed, the bird will be entirely restored to health and spirits, and, if a fine specimen, become again fit to show.

Wing disease is to be treated as in the Carrier, and so with canker in the ear if it attacks a bird; but it rarely does attack Pouters, and when it does, seldom in a virulent form. It more often appears on the skull; when it is best treated on the "let alone" system we have already described, except that in Pouters the mass of diseased matter sometimes seems to break the skin with difficulty, in which case a puncture should be made. When the diseased matter is finally extruded, the wound left should be carefully cleansed with Condy's Red Fluid by a bit of sponge upon a piece of stick, after which it ought to be touched with a caustic pencil, and the cure will be speedily finished.

The most dreaded of all diseases in the Pouter is what is called by many the "wasting" disease, but which we believe to be truly *consumption*. We consider it to be about as hopeless of cure

as that scourge of the human race called by the same name. It can often be alleviated, and a bird's life prolonged. Occasionally there do appear cases of real cures; but as a rule it is hopeless; and there not being the sacredness in this case which of course attaches to human life, we doubt if recovery is much to be desired, since it would probably result in handing down the diseased constitution to others. The only treatment we have ever found at all generally successful is the administration of cod-liver oil floated on milk; but it only deserves to be called a palliative. The symptoms are a rapid wasting away, more or less accompanied by panting or other signs of disease of the lungs.

There is another disease, not altogether peculiar to Pouters, but which seems to attack them more than others, carrying off many birds every season. That it is one development of a cold is certain, and it has a character in some respects resembling influenza; but beyond that we can say little, nor has it any definite name—many people knowing it simply as "the head disease." It chiefly attacks young birds just previous to, or during the process of moulting their nestling feathers; from which it has often appeared to us very analogous to distemper in the dog. The symptoms are profuse discharge in the nostrils, and often in the eyes, the former being often filled with matter of a gelatinous consistence, though at first the secretion is watery. Sometimes this is so plentiful that the poor bird is nearly choked; and with these symptoms is almost always conjoined considerable disorder of the bowels, shown by the droppings being of a green and slimy character, and the bird refusing to feed. We are sorry to say we can give no specific cure, having repeatedly found that the course of treatment which seemed to cure one pigeon had not the slightest effect upon another; but we have followed all the following methods of treatment, and have found each at times beneficial. We hardly know which to advise in preference; but it will be seen that we chiefly depend on assisting the bowels to carry off what we believe is a general inflammatory condition of the whole system, and would upon the whole try the various modes of treatment in the following order. We would put the bird as soon as it was noticed in a warmish pen free from draught, giving to drink half a pint of water in which half a tea-spoonful of Epsom salts is dissolved, and no other drink till all this had been imbibed. Feed on tares, rice, a little old wheat, and oatmeal cake broken small. On the third day cease the salts, but if the bird has not taken it put a pinch down its throat. Some get better with this simple treatment, as shown by the discharge decreasing, returning appetite, and the droppings assuming a more healthy character as soon as the salts have ceased to act. Others are entirely unaffected; and in that case we would give jalap—say half an ordinary jalap pill—every second day for a week. This will often succeed when salts have failed. The next expedient will be to give two capsules of castor-oil every second day for six days, with milk to drink instead of water, the food in any case being as before stated; but if the bird will not eat, make some pellets of rice boiled in milk mixed with oatmeal, and give say ten the size of a bean twice daily, rolling them in fine gravel to assist digestion. In all cases, if the motions assume a more healthy character it is a hopeful sign; and more especially if the bird, after having refused its food, begins to feed. A little hempseed sometimes assists this return of appetite; but should be given sparingly and only of the newest and best quality. When all the preceding means fail, we have *sometimes* known success follow the free use of sulphur; feeding the bird on pills made as before directed, but with the addition of one fourth part powdered sulphur. In any case, should the bird be attacked before it has moulted its tail, or if an old bird, the tail (but not the flights) should be plucked; when the sudden impetus given to the circulation of the blood, through the growth of the new feathers, often assists the cure. In most cases, if the droppings *entirely* lose a green and slimy appearance, and regain a firm and healthy character, the bird recovers.

In all such or other cases, where the nostrils appear filled with discharge, especially if of a thick gelatinous character, the head must be bathed every night with water as hot as can be borne, after which both nostrils should be tightly squeezed between the finger and thumb till the bird sneezes, when the matter will be ejected and breathing restored. It is well in such cases to dress the head with butter, which will tend to prevent the discharge from becoming hard. Some relief from these discharges may often be obtained by giving a pill in which some cayenne pepper and sulphur have been mixed.

The liability of young Pouters to weakness of the joints we have already spoken of. We know of but one remedy for this, but it is in many cases effectual. That is to wrap round the limb a woollen rag soaked in good whiskey (we think the Scotch best, of course). The rag should be soaked afresh at least once a day for a week, after about which time it should be removed. The best way to put the rag on is to roll it round three times and then sew it, which keeps it in place much better than if tied.

Pouters sometimes get their crops over-gorged with water, if deprived of it for any time. This is easily remedied by putting the finger into the beak to keep it open, and then holding the bird upside down, when the water will drain out. Sometimes a bird will get its crop too full of air, so as to be beyond its control, and cause evident discomfort. In that case also, opening of the beak and a gentle squeeze of the crop will give instant relief. Often, again, a bird will seem "sick," as it is termed, leaving little in the crop. The simple remedy for this is to nearly fill the crop with warm water, kneading it about gently, so as thoroughly to wash and cleanse it, and then drain it out again as just directed.

We strongly advise Pouters to be separated after the breeding season. One of the best breeders we know does not do so, but he and others would find far fewer barren hens if they did. We know by experience that leaving them together, especially if there are any young cocks in the loft, often is the cause of hens becoming weak or "down behind;" and where this is not the case, is the reason of their laying much later in the season, and also causes thin-shelled eggs.

We have found it very beneficial with all pigeons, but Pouters especially, to hang up a cabbage or lettuce every week, from March to December, for them to peck at. It should be hung at such a height from the ground as just to allow them to reach it. They will only eat what is good for them, and it is the best prevention of disease generally we have ever known.

Many Pouters are more or less extensively trimmed up before exhibition; and without in the least defending such practices, which no doubt verge closely on fraud, it is only right to point out what is commonly done, if only that exhibitors who refuse to practise such improvements may be able to detect birds which have been tampered with. We must, however, state that many of the *judges* are really to blame for this state of things. We have frequently seen really grand birds shown in a perfectly honest and genuine state (beginners often do this), and passed over without honour for an almost solitary foul feather, while the prize has been bestowed upon a bird far inferior in every essential point, merely because it was free from foul feathers—a freedom, be it remarked, *often obtained in that very bird by trimming*. In this way we have known many a man forced into trimming, who really did his best to avoid it; and such results would not occur if judges were more guided by the really good points, instead of pursuing the vicious plan adopted by some of them, of merely *looking for faults* on whose account they may pass over the birds. Such can always be found; and the natural result of such judging is that by degrees exhibitors—the most unscrupulous beginning and the rest gradually following—do their best to *remove faults* before showing their birds. This would be avoided were judges to bear in mind Mr. Ure's excellent remark that "colour and marking do not *make* the Pouter; they simply *finish* it."

A White Pouter never requires any trimming at all, unless it be of the vulture-hocked class, in which case it is quite general to remove some of the superfluous feathers which project from the sides of the legs and feet. The best plan of doing this is to *cut* them off close to the root or skin, which will stop them from growing again the whole season, until moulting-time arrives; whereas, when plucked, they not only quickly grow again, but frequently come twisted and ugly in shape. Some of the vulture-hocked birds, when skilfully trimmed, will appear nearly an inch longer in limb than before they were touched. The necessity of trimming hocked birds before *breeding* we have already spoken of.

Pied Pouters may of course need the same hock-trimming, which is so general now as to be almost recognised like the "dressing" of the faces of Spanish fowls; but they frequently require, besides, the removal of more or less feathers from one or both shoulders, in order to make the pinion-markings both alike, or to make too much white into a respectable approach to the "rose." The bib and half-moon on the crop have also very frequently to "lose" a few feathers here and there, in order to make the shape and line of demarcation between one and the other as uniform and correct as possible, few birds indeed being *quite* satisfactory naturally in this particular. There are also stray foul feathers to be removed from the thighs if they exist; and finally, there is often a little trimming done on the breast, so as to make the line across between the black above and the white lower down a nice sharp one. In one or the other of these ways many a really good Pied Pouter has to undergo a great deal of "alteration" before it goes to a show.

The colour itself is often "doctored" a little. Black-pieds are so often of a nasty bluish shade that some use a little oil to improve it. This is done by touching the black feathers lightly with a small piece of sponge dipped in oil, and then squeezed out, too much showing at once what has been done. After the sponge, the feathers are rubbed with a piece of cloth; but special care must be taken not to touch any of the *white* feathers, or they are soiled, and detection is certain. Some use goose-fat in the same way, others prefer spirits of turpentine; but the best method of all, in our opinion, is to rub some grease over a plate, and then hold it over the flame of a candle till it becomes quite black. This rubbed on *well* but *sparingly*, whilst warm, is the best expedient, and lasts the longest, of all things we have tried.

We know of no method of improving Reds or Yellows but what are so very easily detected as to be best avoided. Some wash Reds in buttermilk, but we never could discover any improvement after the process. Reds, Yellows, and Whites are of course much improved by being washed when dirty. It should be done with rain-water, in which a small piece each of soap and soda have been boiled. When cool enough, the bird is to be quite immersed in this, and held for some time, until the plumage is well saturated, when it must be well washed with more soap and a piece of sponge, leaving the head till last. The legs should be tied, to avoid struggling, and the beak carefully kept out of the water. When clean, the bird should be rinsed, and then totally immersed in enough water to cover it, in which is dissolved at least two tablespoonfuls of borax and honey—the regular "baby-mixture" kept by all chemists. The bird should be just stirred once up and down in this, which will cleanse out all the soap and make the feathers dry "sound," so that the bird will not appear as if just washed. It should be wiped after with a soft cloth, and then put into an open basket and allowed to dry in a warm room, but not too near the fire.

The "snip" on a Black-pied Pouter is sometimes dyed, by first wetting the place and then rubbing it with lunar caustic. The dyed place is, however, never *so* black as the rest of the body; and we never knew any case of dying such faulty spots in either Blacks or any other colours which could not be easily detected, as they deserved. We say as they deserved, because the dying of an actually mis-marked bird stands upon a worse footing than any other kind of trimming.

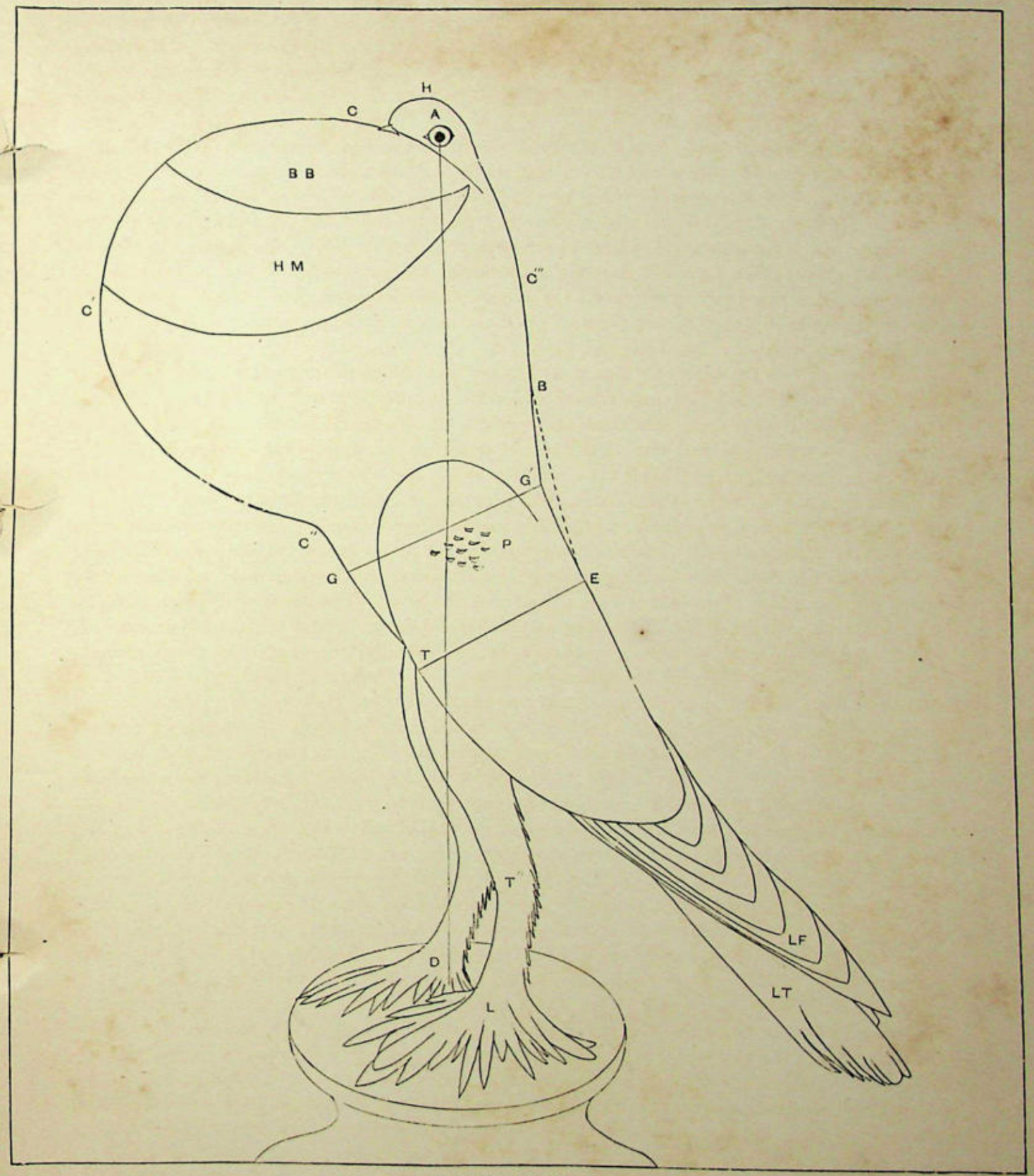
JUDGING POUTERS.—Our ideas as to the proper judging of Pouters have already been pretty fully expressed, so as to leave little need for more than the scale of points which we have drawn up, after the experience of many years. Before giving this, however, it may be well to give, with the aid of a diagram, a more detailed analysis of the various points, which will be more clearly seen when thus illustrated.

In the annexed diagram, then, H, the head, should be small in proportion to the body. The line A D, from the eye to the centre of the feet, shows that when posed in its best position, one is perpendicularly over the other. C shows how the crop, when inflated, should slightly *rise* from the front of the beak, C′ the best fulness of globe to look well, and C″ the chief point of all in crop properties, viz., the *sudden* angle or dent between the crop and the body. No matter how large or well-filled the crop may be, it will not look well without this point is good; and nothing also so much sets off any merit the bird may have as regards smallness of girth. C‴ shows the slight fulness caused by the crop behind the neck; B B and H M show the proportionate sizes of the bib and half-moon, which are most preferred.

The space from the angle of the crop at C″ to the insertion of the thigh at T should be as long and straight as possible. This, with a good angle at C″, as already stated, sets off the slimness of the pigeon, and is what many specimens are deficient in. In most birds the crop comes so low down towards the thighs, that these latter almost appear to spring from the crop itself, when, no matter how long the limb may be, it can never look well. But with a sharp curve at C″, the longer the waist is from C″ to T, the more slender and upright will the bird appear in the pen. The girth, G G′, should be as small as possible; and closely connected with excellence in this particular is the hollow curve in the back, B E. Birds not showing this are apt to appear hog-backed, which quite spoils the look at a side view, beside increasing the girth materially. P shows the marking on the pinion to be as nearly as possible of a rose or circular character. The depth or breadth of flight, T E, should be as little as possible. Some birds when old become loose in the wing or shoulder, which not only makes the shoulder appear deep, but by hanging down over the thighs, apparently shortens the length of limb. In this point young birds which keep their flights tightly clipped up are almost always better than old ones; and the oftener and longer Pouters are allowed to feed young ones the worse are they apt to get in this particular, and the longer will the line T E become. The length of thigh, T T″, should of course be as great as possible; but the most difficult point of all is a good length from T″ to L, which may be called the leg. The longer this joint is the more slender will the bird look, and the more upright will it stand. At L is represented the style of foot-feather which is so admired. At L F is shown the proper length and shape of the flights, and at L T of the tail, in a properly-proportioned bird; too great length here, as we have so often remarked, can only tip the bird forward and prevent its standing upright unless upon a block.

Of course no Pouter ever remains long in the position here portrayed. He is always changing, and only for a brief moment can *any* given attitude be seen. But this applying to all attitudes alike, we have chosen for our diagram that which best shows, in our judgment, the most typical qualities of the bird. If a good one, he is graceful in all.

And with this diagram before us, we will once more repeat what we have so often implied or stated—and what, in our opinion, is the very *essence* of all good judging of this pigeon—that the best Pouter is *not* the bird with the largest crop or smallest girth, or even greatest length of limb, much less of the best marking; but the one which best presents such a combination, in fair proportion of *all* good points, as to produce, in an accomplished fancier, an impression of general harmony and unity in the whole. Even an artist, who had never seen the pigeon, will see much beauty and grace in the well-balanced and harmonious curves here represented; and it is the



POINTS OF THE POUTER.

nearest approach to such ideals, *as a whole*, that constitutes the best Pouter, and should receive the judge's award.

It now only remains to add our scale of points for judging :—

POINTS IN JUDGING POUTERS.

Head : shape and smallness	1
Bib : size and shape	3
Half-moon, or crescent-shaped markings on crop	3
Globe or crop : size, 3 ; shape, 3	6
Girth : smallness (G G'), 3 ; length (C" T), 3	6
Pinion-marking, accuracy of	3
Hollow curve in back (B E)	2
Thigh : length and shape	3
Legs : length from foot to hock	4
,, closeness together	2
Foot and leg-feathering	2
Flights : length and shape	3
Colour	2
Marking across the belly	2
Cleanness of thigh	2
Colour of eyes in all pied varieties	1
	46

For White birds all the points for colour and marking to be omitted ; and if Broken-eyed or Orange-eyed it cannot be shows as a pure White.





Vincent Brooks Day & Son, Lith. London

PIGMY POUTERS.

ISABELS.

CREAMY YELLOW

WHITE RED

CHAPTER VIII.

FOREIGN AND PIGMY POUTERS.

FROM what was said in our last chapter as to the probable descent of the English Pouter from the old Dutch Cropper, it will not surprise the reader to learn that there are still to be found on the Continent many birds of the same ancestry. Some of these birds are very peculiar-looking, but pretty, the German and Dutch fanciers having bred them chiefly for curious colours and markings, as they do their many pretty "Toy" pigeons, and in the process letting all the Pouter properties go except development of crop. As the result of these aims in breeding we have pigeons with good globes, and sometimes, but not often, long feather; while, on the other hand, the limbs have suffered greatly. Some of these Dutch birds, in fact, have been seen with well-developed crops, but *totally* bare legs! On the other hand, some of the colours are really very pretty in their way, the wing-markings of the Turbit being not seldom found, also white bars instead of black, besides some of the more peculiar markings of the Toys.

Not being common or popular in this country, we can only say of these foreign Pouters that they generally breed fairly true to colour, and are in most cases hardy, and fully able to rear their own young. They are not, in our opinion, ever likely to be much cultivated in a country where the true Pouter-fancier keeps up the standard of a much higher class of bird, but may have their place as curiosities.

It is otherwise with those pretty birds variously known as Austrian Pouters, Pigmy Pouters, and Isabels. It has been attempted to affix these different names to slightly different varieties; but considering all to be the same class of bird, and only differing in colour and marking as do the various colours in the standard Pouter, we think it highly desirable they should all be known under one name, and select that of Pigmy Pouters as the simplest, most English, and most appropriate.

What is generally known as the "Austrian" variety is a slender bird, resembling all over an English Pouter, but with thin leg-feathering, or what is known as being "wire-legged." This fault, indeed, often makes them appear even smaller in girth than they really are, but decidedly detracts from their appearance. Some fanciers have partially remedied it by careful breeding. Those again which are now more commonly known simply *as* "Pigmy Pouters," are certainly our favourites. They have been probably bred from the Austrian, and their leg-feathering has been got to resemble that of their larger standard brethren. When this is correct, and the birds have good globes, good limbs, and slender girth, their boldness of outline shows to great advantage, and they appear real Pouters in miniature. Lastly, the birds called Isabels resemble the roughest-limbed Pouters, many of them being quite vulture-hocked, and, singularly enough, like the standard birds, these rough-limbed ones are generally the longest in flights and tail, and have better crops than the thin-legged ones. This is interesting, as showing that the diminutive birds are subject to the same laws of breeding as the standard Pouter, and that their variations are to be studied and matched in the same way.

Of course, as regards any of these varieties, the more they resemble the standard Pouter in all

properties the more they are prized. We have seen some specimens as handsome and perfect in general properties as most standard birds; and one bird in particular which we have seen, belonging to Mr. Tegetmeier, was not only the best of its class which has come under our notice, but was as handsome a little Pouter as we ever saw. This gentleman has, in fact, done more to improve this particular class of birds than all other fanciers in England put together, and we believe has bred nearly all colours. We have, however, often wondered that although nearly all colours have thus been bred, no one in modern times, till very lately, had ever seen a Pigmy Pouter *pied* like the standard varieties. We say in modern times, because Mr. Tegetmeier has interpreted Mr. John Eaton's account of Sir John Sebright's Pigmy Pouters as meaning that these birds *were* so pied. Eaton certainly says they preserved "*all* their elegant properties;" but we are by no means clear he meant to include marking, and, if it were so, it is wonderful that no trace should now remain of such an attractive stock; but as we have already stated Mr. Tegetmeier to have bestowed unusual attention on this variety, he may have good reasons, apart from Eaton's account, for believing that Sir John really had vanquished the difficulty. Since the publication of the first edition of this work, we are pleased to state that Captain Hill, a well-known Pouter fancier, has succeeded in breeding a Black Pied Pigmy Pouter, nearly perfect in marking, besides being a model of a Pouter all over. It was shown at the Crystal Palace Show of 1880, not for competition, the owner being one of the Pouter judges; but such was the admiration it excited, that the price of a good horse was refused for it. Other tolerably well-pied Pigmies have also been bred during the last year or two by Captain Hill and one or two others; but the one mentioned is far the best.

As to the origin of these birds, our own impression is that they have been bred partly by dwarfing the old Dutch Cropper, and partly by crossing these with the German Toys. Its source in larger breeds is made certain by the results of a cross, for we know of a case in which a very extra *small* Dutch Cropper, crossed with an "Austrian" Pigmy Pouter, produced birds which could not have been distinguished by mere size from ordinary English-bred Pouters. In fact, without any crossing at all, there is no difficulty in breeding them larger and larger every year; the problem being rather to keep them *small* enough—a fact which, as in the case of Bantams, conclusively proves a larger parentage.

The most common colours in these attractive little birds are Blacks and Blues; next Whites, Reds, and Duns; and those called Isabels are of a cream colour, with bars across the wing-coverts as in a Blue-pied, but white instead of the ordinary black bars. This is one of the features which makes us suspect the cross with some of the Toys, being common to many of these; and it certainly looks very pretty. In no single case, however, until the birds shown by Captain Hill, have we yet seen a Pigmy Pouter having the "standard" marking on crop, pinion, &c.; and we repeat our opinion that this marking, now it has been produced, must "beat all."

Pigmy Pouters have no particular diseases, not being, like the large variety, much subject to gorging or other ailments. They look well at large, flying about easily with their crops distended. They should be judged by their approach to standard Pouter points, with the exception of marking. Should this generally be attained, the points for colour and marking will then also apply, but the smallest bird should be most prized, instead of, as in the standard Pouter, the finest and largest.



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith. London W.C.

ALMOND FEATHERS

CHAPTER IX.

THE ALMOND TUMBLER AND ITS SUB-VARIETIES.

THIS pigeon has always been looked upon by most fanciers as the best and chief of all the varieties of the "Short-faced" Tumblers. At one time, indeed, it was almost looked upon as *the* "high-class" pigeon of all, ranking even before the Carrier and the Pouter, but this we cannot agree with for several reasons, the chief being that the best Almond will only remain what it should be for at most two seasons, while a Carrier, if a good specimen, looks well as long as it retains health and vigour. A Pouter also, with care, will retain its standard qualities during its lifetime; but the Almond, as we have seen, not only requires a certain time to bring it to perfection, but after a very moderate further time becomes again unfit for exhibition.

Even amongst the short-faces we do not ourselves regard the Almond as ranking first. Though we appreciate it as much as any—having, indeed, good cause to do so, even from a business point of view—still, for somewhat similar reasons to those just advanced, we regard another variety—the Black Mottle—as standing above it. We do so because, while quite as difficult to breed to points and feather (this may be questioned, but we shall make our words good in the proper place) as the Almond, if not, indeed, more so, as we consider it is, the Black Mottle retains its beauty, like the Carrier, from the nest-pan to the end of its days, while even more attractive in appearance both to the fancier and non-fancier, and at the same time less delicate and difficult to rear. We therefore would rank the Black Mottle first in order, and the Almond as fourth in rank of the high-class pigeons; but still, as its admirers are more than those of all the other varieties of short-faces together, we must adhere to the fashion, and take it and its varieties first.

What has always struck us as being very remarkable concerning this pigeon is the fact, that while its admirers and breeders are so numerous and enthusiastic, we have never yet known—let us say six—even of the best fanciers and breeders, who could *agree* as to what was the correct standard of the bird regarding its colour. All the old breeders, and most of the younger generation also, will, it is true, if asked, state that the ground-colour of the bird "should resemble that of the Almond," from which it is said to derive its name. Without questioning one assertion or the other, we say that very little is to be gathered from such an answer, and have often thought it a great pity that young and inexperienced fanciers should use so little of even their own limited judgment, and swallow so readily *all* that is told them by their older brethren, many of whom seem to take some sort of mysterious delight in telling their neophytes a great deal of nonsense. Especially we would beware of a man who began by telling us there were no birds to be now seen equal to those *he* had when he was young in the fancy. But to return to our point: Ask such an old "chip" what the ground-colour of an Almond Tumbler *should* be like, and ten to one the answer will be, "The same colour as the shell of the almond." Hundreds of times have we heard this reply given; and it is to all intents and purposes useless, for the simple reason that there are many shades of colour to this "shell of the almond." Some, to be more definite, will say that the ground-colour should be that of the *inside* of this shell of the almond, and we have even heard it

said that the colour of the *kernel* of the nut is the correct thing. Few will agree with this last, since the kernel shows generally a reddish tinge, which scarcely any one would desire his birds to resemble. The next—the inside of the shell—is no better, if not worse, being of a pale yellow, or what pigeon-fanciers call a "mealy" colour. Finally comes the outside of the shell, which is to be seen of various shades of colour. Most generally, when fresh and smooth, this, too, is of the pale or mealy shade, but in *old* nuts, the shell of which has begun to moulder away or become crumbly, is seen a *deep* rich, but *not* reddish yellow colour, which we give as *our* idea of the proper ground for the Almond Tumbler; and if, as we do not question, the name was so derived, we take it that these old nuts were what was intended. There are, it is true, so very few birds seen of this rich yellow ground, that we do not wonder there are so many different opinions about it; almost every one of the many fanciers of Almonds saying and believing that *he* has got the correct thing. But if we are correct in our idea as to colour, we are not going too far in saying that we have never seen, first and last, more than about twenty birds of the proper or best shade of colour, and much less than this which, in addition to their correct feather, possessed in a good degree those other points or properties which constitute a good short-faced pigeon.

Of course, we give this as *our* opinion, and we have already admitted the great differences that exist. Our experience is, that scarcely any breeder of Tumblers will ever acknowledge that his birds are *not* of the most desirable shade of colour, even when he knows and has previously acknowledged (apart from his own birds) the correct shade. Indeed, there is so much difference of opinion on this pigeon, that even the fortunate possessor of the precise shade he most covets has comparatively little pleasure or satisfaction from it, since he can so seldom get others to acknowledge that it *is* right. Often he will be told, "Yes, it is very nice, but nothing to what *I* have had." Old breeders especially will often make such remarks; but it will then usually be found that they were never remarkable for possessing birds of any particular merit, since a real fancier who has produced such best knows the difficulty of it, and is most willing to acknowledge such merit whenever brought under his notice. The most truthful statement we ever heard made regarding the Almond was of a very different type. We cannot remember the exact words, but they were uttered some years ago at the annual dinner of the *old* Columbarian Society, meeting in London Wall, by Mr. Esquilant, one of the oldest and most respected members, and were to the effect that whereas, in his younger days, it was a rare sight to see as many as three Almonds in the Society's pens at one time, and even these would now be considered as wonderfully "plain" in all points, it was now nothing extraordinary to see forty or fifty fine birds at one of the meetings of the Society, all superior, especially in head, beak, and carriage. To the truth of the last remark we can testify, though we do not pretend that all these were of a good shade of colour, the prevailing taste of the members of that society having always, within our memory, been for head, eye, beak, and carriage. We believe this taste has perpetuated itself naturally; for each new member of the Society who became attracted to this class of bird, on seeing the style usually shown at the Society's meetings, would naturally become struck with it, and be led to emulate the wonderful head and beak properties he had there for the first time beheld. The Society's meetings have made many good fanciers in this way, and it is a well-known fact that its president has done more for this particular class of pigeon than any other individual yet known; nay, we might assert that Mr. George Chapman, to whom we allude, has bred more Almond, Agate, Splash, and Kite Tumblers than any one else in the United Kingdom; and although a few other breeders have at different times bred specimens of a better shade of colour, even these were in almost every case, directly or indirectly, on one side or the other, descended from his strain of birds.

We do not mention this fact idly, but in connection with the further fact (which we can vouch

for) that Mr. Chapman has kept and bred from the same strain of birds for nearly thirty years! Some will hardly credit this; but it simply shows both the adaptability of the Almond for close breeding, and what can be done by careful and judicious management of one stock. Had this great breeder crossed occasionally, no doubt he would have produced better coloured birds than he usually bred (at least to our fancy), as we have ourselves frequently put birds of his strain into other hands to be so crossed, which then produced all that could be desired by any one in Mr. Chapman's strain. That, however, is not the present point; we mention his experience for the lesson it teaches, and because within our own knowledge the fact that he had so bred for such a length of time, has led several into a fancy for this variety, who otherwise would never have dreamed of it, owing to what they had heard or believed of the difficulties in breeding and rearing the Almond Tumbler.

No pigeon being of a more artificial character than this, or more indebted to sedulous care and cultivation for many years, it is right to mention a few, to whom modern fanciers are much indebted, for having persevered with it during many years, and handed it down from the earlier breeders to our own day. In London, Messrs. Jayne, Esquilant, Hale, Hall, Ford, Gillett, and Merck, have been staunch supporters of the Almond for many years, and have, in their time, produced wonderful specimens. Singularly enough, few Scotch fanciers seem to have had any particular liking for this variety—Mr. Matthew Stuart, of Glasgow, Mr. Marquis, of the same city, and Mr. McKenzie, who resides in Ireland. We do not remember a single Irish fancier who ever kept Almonds for any length of time. We know of no locality, perhaps, where this pigeon has ever been more *generally* fancied than in the neighbourhood of Newcastle-on-Tyne. Several of the best breeders and judges of Almonds, who have visited the Newcastle shows, have had good cause to remember such visits, as regards their own special pets. We may also mention that there also have we found the best arrangement of Almonds we have ever met with, dividing them into the two classes which every breeder understands so well. At Newcastle, these are termed the "long-faced" and the "shaped" birds; the first being birds bred alone, or chiefly, for colour and feather; whereas, the really short-faced bird, as bred by what are called "head-and-beak fanciers," is called the "shaped" bird, on account of its beautiful form and carriage. Owing possibly to this greater exactness of definition, we have found less disagreement among these Newcastle fanciers as to what an Almond should be than in any other locality we ever visited, especially than in London; and must say that in general we have never listened to ideas we could more fully unite in than those expressed in free conversation by our Northumberland friends. We were particularly struck by their general freedom from bias, not seeking so much for any one particular good point, but requiring a bird to be really good all over before they would admit that it *was* a good one. And there is no better test of a "good fancier" than *that*, as any one who is constantly buying and selling has good reason to know. Last, but not least, we must mention our old friend Mr. Fielding, of Rochdale, who has never been without more or less Almonds for nearly a quarter of a century, and knows what a bird should be as well as any one we ever knew.

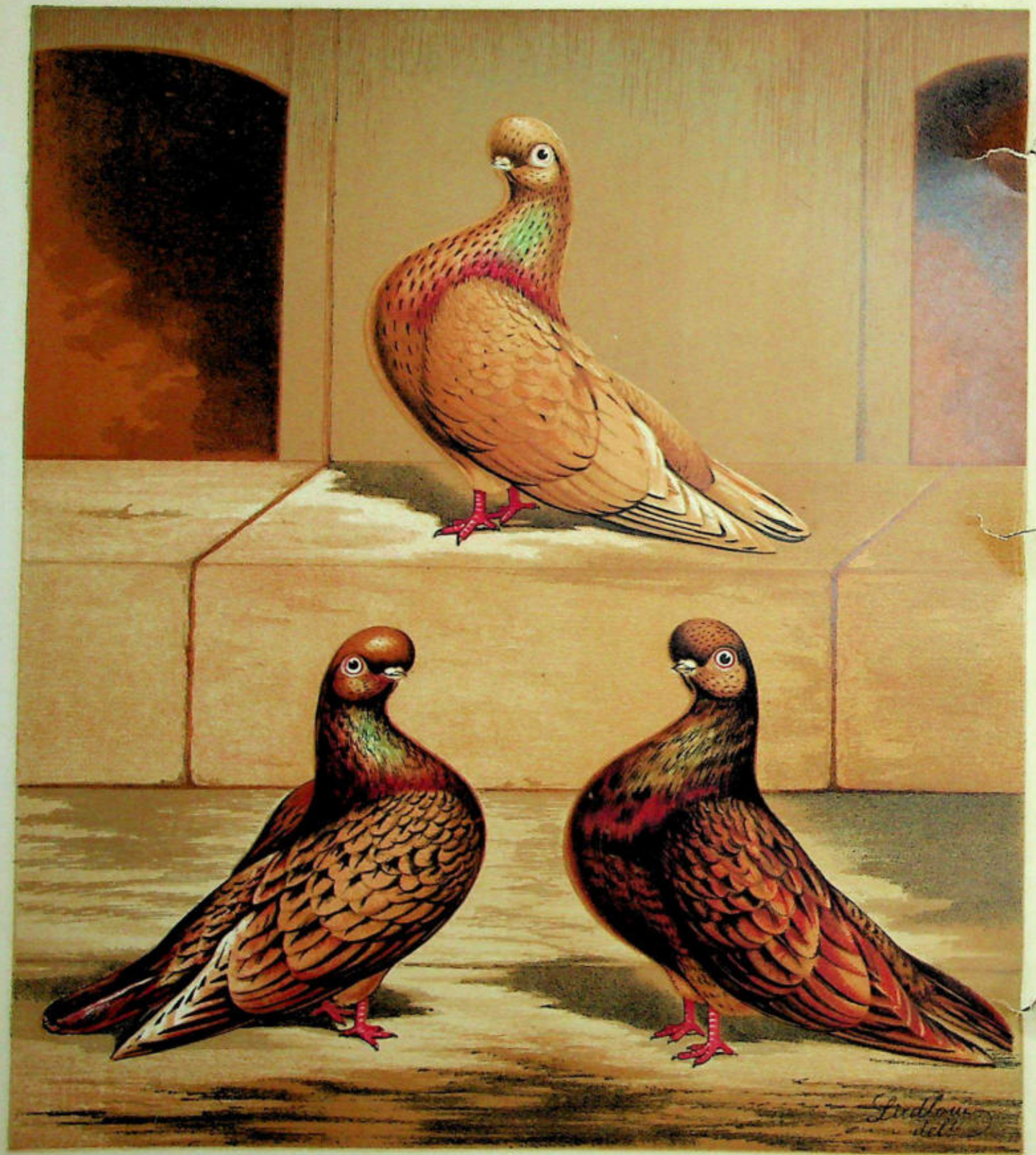
We will now proceed to give our views as to what an Almond Tumbler should be, and the comparative difficulty in producing each point.

I.—Colour or Feather.

The first and perhaps most valuable property, since from it is derived the very name of the bird, is the colour. As we have already remarked, there are so many different shades of colour that few understand the proper one; and we have even known many people who have made so little observation of their own upon the colour of their birds, that they believed them always to

remain the same shade of colour. But this is never the case, the best specimens of Almonds only retaining the standard colour for two seasons, and even this only when it is the correct shade we have described, viz., the rich yellow of the shell of an *old* nut, when it has begun to crumble or moulder away. Even from the age of three months, the young cock, which we will first describe, ought to show this desired shade of ground-colour, from the neck downwards towards the tail; shoulders, rump (we have before remarked that the rump of a pigeon is the lower part of the back, near the tail), and thighs all being of the *same shade of colour*. The greatest difficulty in this particular point of ground-colour is to breed birds with the rump the same colour as the shoulders, it being rare to see a bird which is not of a mealy (lighter) tinge on the top of the rump, while others are mingled with mealy and white on the same part. When this last is the case the bird is what is known as splashed on the rump, and is only fit for stock purposes, not being admissible in the show-pen as an Almond, unless all the other birds against which it is shown happen to be deficient in the same respect, or there is so little white that a moderate "plucking" prevents its being seen. This greatest difficulty, then, being supposed to be overcome, the rump should be of the same rich yellow ground as the shoulders. Before it moults its nestling feathers the rump will be all of one colour, unless splashed with white; but when it moults—say, about five months, amongst the new yellow feathers will be seen small ticks of rich black. When these are evenly distributed, the feather or plumage of the bird is said to be "well broken;" and the deeper the ground-colour the more and the sooner, usually, will the black feathers be seen. A bird with much of these black ticks is said to be "strong in feather;" and here, too, is a difficulty, many of these ticked feathers being often of a bluish or dun colour, which spoils the beauty of the whole bird.

Next come the tail feathers, and these, belonging to what are called the "standard" feathers of the bird—that is, which must be properly marked or broken for the bird to be a standard Almond—we show in the plate of Almond feathers, which will greatly assist both the eye of the reader and his understanding of the various technical terms. Each "standard" feather in an Almond—and these feathers comprise the tail feathers and ten flight feathers in each wing—must show *three* distinct colours. The foundation is the rich yellow ground, already spoken of, which should in the tail feathers extend from the root to *about* two and a half inches from the tip; there is no exact limit. Then we like to see a bar or splash of white somewhere about half covering the remaining space, which sometimes appears almost like a white bar across the tail, but so much regularity is rare. This white is intermingled with black splashes, and the larger the bar the longer will the bird retain a "standard" character as regards his tail. Then the last portion, or tip of the feather, should again show the yellow ground, and the nearer this is to the body colour the better is the bird as regards his tail. Black does not appear so distinctly in the nestling feathers, but as the young cock moults his tail the patches of black appear mingled with the white. It must be clearly understood that no particular *pattern* is expected of the different colours, either that in our plate or any other: hence there is no exact style of marking in Almonds, as in other "birds of feather," both in poultry and pigeons; and it requires one skilled in what really *is* required to appreciate perfection, since there is nothing for the general or ignorant eye. All that is desired is, that each "standard" feather *should* show the three colours in something like fair proportion, and as distinct and sharp as possible, one colour shading insensibly into another not being so much valued. In the flight feathers the arrangement of the colours is even more irregular and uncertain than in the tail; but the qualification for a "standard" flight is still the same—that each of the feathers shows the *three* colours as sharply and distinctly as possible. If they do this, the bird is a "standard" Almond, however those



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith.

ALMOND TUMBLER COCK.

1½ YEARS OLD

2½ YEARS OLD

4 YEARS OLD

colours may be distributed or marked on the feather itself. A feather may, however, have the three colours, and yet not be a good one, as they may be so run into each other as to be more of a grizzle than what a standard feather *should* be. Such a grizzled feather we would prefer only yellow and white, rather than a grizzle of three colours.

The tail of a good Almond is seen at its best at the age of about eighteen months. Many birds which are *too* deep in colour have their tails best at nine months; but, as a rule, these birds being so strong in feather, lose all or nearly all the white during their second moult, and thus lose the property of a "standard" tail. We may say, indeed, that according to almost universal experience, a too deep-coloured or strong-feathered bird loses this point in the second moult; so that, on this ground also, the soft rich yellow colour is infinitely to be preferred, as not only looking best in itself, but retaining its proper shade for a longer time, the strong-feathered bird only remaining a "standard" for *one* season; for when it has arrived at the age of two and a half years, at which it has become nicely spangled on the shoulders, and looks well *there*, it will be found to have lost the white, and to have only two instead of three colours in most of its flights and tail feathers, thus losing its "standard quality." Besides this, such a bird at the same period will have become far too dark to look well from the head to the shoulders, and also on the breast. In a bird of the correct soft yellow ground, on the contrary, it will be found that the head, neck, and shoulders remain nearly the same shade, for one season more than the darker shade, besides being through both far more beautiful to the eye, as the black-spangled feathers with their green lustre, intermixed with the yellow ground, make a most attractive picture.

But the greatest advantage of the yellow ground is, that it not only thus keeps for a season longer the proper colour on the head, neck, and shoulders, but also over the body, flight, and tail, and will sometimes be found to retain even perfect "standard" flights and tail for two seasons; which, as we have seen, the dark birds never do. We have even known one or two birds keep the standard colours in flights and tail for *three* seasons, though we must say this is exceedingly rare; but we have never seen a single strong-feathered bird that remained a "standard" Almond for more than one season. In making this statement, we do not refer to the Long-faced Almond, but to the Short-faced Tumbler alone. Some of the mealy-feathered birds will also retain the three colours in flights and tail for three seasons; but as the mealy feather is to be carefully avoided for many reasons, we do not treat upon it here. No breeder *wishes* for a mealy-feathered Almond, although such will come even from the best stock; when they do thus come, our advice to the breeder is, as soon as possible to exchange it for another, or at all events not to breed from it with any expectation of getting from it yellow-grounded birds.

The yellow ground, then, is to be infinitely preferred on all accounts. In the first place, it is rarer; in the second place, it looks better; in the third place, it retains the "standard" colour in flights and tail for a much longer time; and lastly, it keeps very nearly the same colour after the first moult, until after two seasons it finally moults too dark. Some of the strong-feathered birds look exceedingly well on the shoulders for several seasons, when their spangling looks very attractive; but the tail and flights at the same time will more resemble those of a Kite. Owing to this *progress* in the feather, as we may call it, we have often been puzzled to decide when even a good-coloured Almond looks its best; because, at the period when it is perfect in tail and flights, which is generally at about eighteen months old, it is rarely or never properly spangled with black on the body. At this period, unless the bird is of remarkably good carriage, the beauty of the "standard" feathers (especially the flights) is not seen until the bird is handled, and these standard feathers opened out, so as to show their properties. On this account, perhaps, upon the whole, much as we admire a perfect tail and flights, we rather prefer the bird a season later, when the tail

and flights are less perfect (being darker), if the body feathers are of a sound yellow colour, and well and regularly spangled. Our reason is simply this, that if the beauty of the bird can only be seen when it is handled, it can scarcely be called beauty; since, after all, the full beauty of the Almond in *other* points can *only* be seen in the aviary or the pen, carriage especially totally disappearing when the bird is held in the hand. After all, however, it is a matter of taste; and hence we have represented in the plates both a cock and hen at all three stages of their lives.

We think, in fact, that this matter of *taste* should be allowed more weight than some judges are in the habit of giving to it. For instance, though we have explained what is needed to make a standard tail and flights, we do not think an exaggerated value should be placed upon it, having so often seen birds which *looked* perfection in the pen, but when the flights and tail were spread out would show, perhaps, *one* Kite feather (all black, with a fiery glow on it) in the tail, or one or both of the flights. Very often that Kite feather, instead of spoiling the beauty of the bird in the pen, actually improves it, especially if it be the fourth or fifth feather of the flights. The bird appears beautiful all over, and no fault is to be seen until it is handled and the feathers spread out. Another bird, perhaps, is a standard bird in flights and tail, but of a mealy ground-colour. It then is a "standard," but its only beauty is this marking on tail and flights, which can *only* be seen in the hands. Now, certainly, we think that the beauty which appears at *all* times is of more importance than that which can only be seen while the bird is held in the hand. We would apply this rule to *any* faulty colour which appeared in the pen, since surely one or two faulty feathers, which need searching for, are not so bad as faulty colour all over the entire body, which is always seen. Besides this is the fact that the one bird will very probably produce valuable progeny quite free from the foul feathers, while the other is far less likely to produce birds of good ground-colour.

Referring, then, to our plate of the Almond cocks, the first representation, of a bird at eighteen months old, will be seen to possess standard flights and tail, but shows little or no spangling on the body. Next will be seen what we regard as the proper shade of ground-colour, at the age when, upon the whole, we think a good Almond cock looks his best, viz., at two and a half years. The body is now spangled, but the white has nearly or quite disappeared from the "standard" feathers. We must say that at no time have we ever seen a bird with such a well-spangled body as here depicted retain at the same time the standard colours in its flights and tail; birds rather lighter sometimes will. We have heard fanciers *say* they have had birds as well spangled as this, which still retained their "standard properties;" but in every case when we came to see the birds we found it was simply imagination, chiefly on the part of those who did not know correctly what a standard bird was, and were pleased to be shown where they were mistaken. The third portrait we represent as that of the same bird at four years old. It will now be seen to have assumed a somewhat deeper and darker shade of colour all over, and is what the left-hand bird would in nearly all cases moult into the following season. It will be seen there are *no* standard feathers now left, the white parts in the flights and tail having all disappeared, and given place to the black and the darkened ground-colour, now approaching almost to a mahogany tinge.

Thus we have represented what we regard as the proper shade of colour, first in the young bird, following it to what we think its best age, and finally to the stage when it must retire from competition of any severe character as too dark. In doing so, after what we said at the commencement, we hope it will be fully understood that we do not dream of expressing views which every one will agree with. Far from it; in the face of the many opinions we have alluded to, it would be presumptuous to hope that *we* could unite all fanciers in one and the same view. Still, as we have had in the course of our experience to study the wishes of some hundreds, both of



Vincent Brooks Day & Son, lith.

ALMOND TUMBLER HEN.

1½ YEARS.

2½ YEARS.

4 YEARS.

exhibitors and judges, as regards the question of colour, we think those who breed to what we have given, if they succeed in attaining it will be on safe ground, and will have little cause to regret it. We must, however, say that no one must expect to lay *feathers* of an Almond upon paper and expect them to resemble these plates. The feathers thus looked at will appear totally different; and what is aimed at in the plates is to convey, as far as possible, a fair idea of the appearance of the whole *bird* in life. In comparison single feathers will appear very dull and cold.

We have next similarly to consider the Almond hen. In the first place, the same cannot be said of her as of the cock, as to possessing standard flights and tail. We have often *heard* of such birds being seen; but having had more Almonds in our own hands for examination than any one else we know, and many of them, as regards mere strength of feather, being quite as showy as most four-year-old cocks, we say without hesitation, that we have *never* yet met with such a thing as an Almond hen which possessed three distinct colours in the flights and tail. When we see such with our own eyes we will believe in it, but not till then. Certainly we have several times been shown birds that were termed standards, but on careful examination, feather by feather, they invariably proved far short of what had been stated. Sometimes a hen at four years old (being naturally lighter-coloured, they take longer to get properly broken in feather) will be seen with a standard tail, but the flights will only have two or three standard feathers on one side and perhaps four on the other. Some will show the desired three colours on one feather and only two on the next, while the third is, perhaps, nearly all white. The *nearest* we have ever seen to a standard Almond in a hen, has been to show the three colours in the first *three* flight feathers of each wing, and this is all we ever expect to see, though why it should be so it is hard to say. It is, however, all that is needed to make the bird look perfect to the eye in a pen or aviary, and whenever we find a hen possessed of this much we feel more than satisfied, as these outer flight feathers are all which can be seen when the hen is showing off to the cock. Let her be ever so good in carriage, the hen seldom drops her flights so low as the cock does, so that even if she be faulty in the fourth or fifth flight feathers, it is never seen until she is handled.

We are of the same opinion with regard to the hen as the cock, with respect to the shoulders breast, rump, and thighs being all of one shade or colour, before the period at which she, like him, becomes broken or spangled in feather. If she has a mealy-coloured rump in infancy, she, like the cock, will never improve in this respect, but will show the variation in shade as long as she lives. Some persons attempt to persuade novices differently; but we never yet knew a single case of an Almond Tumbler of either sex with a mealy-coloured rump, which afterwards became of the right shade of colour. On the other hand, we never knew a single instance where the rump was of the right colour, but the bird was of a good sound colour all over, and never failed to become well spangled when the proper time arrived. Birds of the mealy ground-colour, even when afterwards they become darker, are nearly always found to retain a mealy edging to the feathers of the shoulders, as if each feather was laced with a lighter colour, which looks bad.

By referring to the plate, the colour of the Almond hen will be seen at her three different stages of life, in the same manner as we have before represented the cocks, and it will be seen how the spangling gradually increases, while the white decreases in the same way. The difference between the hen and the cock will also be seen; but we may here add that the *nearer* the hen can be obtained, both to the ground-colour and spangling of the cock, the more she is valued. This, of course, must be considered according to her age, and we have seen a few birds which could hardly be distinguished from cocks; but it is rare to see what may be called a well-matched *pair* of Almonds. The reason is simply that, owing to the lighter colour, it takes a hen nearly double the time to acquire the same depth of colour and spangling as a cock; and the breed being so delicate

in constitution and hard to rear, many die before they reach the age—four or five years—which it usually takes before the hen is thus properly spangled. There are, in fact, very few hens which make up into nice matches for good cocks at *any* age, the mealy ones least of all. The class of hens which usually become well broken in feather are those which, after casting their nestling feathers, show both yellow and white, with some signs of black, in their flights. If these feathers, especially the first six flights, show some signs of break of feather, the fancier may in due time expect a good hen; but if these flights show no break of feather, and the centre quill be all of a white colour, showing *no* trace of black, such a feather will never become properly broken, or show more than the two colours of white and the ground; and in nearly every case—as far as our experience extends we may say *every* case, but we do not pretend to know *quite* everything—will also never become well spangled on the body. Hence, it is the presence of *some* proportion of the Kite or dark feathering in the flight feathers which is to be sought as the indication of future good spangling; and the more of it is intermixed with the other two colours in these early flights the sooner will the body become spangled. The hen being naturally so much lighter, it follows that there is not nearly so much danger in her case of getting too much strength of feather, the difficulty rather lying the other way. It must also be understood, that while a hen not broken enough in feather may show too much want of spangling to be a good show specimen, it does not at all follow she must be of no value. She may have the very same blood as *much darker-looking cocks*, and be most valuable as a stock or breeding hen. We simply mention the marks of future show birds, that those entering this fancy may know when any bird is likely to prove an exhibition specimen (which may very likely breed too strong-feathered *cocks*), or a good breeding hen. Often, again, Almond hens will be seen having a large patch of Kite-coloured feathers on some part of the body, which is of course a "foul" mark, and makes the bird unfit for close competition; while others will be met with showing one or several of the flight feathers on one wing alone of a solid Kite-colour, which also is foul marking, and excludes a bird from close competition, unless shown expressly for head, beak, and carriage points alone, in which they are often very superior. But either of these classes of birds are most valuable for breeding.

CARRIAGE.

We come next to the second property of the Almond Tumbler; and though we are quite aware it is not so difficult to produce as either colour, size, or formation of head and beak, we have always noticed, from the first day we ever *did* notice this pigeon, that there is no point about the bird so strikingly attractive as good shape and carriage. Colour requires a skilled eye to appreciate it; size is to the uninitiated no point of beauty at all; and even head and beak require *some* conception of the fancier's ideal to understand; but if the bird has really good carriage, as represented in our plates of each sex, it is strikingly beautiful to all eyes. On the contrary, the finest specimen of any variety of the Short-faced Tumbler, if it does not possess good carriage, or—as it is called by the Newcastle fanciers—if it be not good as a "shaped bird," it does not look well either in the show-pen or the aviary, and its good points can only be understood and seen when it is taken into the hand. We consider, therefore, we are quite justified in ranking as a second property that which is so striking to the beholder, be he fancier or not a fancier at all. For example, let six birds be placed in a pen which show nothing in shape and carriage, and another which is fine in this particular. We care not who sees them; he will at once select the one specimen as *the* bird out of the lot, the most attractive, and the best bred. Should the six birds be even grand in head and beak qualities, and good in colour, while the other bird is very middling in both, still the well-shaped bird will appear

superior, and even—so deceptive is general symmetry in leading the eye to suppose symmetry also in detail—appear actually better than the others in head and beak, in which it is actually deficient!

This point is apt to be less esteemed, because it is less difficult to breed than the others. Indeed, if the amateur once becomes possessed of birds with good carriage, there is very little doubt of the progeny having the same good quality; while, on the other hand, if his birds are deficient, and are descended from others which show the same fault, it will be rare for him to obtain a good-carriaged bird. This quality, then, is one of the most *surely* hereditary—that is, if once you get it you can pretty easily *keep* it, which is not so true of the others. Still, we must confess, much as we admire head and beak, we would prefer a bird of only middling quality in these points and of super-excellent carriage, to another with the most extraordinary head-points and no carriage. Our reason is the same in principle as that given under the last heading. We know that the most extraordinary-headed birds we have ever seen have been more or less "assisted" whilst in the nest, so as really in great degree to *make* the head what it was, though, of course, very few breeders will "own up" to such proceedings. Still, it is known to be done by nearly every successful breeder of short-faced birds; and knowing it, we would not set the same value upon *any* property which is capable of being partially produced or greatly improved in this artificial way, as upon one which owes all its beauty to nature, and *cannot* be produced or improved by art. In a commercial point of view we would of course place far more value upon head-points; but we are here giving our honest *opinion* as to the properties of the bird, and were we even shown a bird perfect all in other points, but possessing no carriage, we would still consider it but a second-rate pigeon.

The proper carriage of the Almond Tumbler is with the head thrown far back in a saucy manner, so as to show to the utmost the broad and prominent chest. The fuller the chest appears, so much the better. Then the flights should trail or hang down, and the more they do so the more do they show both their own colours, those in the tail, and on the rump; whereas, a bird of bad carriage conceals either the perfections or the faults in those important parts. Shortness of leg is connected with good carriage, but is described separately hereafter. All the essentials of good carriage will be seen at once on referring to the plates.

THE HEAD.

We come next to the head, which most fanciers consider the property of most value in the Almond. The first essential point in a good head is height of skull, which shows off well either in a front, side, or three-quarter view, as the various representations in the plates sufficiently show. Some of these positions are, in fact, almost deceiving, and those who have not seen birds of really good carriage in *precisely* the same attitudes may doubt if any real birds possessed such height as there shown; but this is simply the effect of the position, the heads being very carefully drawn. The skull must also be wide, which can, of course, only be seen from a front view. Many heads are too wide for their height, however, and it is only those possessing a good height which can show the nicely-rounded top which is so much admired. The front of the skull, or forehead, must form a good and sudden "stop," as it is called—that is, the skull or head should rise perpendicularly, or at right angles, from the root of the beak; not sloping back as in other pigeons. Finally, the length from front to back of the skull should be as short as possible. Some birds have a kind of projection at the back of the head. This adds to the apparent size of the head, but spoils its appearance completely, and looks bad in any position, making the skull appear long.

The head should be full at the sides. Very many birds do not show this sufficiently, and

in that case never look so "finished" as when the eyes are full and almost projecting, which makes the head look round on the side, as well as at the front, back, and top. The flat-cheeked birds look mean by the side of a full, rounded, bold head of this kind.

Birds too broad in head are often also very flat in the skull. Such are called by fanciers "square-headed" birds, from the bad appearance they present, and especially on account of the flat and square look of the front of the skull. A high-skulled bird, on the contrary, as it becomes two or three years old, generally acquires a "set" forward of the feathers on the forehead, which makes it appear actually to hang over the beak, and adds much to the apparent shortness of face. Such birds also nearly always have another point, which is greatly admired in the head of an Almond, namely, fullness of muff, or the feathers on the cheeks below the eye projecting like the muff on a Polish fowl or a whiskered Bantam. This is a grand point, and makes the head look larger than it really is, either in pen or aviary.

The head should be proportioned to the size of the body, a large head being preferred. Of course no one can expect to see the head of a small bird equal to that of another with larger body; but should the head of the small bird be equal, or nearly so, to that of the larger one, its head is to be considered the best, unless it has been tampered with. This point needs care, or a pigeon may win the point for size of head unjustly, merely because it is altogether a larger and coarser bird than the other. And in all cases the form of the head must be considered before mere size.

The form of the skull being by most fanciers considered of such primary importance, owes much in general, as we have already hinted, to the assistance of art whilst in the nest-pan. We shall, in the proper place, describe the best method of giving this assistance, without which no fancier can possibly compete with others to any purpose; but the result of this practice is that it is very difficult now to determine the real quality of a bird. This was one of the reasons why we expressed a wish that less value were set upon this property as compared with others which could not be improved; and, as the matter now stands, the breeder's difficulties are great. We may be asked whether we would not prefer a bird of good carriage, with its head well "made-up" into a first-rate show form, to a plain natural head? Well, there is one purpose for which we would prefer it—or rather two—to *sell* it, or to *show* it; but for breeding purposes we would infinitely prefer the honest-headed bird (that is, of course, if we knew it to be so) whose best and worst qualities we could see, whereas, we cannot say what the "made" head would have been had it been let alone. Many will say that a really bad head cannot be made a really good head, or at least cannot be made larger. It is true that as regards most of the improvements we have hitherto spoken of in this work, a bad point cannot be made really good. But this case differs; and we can assure our readers that the head *can* be made larger, broader, higher, and of the proper shape. We know it from experience, and shall, of course, describe the manner in which it is done; and still further, this is a case of improvement which cannot possibly be *detected*. No judge can say *positively*, as in most other cases, that a head has been tampered with; and hence he is not warranted in disqualifying it. All practical breeders know by experience what we state, and few beginners but what are startled by the progeny from some of the wonderful-skulled birds they have purchased turning out very different from the parents. This has to our knowledge discouraged many who would have remained in the fancy had they only happened to begin with honest-headed birds. Still, it is the fact that the progeny of even the best of these will not compete successfully if untouched. The standard in skull is so high, that, except in the rarest cases, natural birds *cannot* reach it; for which reason we shall endeavour to show all alike "how it is done," and are not ourselves thorough-going "head-and-beak" fanciers.

THE BEAK.

The beak of the Almond should be whitish, or pinky-white, similar to the colour of the finger-nails, though it is not common to see the beak of the cock a perfect colour, his being usually correct in the lower mandible, while the upper is more of a Vandyke-brown, or even sometimes black. This is, however, a comparatively unimportant point, only to be weighed in close competition, as we would not object much to any bird unless both mandibles were black, or what is called a Kite-coloured beak. This is a great fault, as it gives a coarse appearance, however good otherwise the bird may be, but it is only found in the hard-feathered birds, or those which are too deep in ground-colour. The grand points in the beak are the size and the shape; as a bird may have an exceedingly short beak, and yet it may be bad. The kind of beak most esteemed, but also most rare, is known as the Goldfinch beak. When perfect it resembles that of the bird from which it takes its name, on a small scale, and, if not too long, adds much to the fineness of the head. But some of the Goldfinch beaks are so long that they become wry-beaked, one of the mandibles crossing the other. Such a beak must always be kept trimmed with the scissors, so as to be as close-fitting as possible, otherwise the bird, being unable to preen itself properly, will soon swarm with vermin, and become cankered in the lower mandible. Hence birds having Goldfinch beaks at all long must always be well looked after, and attended to on the least sign of the beak becoming wry, and on the whole we prefer as the safest form of beak that which more resembles the half of a barley-corn. This class of beak being shorter scarcely ever requires attention, and always looks well; and if the skull be high, short, and good, it shows as well as anything the beauty of the Short-faced Tumbler. The upper and lower mandibles should be of about the same thickness, close-fitting, and straight. There is a kind of beak to be particularly avoided, namely, that in which the upper mandible appears much more massive than the other one, hanging, as it were, a little over it, and showing a hook or curve downwards at the point, something like the beak of an Owl Pigeon. No matter how short such a beak is, it never looks well, giving a coarse appearance to the head at best, and in addition, being nearly always accompanied by a coarse wattle, which is about the worst fault that can be found in a Short-Faced Tumbler, giving beak and head altogether a common coarse look which every fancier will refuse to look at. This fault is rather apt to be hereditary, so that we advise all our readers carefully to avoid either a coarse beak or coarse wattle, unless they *particularly* require the bird for the breeding of colour only, and on that account are willing to run the risk.

Length of face is measured from the front of the eye-wattle to the point of the beak. We decline to give any standard of length, as others have done, knowing well that such is deceptive, and that a bird may be really very short in face, and yet measure rather long. This depends chiefly on width of skull; for it is obvious that in a very broad-skulled bird the "bevel" to the point of the beak will make a great difference in length of measurement, so that a short-faced bird, if broad in skull, might really measure longer than a quite common-faced pigeon. The best-faced pigeon is that which would appear shortest if the skull were supposed to be cut in two longitudinally, and the length measured on this ideal median line.

THE EYE.

The eye of the Almond should be white, or as many fanciers term it, "fish-eyed." The more the white shows round the pupil of the eye, the more attractive does the bird look. Some of the darker birds have a reddish shade, which gives a fiery appearance; while other dark birds have little or no white, but are what is called broken-eyed, which looks nearly as bad as being

black or bull-eyed. Sometimes this broken appearance will come from the bird catching cold in the eye when young; if so, it scarcely ever gets better, but always has a watery look, and the eye will often be found closed up in the morning; while, not unfrequently, a small cataract will form, which ultimately causes complete loss of sight. On this account, a pure white eye is not only to be valued as pretty to look at, and as a desirable standard point, but as a sign that the eye is sound and healthy, and not liable to disease.

A fine large white eye adds much to the appearance and size of the head, especially if the eyes stand out prominently from the head, as they should do. Some birds have so little of the wattle or skin round the eye, termed the eyelash, that it can scarcely be seen. This is generally accompanied by a small eye, which makes the cheek appear flat. On the other hand, a conspicuous eyelash is generally found along with a full and prominent eye, which makes the whole head or skull, if properly shaped above, appear as round as a marble. This is the proper shape of the head; but no one must expect to see it fully developed until eighteen months old. It will improve in size much longer—even till ten years old, if the bird live so long—but if not of good formation at eighteen months old, will never afterwards become so.

Much as we admire a nice white eye, still we would never compare it to any of the other properties of *standard value* in importance, were we judging Almonds.

LEGS AND FEET.

The thighs of the Almond should be so short as not to appear, and the legs also as short as possible. This property can hardly be exaggerated, as the shorter on the leg a bird is the more beauty of carriage does it show, trailing its flights low down like a Sebright Bantam, and thus exposing to view the back, rump, and tail. In a bad-carriaged bird, the three standard colours cannot be seen in the flights and tail without opening them. But a bird with short legs and good carriage walks, when aroused, nearly on tiptoe (the feet, too, should be as small as possible), and thus, hanging its wings, and showing the mixture of black, white, and yellow in the standard feathers, exhibits the last and finishing beauty of the Almond Tumbler.

We have now to consider the breeding of this fascinating little bird; but it is first necessary to mention and describe the various colours which occur in breeding it, and which are used again in crossing. Probably the Almond was first formed by crossing and combining these various colours. At all events they are of constant occurrence, and when properly "Almond-bred" birds, are as valuable in breeding Almonds as Almonds themselves.

First, we will take the Red and Yellow Agate Mottles. Many of these in their nestling feathers appear to a careless eye precisely to resemble in marking a regular Black Mottle; and we have known many such purchased by amateurs, who thought they had obtained a fine cross for their breeding of Mottles; of which, as they will be treated of in the next chapter, we only need say here that a Mottle is a bird of the same colour all over, except a rose of small white spots on the shoulders of the wings, and with or without other small white feathers on the back. But every time the Agate Mottle moults it shows more and more white, so that such a purchaser's hopes are soon blasted, and not seldom in such cases the seller has been reproached for having trimmed the bird, whereas, all that was wrong was the purchaser, and perhaps seller also, not knowing the difference between a true Mottle and an Agate Mottle which is Almond-bred. Yet this is readily to be seen. Though at first sight the Agate in its nest-feathers may show all the colour of a true Mottle, if the flight and tail feathers be opened, the *quill* of the feather will be found either altogether or in places white, or nearly so, and the colour of the feather itself will be seen to be in



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith.

ALMOND TUMBLER SUB-VARIETIES.

ALMOND SPLASH

RED AGATE SPLASH OR MOTTLE.

YELLOW AGATE.

KITE.

places a little grizzly towards the centre, especially in the flight. Often also there will be a feather nearly all white in the tail or flights, besides the white markings on the body. Such a bird it is which so often deceives inexperienced amateurs, and is termed an Agate Mottle. Briefly, it is a bird which possesses more white than the true mottle feathers. On the other hand, the true Mottle, when the flight and tail feathers are opened out, shows the feathers, both in the quill and the web, of a sound, distinct colour, be it red or yellow, the quill being free from white and the web from any grizzle.

There are also met with a lighter class of Agates, which are nearly all white, and sometimes even all white. In the latter case the birds seldom have pearl eyes, being more generally black or bull-eyed, and being thus, can hardly be called anything but White Almond-bred Tumblers.

There are again what are known as whole-coloured Agates, red or yellow; which are frequently confounded, by those who do not know the difference, with whole-coloured Reds or Yellows. There is, however, just the same difference between the whole-coloured Agate and the whole-coloured Red or Yellow, as between the Agate Mottle and the true Mottle. On opening out the quill-feathers of the wing and tail, the true whole-feather has the quill and web of the same sound colour as the body; while the whole-coloured Agate will have the quill nearly white and the web a little grizzled. We point out these differences because they are important to those who wish to breed *sound Reds* or *Yellows*

Next we may describe the Splash or splashed bird, which is termed by some the Almond-splash, and by some are even called Almonds. The difference is however great, and lies in this, that the ground-colour, instead of being yellow as in the true Almond, is mixed with too much white, and the break of the feather nearly all black, so that the bird is short of yellow. The tail and flights also, instead of showing the three colours, have in most of them only the black and the white, with perhaps an Almond feather here and there only. Some of these splashed birds appear beautiful Almonds from the head to the rump, but there the true Almond ground ceases, and the want of yellow on the rump, and the too much black and white in the tail, betrays the Splash. Of course these birds are often most valuable for the breeding of well-spangled Almonds.

There is in the next place the Dun; and it is very singular that nearly all the Dun short-faced Tumblers are hens. In all our experience we do not think we have met with half a dozen cocks of this colour. When these birds are of the shade known as *Golden* Dun, they are most valuable for breeding from. These Golden Duns are such birds as are of a much lighter shade—in fact a pretty good yellow—on the breast, compared with the darker dun of the body. Some of these Golden Duns are slightly mottled on the rump; this we prefer to those showing no white.

Next to these is the red or yellow Whole-feather. These, to be true, must be of the same colour throughout the whole body, and especially on the rump; and it will in fact be found that if good in colour upon the rump, there will be little the matter anywhere else upon the body; though, as we have said, this outward appearance is not sufficient, and no bird is really a Whole-feather unless the quills of the tail and flight feathers are the same colour as the body.

Finally, there is the Kite, perhaps the most useful colour of all, especially when of the right or best colour, for there be Kites and Kites in Almond-breeding. To outward seeming, these birds are what most would call black; but there is a bronze lustre, or as others call it, a red or fiery *glow* over and through the black, which makes the true Kite-colour. This is especially noticeable close to the quill feathers; but if all over the body so much the better.

All these colours are produced, more or less, in breeding Almond Tumblers, and are used in breeding them, grand specimens having been produced with every one of them judiciously mated. Of course, one or other of them *may* have been bred for several generations, red from red, and so

on, in which case they are of far less value; but when *Almond-bred* birds, they are of the greatest use. No doubt the Almond was produced by combining them all, though how, and when, and where, no man can now say. All we can do is now to give our advice in pairing. It will be readily understood, after what we have said, that perhaps a larger element of real *chance* enters into the breeding of Almonds than of any other pigeon. No one can speak with certainty, or say that such a pair of birds, mated with the most sedulous care, will breed thus and thus. All we can do is to say what we have known produce good results, and may be expected to do so again. But, above all, much depends upon what each bird was bred *from;* and we are supposing each, in the following remarks, to be bred from Almonds. Again, if the produce of any pair be really good of either sex, and especially if those which are Almonds be of good colour, carriage, and head properties, we strongly advise never to separate a pair which has been thus proved to "hit" well, so long as they will breed, or continue to breed thus satisfactorily. No one, again, must expect to see pairs of Almonds in the nest, but must be satisfied with one in most cases. We have known pairs of Almonds produced through a whole season, but it is very rare indeed to breed good cocks and good hens from the same pair—that is, good colour as well as head and beak. On the other hand, should a pair fail to produce what the breeder desires; for example, should he get no Almonds, or if he does, find them poor and mealy in colour; then, if the cock be a choice bird, we would not advise losing the whole season with him, since if the first pair be Almonds and of a bad colour, the rest are nearly certain to be the same, though they may be excellent in every other property; but by all means in such a case we would re-match the birds otherwise and try again; for it will be found needful to seize *every* chance in Almond-breeding of obtaining what benefit is possible from any particularly good bird.

The most usual, and a very old plan of breeding Almonds, is to breed an Almond cock with a Kite hen, and many first-rate specimens have thus been bred, particularly exhibition cocks; since, as in most other colour crosses, the progeny are very likely to be the same, or still Almond cocks with Kite hens, though in some cases the reverse happens. Then to breed Almond hens we would, if possible, and for the same reason, reverse the process, putting a good Almond hen to a Kite cock. This is now seldom done, but is one of the best matches we know for breeding what is so rarely seen and so difficult to produce—an Almond hen of good sound colour all through the body. Of course, in these and all other matches, the breeder will get, and must expect, a large proportion of other colours, such as Red and Yellow Agate Mottles, Red and Yellow Agates, Whole-feathered, and even Duns. The cross between Almond cock and Kite hen is rather too dark to repeat often.

It sometimes happens the breeder has a strain of birds so valuable, both for its own properties and its power of transmitting them, that he is anxious to breed from them without a cross. In this case each parent should be crossed with one of its own progeny the following season. If the cock should be of a rather deep colour, and the young hen a Yellow Agate, Agate Mottle, or Splash, either would be a good match; and if a Whole-feathered Yellow, or even a Golden Dun, so much the better; but on no account a Kite, which, for obvious reasons, is unsuitable for the darker or very sound-coloured Almond cocks, breeding often too dark, especially when of the same strain. For a sound-coloured hen we would recommend a similar cross with one of her offspring of the same lighter shades, and we have known both breed remarkably well.

The cross above mentioned between a Kite cock and Almond hen is not easy to procure, as *good* Kite cocks are *always scarce* to be got; but we like it much, and when the Kite has plenty of the bronze it makes the progeny almost always of a fine rich ground-colour, if they happen to be Almonds. We know no cross so likely to produce good hens; and, in fact, *all* hens bred from this cross—be they Agates, Splashes, Yellows, Duns or what

not—we would consider as most valuable for breeding, if of fair quality in other points, even though they might grow a trifle coarse. Hens should, in fact, if good in head and beak, never be too hastily condemned for this fault, as they often very foolishly are. Our reason for this advice is that nearly all the very small Tumbler hens are bad breeders, some laying but few eggs, others small yolkless ones, and others again being too weakly to lay at all, but dying egg-bound, unless relieved. Others again only lay a pair or two during a whole season. If, however, the hen be of good size, she can be depended on to lay six or seven pairs of eggs, without at all affecting her health for the following season, while her offspring will give far less trouble in rearing, and be as a rule a more vigorous class of birds. The young bred from small weakly hens, as is well known, give the greatest trouble to rear, and even when reared cannot stand the least exposure. Again, the offspring of weakly hens never look so close and tight in feather as those derived from strong birds. We would, however, on no account breed from such a strong hen with a large cock, as the progeny would infallibly be oversized; but, as the finer points come most from the cock, and constitution most from the hen, we would, so far as possible, choose a small, handsome cock of good carriage, and put him with a strong, motherly hen, with a view to getting fair-sized birds of a vigorous constitution.

We will again suppose the breeder has an Almond cock, which has become too dark for the show-pen. Such a cock makes a fine match for either an Agate Mottle, a Splashed Agate, a Splash, or even a Dun. A bird in his prime of feather we would give either an Almond Splash hen, or a whole-coloured Yellow Agate free from white feathers. This last is a match we are particularly fond of, not unfrequently producing pairs of Almonds in the nest, and often of splendid colours too.

Take again an Almond cock too mealy in feather, but which it is desirable to breed from. We would advise matching him with a Red Agate whole-feather, if such can be obtained; if not, then a Red Agate Mottle, the less white about it the better. If such could not be obtained, we would match him to a Kite hen, and the more of the Kite or bronze tinge she shows on tail and flights the better, and the more likely will the progeny be to be of good colour. We look upon this last as more of a chance cross than any of the others; still, we give the best advice we can, for the sake of such as may have these faulty-coloured birds, and wish to know what affords them a fair chance in breeding from them.

Again, we will take a class of birds which are often at command for breeding, viz., those which have too much Kite blood in them, as shown by their dark and rich mahogany colour, rather than yellow. These birds are often found in the lofts of breeders who keep breeding in succession from Kites and Almonds, without using the lighter colours. They are so strong in feather as to be equal for breeding depth of colour to a Kite cock, the Kite being chiefly used either to strengthen the colour of mealy-feathered birds, or to assist a too soft-coloured hen. Such a dark cock, accordingly, makes a splendid match for a soft-feathered Almond hen, which shows no break of feather in body, flights, and tail, of which there are always more to be had than of the desired colour. This is, therefore, in general an easily-managed match, and will often produce birds which will surprise the breeder, particularly as regards a real ground of the true and proper colour. The want in the hen being break of feather, which the cock helps to supply, and both being Almonds and Almond-bred, we have seen more birds of the rare and proper yellow ground-colour produced in this way than by all the other crosses we know of; and we believe it was the mode of breeding adopted by Mr. Hale, who produced more of this coveted colour than anyone else we are acquainted with. His next fancy was the same dark class of cock with a well-spangled Splash hen, and this, too, answers well.

We come next to the Splashed Almond cock, which is a most useful bird when bred with hens of any of the following colours:—First, a really sound-coloured Almond hen will in most cases breed something good. The next to suit him will be a Red Whole-feather hen, or, still better, a Yellow Whole-feathered Agate; but, if it can be got, a real Whole-feathered Yellow will be best of all. If none of these hens can be obtained, we would put him with a good-coloured Kite hen; but should the Kite be nearly black, we would not use this cross, only attempting it if the bird showed plenty of bronze.

Next comes the Whole-feathered Yellow Agate cock. The proper hens to breed with this colour would be, first, an Almond-splash, or an Almond if well broken or spangled in feather, or a good-coloured Kite.

Next again is the Whole-feathered Red Agate cock. The hen most suitable for this bird would be an Almond; whether young or old, good or bad in colour, does not much matter, since no cross is more apt to improve the colour of the progeny of a faulty-coloured Almond hen than the Red Agate. So also will the real Whole-feathered Red, if bred *from* Almonds, and it is very seldom the real Red does come from other parentage.

There is again the real Whole-feathered Yellow cock. This is very seldom to be met with, and is a most valuable bird; in fact, were there more such, there would be far less trouble in breeding birds with the proper yellow ground, and we have often wondered that breeders have not tried to breed a strain of Yellows and Reds, having in the Red and Yellow Agates so *nearly* what is wanted. When a breeder, then, is lucky enough to get a really fine Yellow cock, he will have little trouble, if he mates him with a well-spangled Splashed hen, as the hen will give the spangling, while the ground will come from the cock. No bird would, of course, suit this class of cock so well as a good Almond well broken in feather, but the difficulty, of course, is to get an Almond hen well spangled, which is necessary, for which reason we put up with the Splash. The reason of this we have already hinted at; it is simply that an Almond hen rarely becomes properly spangled till from four to six years old, and even more rarely ever breeds at such an age. She might, if let alone, perhaps; but in most cases, when any amateur is fortunate enough to possess such a hen, he sends her to be exhibited, and then, if successful, all chances of her breeding are gone. Hence we see very few Almond hens of the proper colour to breed with a Yellow cock; since, by the time they have got the colour, their breeding days are over, and most of such birds fall into the hands of the great exhibitors and dealers, showing being all they are then good for. It is needful to be plain about this, and we repeat distinctly that no one in purchasing must or can *expect* an Almond hen to be a breeder, if she has become in feather what she is expected to be in order to gain honours. We know there are occasional exceptions, but they are very few. What we say is an almost universal rule.

Some fanciers we have known match up two good Almonds; that is, a cock and hen each fit for competition. We will not affirm it is so in all cases, but we can state with confidence that when this is done, the result is very seldom at all satisfactory, the progeny being generally either light-coloured Agates or Splashes, or too often nearly all white. But even worse than this is the fact that birds from such matching often come, which are what is termed "bladder-eyed." This singular term denotes birds which, instead of having pearl eyes like the parents, have large projecting eyes quite black, and perfectly blind. There is, therefore, great risk in breeding birds together. both which are really good show Almonds, and it seems as if it was necessary to have a considerable difference in feather in order to get the colour desired. In all the various matches, it will be seen that the one bird supplies what is wanting in the other, a bird too light being matched with one too dark, and any bird containing only two of the three desired colours being always

matched to another containing an excess of the third. Such a plan is the most likely to produce the coveted but rare result of *two* Almonds in the nest. But one thing above all others should be carefully avoided, and that is, breeding together two *soft*-coloured Almonds, the progeny being generally Mealy Chequers, Chequered Duns, or bull-eyed White Splashes.

Red Agate-mottle cocks should be mated to Almond or Kite hens, and the better the colour of each, the more likely to produce valuable progeny. We would breed Yellow Agate-mottle cocks to the same hens as the Red Agate-mottle, both as a rule producing very similar offspring when mated to the same bird. But to speak frankly, the Almond is such an artificial or composite bird in colour, that no one can say with certainty that *any* two pigeons mated together will produce Almonds. We have known many cases were birds were mated, of such a quality and matching that the owners made sure of success; yet not one single bird came of the desired colour the whole season, while the very same cross as regards colours, with another pair, produced nothing *but* Almonds. And still more strange, to all but those who are accustomed to the lottery of Almond-breeding, the very same pair of birds the following season have precisely *reversed* these results, the one which had failed the year before *now* breeding Almonds, and the other not! That is the reason of our laying stress not only upon what a bird *is* in matching, but on the actual colour it has at that time attained from age. But even with this qualification all we can do is to state what are the most promising matches to adopt. Of course any one who has bred his own birds can attain much more certainty than in employing stock of whose breeding he is ignorant, as two off-coloured birds which are in themselves a suitable match, if the produce of Almonds direct, are much more likely to produce Almonds than when they are themselves the offspring of off-colours.

Under these circumstances, if a breeder finds any given pair produce pretty generally even one good bird and one plain one, he should let well alone and feel satisfied, be the other bird in the nest Agate, Splash, or anything else. But one precaution should never be lost sight of, which is, never to breed from birds, *both* of which have coarse beaks and wattles; since, if this fault once get into a strain, it takes incalculable time and trouble to breed it out again and obtain birds with fine beaks. No bird can look finished which has this fault, and it is one which cannot be remedied by any art, at all events as regards coarse wattles: we have known before now some improvement made in beaks, though it is very difficult. It will be found difficult enough to obtain fine beaks even from parents all they should be, without introducing coarse parentage, which we would never do even on *one* side, unless the colour was so bad we could not find what we wanted in any but a coarse-beaked bird. In such a case, if the choice offered, we would let the coarse-beaked bird be the hen; when, if matched with a small cock (small birds being generally fine in beak and wattle), there will be less chance of a bad result. This is especially the case if the small cock be a late-bred one, as it will almost always be found that the smallest, most delicate-looking, and handsome cocks are bred after the month of June. It is comparatively little trouble to breed good-coloured birds which are large and coarse in shape: the difficulty is to get the true Almond colours with the small and beautiful formation so much admired; and this difficulty arises from so many of the smallest and best birds dying in comparison to the stronger and coarser stock, that it is often impossible to get a small bird of the colour and other points desired.

While late-bred cocks are, however, as a rule the best, and preferable even for breeding, on account of their power of transmitting the delicate high-bred characteristics to their progeny, we would very strongly impress upon all who take a fancy to Almonds the importance of choosing hens which have been bred early in the season, and especially for breeding young hens. Late-bred hens not only never lay so well, but even when they do lay, and there are birds in the eggs, it will often be found that they do not hatch, owing entirely to the want of constitutional vigour. We can

hardly say how often we have not heard the complaint, from one or another Almond breeder, of "Just found another pair of fine young ones dead in the shell;" the mishap being usually attributed to either the parents or foster-parents having allowed the eggs to become cold, while it is rather the sheer want of strength in the young birds to break the shell. We advise, then, to breed early for hens; and if these birds become too large and coarse for exhibition purposes, they will, nevertheless, if that be their only fault, be of the greatest value as stock-birds. If hatched not later than May, they will moult all through—body, flights, and tail—the first season, while the late-bred ones often keep very loose in feather all their lives, owing to their not thoroughly moulting, or being so long over the process. The difference in plumage alone between early-bred hens and late-hatched ones is remarkable, and quite enough of itself to cause a strong preference for early-bred birds. Of course, for a late-bred, or small and weakly hen, we would select a strong, and, if possible rather larger, but not too large, early-bred cock, so as to impart more vigour to her progeny, and enable them to hatch; for breeding from both small and late-bred parents is the most disheartening thing we know of almost in the whole pigeon-fancy, and has disgusted many who would have persevered and succeeded, if they had only known the cause of their repeated failures to hatch and rear the young. Of course, there are numbers of Almonds purposely bred late, both for exhibition, and for sale to the many who admire a "pretty little bird." Such are often eagerly purchased by people who, *knowing* them to be young, think they have got most valuable breeding stock, till they find their mistake; while many dealers are very glad to sell them, knowing their frailties, and that they will probably never produce anything to compete with themselves, and that little or no blame will attach to them. This it cannot well do, since the birds duly lay; and when the eggs are found unfertile, or young ones half-formed, or fully-formed and dead in the shell, bad sitting, or insects, or some other cause is sure to be supposed, instead of the simple truth that the pair of birds have no strength of constitution.

Early-bred hens have another advantage, in having more strength of feather, so that they often moult out fit for the show-pen a season before those hatched late. Since hens are so much longer coming to perfection, this is a very great advantage, and when added to the infinitely greater ease in rearing through the summer season, far more than outweighs the probability of getting them rather larger; since it is probable that an equal number at least of small birds will *live* of those hatched early as late. For breeding hens, then, we sum up our advice in a recommendation to choose a strong, vigorous hen, even if rather large; to correct this by a small fine-looking cock, late-bred if necessary; and to breed in good time. To breed exhibition cocks, we would, on the contrary, rather prefer a largish cock, with as small a hen as could be procured, and for much the same reasons.

Many Almond breeders will, of course, say that several of their best birds have been hatched late. We do not question it for a moment. But they are apt to forget the trouble and anxiety the birds have been to them, and how many have perished to a few reared. When skill, and patience, and knowledge have been acquired, much can be done; but we know by long experience that nothing is so thoroughly disheartening to a young fancier as to obtain numbers of birds and be unable to rear them. And as we know that Almonds are *not* so very difficult to breed and rear when judiciously mated and managed, we have tried, at the risk of being wearisome, to explain the cause of so many failures.

Another very great mistake is the common opinion that Almonds can only be bred and reared in a *warm* place, where they are never exposed to the cold. On the contrary, such a place is just what often gives nearly all the trouble, since being thus confined and kept warm, will soon make any breed so delicate as to cause more trouble than one in a hundred will long continue to

bestow. No breeders rear so many Almonds, and with so little difficulty, as those who allow their birds a flight in the open air, and those few who can allow them entire liberty do best of all. No artificial heat is required for Almonds more than other pigeons; provided the loft be only dry and free from draughts of cold air, that is sufficient. The most successful breeders we have known, in fact, have had but poor accommodation for their birds at night, but have made it up by attention and giving them their liberty in the open air. Such a loft and aviary as we have already described will answer well for Almond Tumblers, and the birds should be allowed to go into the aviary at their own pleasure in all weathers.

But the grand point in successfully rearing Almonds is to have a good staff of feeders. We have spoken of this in the case of Carriers and Pouters; but with Almonds it is of still greater importance, owing to the far greater weakness of the birds, and the worse quality of the parents as nurses. Not unfrequently there are Carriers and Pouters which can and do rear their own young—good Short-faces scarcely ever, in our experience, the very fineness of the beak making good nursing impossible. The Tumbler also usually gets very soon tired of what little feeding it *can* do, and leaves its young in a very few days, which, of course, is death, if no other care be at hand. Large, coarse birds will sometimes feed very well, and we have known a really good bird do so, but we would never risk it. It is not wise or safe even to allow them to sit upon their own eggs, since, if the hen be weak after laying, as she often is, she does not sit closely enough; and at best their small and delicate bodies scarcely impart sufficient heat. This is the reason that Almonds are often, when sat on by their own parents, scarcely fully formed when the due hatching-time comes; and if so are often lost, since few pigeons, but specially few Almonds, will sit more than a few hours after the time is expired. Thus birds are lost which really would have hatched had the eggs been warmed by more vigorous sitters. Any fancier who wishes to do well, therefore, ought to have *two* pairs of feeders for every pair of Almonds he is breeding, so that one pair or the other may be sure of laying at the same time. It is best to match one pair of feeders about two days after the Almonds, and the other pair two days later again, when one or the other pair will be almost sure to come right. Then the eggs are to be transposed, the feeders hatching the Tumbler eggs If, however, after all, the Tumblers should lay one or two days before the feeders, it will be best to let them hatch their own eggs, shifting the young as soon as the feeders hatch, and letting the Tumblers have the common young ones for a few days longer to feed off their soft meat, which they will do much more quickly than their own young, owing to their greater vigour. We have heard fanciers doubt the wisdom of shifting, on the ground that they had known the common young ones which were nursed by the Almonds live, while the young Almonds which had been shifted died. But this arises from one of two causes. In the first place, the Almond is a very delicate bird at best, and under *any* nursing dies more frequently and easily than any other pigeon; hence it may perish with a good feeder, but would with equal certainty, in that case, have perished if left alone, and even sooner. The proof of this is the fact that all who have fairly tested the matter, by trying to do without feeders, have failed in rearing any, except perhaps one or two, with infinite trouble. But a more common reason of young Almonds dying, even with good feeders, is the fact that they are often so very weakly as to be unable to lift up their heads to be fed. No feeder can fill a young bird in this case, and is apt to get tired of and abandon it. There is little chance of saving such weakly birds; still it can sometimes be done, by making a thin gruel of milk and fine oatmeal, and taking a little in the mouth, putting the beak of the young pigeon between the lips. If the young Tumbler will take some food in this way, and the feeders or parents will sit upon it for a day or two to keep it warm, until it gets enough strength to lift up its own head in the nest for food, there is hope of it; and if it lives long enough to be properly fed by

the old birds, can then generally be reared. Another good food to be given in the same way is the semi-fluid white of a half-boiled egg; indeed, we have found this most strengthening and nourishing of all, and have saved birds by it that without would certainly have died. Birds thus snatched from an early grave seldom make what can be called strong ones, of course; but it is often well worth all the trouble, even if they only live a few months, in order that the breeder may know what class of birds a pair which he has perhaps mated for the first time produces, either in feather or other points; for very few can tell the difference between an Agate, Almond, Red, or Splash, when in the nest-pan, until about the age of three weeks. If then the young be the first produced, it is often well worth while to save a bird even for that brief space, to ascertain the character of the produce. Other colours can be foretold. If the beak be black it is sure to be a Kite; if the beak be white or light horn-colour, and the bird show no down on the body, but the skin be bare, then it will be a Yellow: if not, a light-coloured Yellow Agate; but for other colours there is no certain rule till about three weeks old.* We know some experienced breeders can tell rather sooner in general; but often even they are deceived by a bird they had fancied was an Almond turning out an Agate or Splash. Of course, as soon as the flights and tail-feathers appear, if there be a break in the feather—or, in other words, if two colours plainly appear—then it must either be an Almond, or an Almond-splash.

The class of birds which make the best feeders for Almonds are plain Bald-heads or Beards (*i.e.*, not Short-faced), Turbits, English Owls, Magpies, Jacobins, &c. All very heavy-beaked birds are obviously unsuitable; but beyond this the variety is of little importance, the essential points being good feeding qualities and a tame and confiding disposition. The last is as important as the first, for the young Almonds need much watching, and a wild bird, though a good feeder, is apt to fly off the nest in alarm when disturbed, and perhaps will not go on again till the young bird is fatally chilled. The feeders should always be kept in a separate loft where possible, for fear of even a chance cross, which would be unmistakable in its effects, much more a permanent *mesalliance*. As to the loft, we have before said that those already described will answer well, as will any other good plan. It is only especially necessary with Short-faces to have the nest-pans on the floor, because the hen is the weakest of all varieties when laying, and very frequently is quite unable to fly up to a shelf; so that unless properly accommodated, eggs are apt to be laid on the ground and broken. We have only to add, respecting breeding and rearing, that it is as important to give the best food and plenty of flying exercise to the feeders as to the Tumblers themselves, simply for the reason that their soft food is then more abundant and of better quality, and that the young birds, being so delicate, demand *everything* in their favour, except injudicious "coddling," that can possibly be afforded them.

We have only to add, in relation to the breeding of Almonds, that on account of the greater

* The author of the "Treatise on the Almond Tumbler," published 1802, from which Eaton copied so much of his work, gives, at page 44, the following "Marks by which to ascertain the colours of young birds in the nest: if the beak has no mark on it, but is quite white, the bird will be an Almond. If the beak is white, and has a little patch of black somewhere about it, this will probably be a Splash; but should it be an Almond, it will most probably have a great deal of black about it. If the beak be crossed on the point with a black stripe, or cross, rather inclining to blue, the bird will be a Black, and not a Kite. If with a deep blue mark, it will be a Blue, which colour is very objectionable; and if the pair should throw this colour more than once, they should be parted, and were they mine I should part them the first time. If with a black mark, rather inclining to or having a faint tinge of red, it will be a Kite, and most likely a rich one. If with a slaty-coloured mark, it will be a Dun. If with a straw-colour, a Yellow. If with a deeper straw-colour inclining to red, an Agate. And if with a deep red, it will be a Red, or Red-mottled bird." This may have been partly true at that time; but at the present day we know many of these statements to be contrary to fact, and we do not think more can be safely affirmed than we have said in the text above, and do not in fact see how any rules can be correct in all cases for birds bred so variously as are Tumblers.

delicacy of the hen, more than usual care should be taken to have all the arrangements so that there may be as little quarrelling as possible, and that none of the hens be persecuted and bullied by strange cocks. Such mischances may spoil many eggs, and greatly injure the hen. A good look-out should also be kept to see if any hens appear egg-bound, a mishap to which this variety is more subject than perhaps any other breed. And finally, the bath should be carefully attended to, not only as regards the water being kept fresh and clean, but that there be a block or brick on which the birds can stand; otherwise, a weakly bird may be unable to leave the water, and get drowned. We repeat this piece of advice, because we have known the misfortune actually to happen.

Before being exhibited, the beaks of the birds are always reduced by trimming, if necessary; but this we can treat of most conveniently in a few words upon exhibition at the close of our remarks upon all the Short-faced division.

Next we must describe the process to which nearly all skilled fanciers subject the young birds whilst in the nest-pan, in order to straighten the beak and "make" a good head. When the bird is about six days old it is taken in one hand, while with the other the beak is caught between the thumb and forefinger, and gently bent upwards, so as to make it appear quite straight. The same



Fig. 44.

is done on the tenth day, again on the fourteenth, and lastly about the twentieth. This makes the beak straight, and if the bird has a short and good head, many content themselves with it; but most fanciers, while they perform the above operation, at the same time press back the front of the head, at the base, with the thumb-nail, which helps to make what is called a good stop; the skull, being thus forced inwards, growing wider and higher. This, however, is a bungling piece of work unless very carefully done, as it tends to make the front of the head too flat, and shows the signs of the operation too plainly. But some of the most skilful fanciers have hit upon a great improvement, which consists in using for the operation an instrument of wood, shown in Fig. 44. The form of the handle is of course quite immaterial, the front being the important part. This is shaped into a curve, concave both in front and on the under side, and bevelled back at an angle from the lower edge. This is pressed against the bottom of the forehead four or five times, beginning about the tenth day, and of itself makes the beak come straight; while, if carefully done, it makes the skull so much wider, higher, and better in shape, as would scarcely be believed by any one who had not known and seen the birds before being operated upon.

In thus describing the mode of "making" the head of a Short-faced Tumbler, we expect to arouse a great deal of angry feeling, since it has been kept as a secret by many fanciers. We do so, however, in accordance with the whole plan of this work, which is to place all that we know, so far as description can do so, within the reach of every reader: and this we do, not only that all may be upon the same level as regards these points, but because, in our opinion, this free publicity is the most likely means of putting a stop to all such questionable proceedings. We are quite aware many will deny that such processes are used, and we are sorry to say we have heard some of the strongest of such denials from parties who, to our personal knowledge, adopted it to even a *greater* extent than most others, and whose social position should have kept them from the denial, if not the perpetration of the cruelty. In fact, very few indeed will acknowledge it until

caught in the act, after which denial is, of course, useless; and that is in fact one mode in which we acquired knowledge of the trick. But we also know the experience of other fanciers who, with the best stock, never could produce the same head and beak properties as their rivals, until, either by good fortune, favour, or bribery, they got possession of the grand secret, after which all their difficulties vanished, though still denying their own were tampered with.

But we have just called it "cruelty;" and we do so because we are bound to say emphatically that it is a *cruel process*. We have been most unfairly attacked already for stating things that are commonly done, as though we defended and advised fraud. We appeal to our own pages. In some cases, such as cutting away the spouts from a wattled pigeon, where the operation is needed for the bird's own comfort, we refuse to regard it as any fraud at all, and would have all open and above board, and teach the young amateur how to relieve his bird with equal success as his older rival. In other cases we have defended and recommended nothing, but simply recorded facts as to what *was* commonly done; and, in doing so, we contend that the obvious tendency of making them generally known is to facilitate detection, and thus check whatever may be dishonourable. But in this case let there be *no* mistake about our feeling on the subject. We regard the process as a cruel and barbarous one, though we cheerfully admit that the amount of cruelty varies a great deal. If the bird have a naturally good head, being bred from good, yet honest-headed parents, it requires very little treatment indeed to make the head an extraordinarily good one; and if carefully and gently done, in this extreme case it may perhaps be almost granted that there is no cruelty at all. And we know how many will "take us up" here, and affirm that such is the case with all the "really good" heads shown, and that no such head can have been made out of an inferior one. We are very sorry to say we must explicitly contradict such a statement. We have seen and purchased birds for their "grand" heads, which we afterwards found were the produce of "pleasant-headed" pigeons (a "pleasant" face or head in the Tumbler fancy is one a little better than that of a common flying Tumbler), and we have seen the whole course and result of the operation in many other cases ourselves, and have seen very plain heads "made" into remarkably good ones. These plain birds, then, require the operation so much and so often before they are "done enough" to pass as good Short-faces, that the signs can often be detected in the finished skull by a careful eye, and the cruelty in this case is very great. One proof of this is the simple fact that not a few die under it, though this usually happens with fanciers who try to do too much at a time. But when this is not the case, the bird's life is still shortened, as will soon be found on comparing the age attained by one severely "made" with that of any honest-headed Tumbler. The causes for this are several, and we state the chief, as they will clearly point out the real nature of this barbarous treatment. In the first place, the beak being bent upwards, while the base of the skull is crushed inwards, the passage of the nostrils is partially closed, and if the bird operated upon is of a plain type, almost entirely so. This interferes, of course, very seriously with the breathing powers, the bird being obliged to breathe as much or more through the mouth as by the nostrils, and even with this assistance (which is most unnatural to all animals, and has many well-known evils even in man) the poor sufferer is often seen panting, with the wings hanging loose, as if in the last stage of consumption. We have seen this often in birds not more than three years old, which is nothing for a Tumbler, as these birds, when healthy, live to a greater age than any other of the high-class pigeons. Further, the upward bending of the beak often causes the sides of the mouth to be much more open than when left to nature; and in this opening the dust and air are apt to corrode the surface and cause canker, as already described in other varieties. Should this happen, still worse follows; for as the nostrils are almost sure to be also somewhat affected, and owing to the want of breathing power cannot be cleansed by the expulsion of any matter which

may have formed within them, as is the case with a healthy pigeon, they become quite closed. Breathing is then confined entirely to the already diseased and foul mouth, which rapidly causes disease of the lungs, as may often be discovered on dissecting a bird which has died in this way. The eyes often suffer also, though not always, of course. Still, comparatively few birds which have been *much* operated upon will be found to possess two nice clear pearl eyes, being more frequently seen as what old fanciers call "dull" in eye. This condition most usually, though not always, is caused by tampering with the beak and skull; and a bird thus affected is very often in trouble, the eye being very apt to discharge and then get closed up, unless carefully looked after by bathing with warm water, and, after drying, anointing the eyelids with grease. When the weakness comes from tampering, there is no hope of ever curing it. Of course, weakness in the eyes is often found in birds which have not been tampered with; but it is seldom accompanied by any watery discharge, which probably depends on the stoppage of the nostrils already alluded to, and is pretty generally connected with more or less approach to the immensely large, and generally black eyes, already described as "bladder-eyes," and which arise from breeding together two birds too extra-good in head to be a safe match, showing, thereby, that Nature will not allow us to go beyond a certain point in any particular without taking her revenge.

Our readers will now understand our reasons for not setting such extraordinary value upon head and beak as many fanciers. We know the commercial value of these properties; and, if our readers only consider how we are flying in the face of every private business interest in what we here state, they will, at least, give us credit for honesty and sincerity in our desire that those properties of the bird, which are really hardest to be produced, and which must be really bred in the bird, and cannot be imitated by art, should be given higher rank than they have had, and be considered of more value than what is so much and so extensively the result of mere manipulation. We are not going too far in saying that at least three-fourths of the birds we see in various show-pens owe more or less to the doctoring we describe. And hence, however we may value as a commodity a property we find of special value, in writing our opinion as *fanciers* for the guidance of others, we must say what we think; and if the result of these plain remarks shall be to change the values put upon these respective points by most judges and fanciers, and to re-arrange them in an order which is more fair to honest exhibitors, and to the pigeon as nature and skilful breeding alone can make it, we shall feel much gratification. Let no one, however, suppose we advocate birds with no head properties. We do admire a good head, and would call no bird a good Almond Tumbler which did not possess a high and round skull. We would have it as good as possible; and our meaning simply is, that it is the placing such an *extravagant* value upon a point which *can* be greatly produced by art, which has caused it to be so generally produced in that way; and that by placing, as we advocate, the chief value upon points which are even harder to breed than head and beak, and must be either bred in the bird or not be seen at all, we shall get with least trouble and difficulty a better state of things. In what order we would rank the various points we will next state.

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bred as good as it is perhaps ever likely to be; but there is still a wide field open to the fancier for the improvement in beauty and regularity of feather, since no one ever yet saw such a bird—even the best-coloured one yet exhibited—but he could easily conceive of one *far better*, either in ground-colour, or regularity and perfection and evenness of marking. We therefore number ourselves among those fanciers who think that feather should have the first place in judging Almonds.

Next we would place shape and carriage; but having sufficiently given our reasons before will not here repeat them. We will only add the further one, that by giving prominence in judging to points of really æsthetic beauty, which can be understood by any artistic or educated eye, we are more likely to *popularise* a fancy, and obtain for it fresh votaries and admirers. We have seen the truth of this often; and as the proper carriage and shape of the Almond is so beautiful and saucy-looking as to be admired by almost all, as well as the skilled fancier, we would give this property the second place.

We next value fineness of beak. What! put beak before head! Call it virtually "beak and head," instead of "head and beak!" says some one. Yes, we would do so; since, however good a bird may be in skull, if coarse in beak (which is always accompanied by a coarse wattle) it can never look well, but must appear as a coarse bird; and still further, following out our old line of argument, no amount of art or trickery can "make" a coarse beak into a fine one. It must be bred in the bird; and a bird with only a fair head, if with fine beak and good shape and carriage, will always look superior to the best skull in the world if with a coarse beak. We consider, then, that these three properties—colour, form and carriage, and beak—which can *only* be obtained by careful and judicious breeding, should have the highest value in judging the Almond Tumbler.

The size and shape, but especially the height of skull, should come next. We would not have it supposed we regard this as an unimportant property. Far from it; and were it safe from manufacture, we would not quarrel with those who put it first. It is a grand point; but we need not repeat our reasons for giving it the fourth place.

Next should come the eye, by which, of course, we chiefly mean the colour of it. Some would place this property higher. Our reason for not doing so is simply that imperfection in it is no sign of bad breeding. We have often seen specimens unusually perfect in other points, but somewhat faulty in perhaps one eye, which might be slightly broken, or even both. We have seen such passed over by the judge, and the honours given to birds faulty in nearly every other point, but perfect in this. We shall always consider such judging wrong, for even the best eyes generally suffer a little after the age of four or five years; and to pass birds by for failing in a point of this kind, which can only be seen upon close inspection, which does not come by bad breeding as a rule, and can be so easily remedied in the progeny, for birds which, while better in that, are far behind in all the really grand properties of the Almond Tumbler, is to disturb all our ideas of what judging ought to be. It is to go on the system of weeding a class by marking out all birds in which any *definite* fault can be found—an easy plan, well fitted for indolent, incompetent, and captious folks, who are only too thankful when they can find an *excuse* for dismissing any good bird from a class, and so narrowing the field, but little suited to encouraging the sound breeding of pigeons. We say the fault is easily remedied in the progeny, though in this we contradict the "Old Fancier" who wrote the "Treatise," and who says (page 92), "A bad eye, in my opinion, is the worst property a bird can have, and the most difficult one to counteract." He appears, however, to have had chiefly in view the black, blind, or faulty eyes produced by matching too high, the evil effects of which we have pointed out, while we refer here to want of perfection in the white. This may be sometimes imparted by the parents, and is often also caused by the "making" of the head; but in either case, such a bird, if mated to a Red or Yellow Agate Mottle, a Whole-feather, or

even a Kite, will almost always breed perfect eyes if the young be not tampered with. We contend, then, for our old principle, of giving to *every* point its fair *relative* value in judging; and unless we arrive at this we shall never get any recognised mode of judging this bird, which seems in a more unsettled state than all, scarcely two judges agreeing about it. Whether our remarks may produce any greater uniformity we do not know. Many old fanciers, no doubt, will protest at being what they call "dictated to," but this is far from the spirit in which these pages have been penned. In what we have said as to the value of head-points, and the way they are produced, we have simply, against all our own private interests, stated *facts;* and if these facts should lead to a reconsideration of certain points, and a higher value being set upon such as are really genuine and hard of attainment, such a result will be owing to the facts themselves, but even then no *one* point must be made all in all. In the absence of such a system, the present state of things is perfectly ridiculous as regard the judging of Almonds, each judge seeming to go by some particular point he is fond of, and in so doing causing an amount of ill-feeling and unjust suspicion it is hard to calculate. For example, an amateur goes to a dealer (we will frankly admit that we speak from painful experience) and purchases a pair of his best Almonds. Then at some show, where they do not hit the special fancy of the judge, they are passed over. He is annoyed, comes back to the dealer, and eventually the birds are repurchased by the latter. The amateur now determines he will only purchase actual winners at a show, and accordingly he attends the next large show within his reach; when, going up to the winning pen with a view to purchase, he finds them the very birds he had once had and returned to the dealer. Very likely some friend tells him he "is not up to the dodges of these dealers yet; that these birds are now *got up* to win," &c., whereas they are shown precisely the same as before, but under a different judge (we have known it happen even under the same judge, but put it as "mildly" as we can). If this is thought too strong a picture, we go further, and say that in one particular case we have good cause to recollect, a certain pen of Almonds, with the very same competitors (all habitual frequenters of shows know how the same birds will meet again and again), changed places in this way *five times within seven weeks*, under three different judges, so that anyone may have and show the very best pair ever seen, and yet can have no certainty that he will win under the present system, which seems only adapted to making exhibitors savage, since *no* one can at all reckon upon being successful. How many amateurs have been driven out of this beautiful fancy by such a state of things we should be afraid to say; *we* know of enough to make us feel and write strongly upon the point. We insist that no one is able, or has any business to judge Almonds, until, whether he agree with our values or not, he is able to estimate and compare fairly *all* the good and bad properties of the good birds in the class, without being obliged to take refuge in such reasons as "this bird had a broken eye," or "this one's head was just like one that Mr. So-and-so gave first to at such-and-such a show," or "there was *something striking* about the first-prize bird," all which we have heard alleged as reasons for the most ridiculous awards.

We will finally give our estimate of the proper relative values, taking as our standard the young bird of the first year.

POINTS IN JUDGING YOUNG ALMONDS.

Feather: viz., ground-colour, 3 (of which reckon rump, 2, and head, breast, and shoulders, 1); markings on flights, 2; ditto on tail, 3; break or spangling of feather, 1 .	9
Shape and carriage	6
Beak: shortness, 1; fineness, 2; fineness of wattle, 1	4
Head: height of skull, 2; roundness, 1; breadth, 1	4
Eye: round and white	2
Legs and feet (shortness and smallness)	1
	20

A few remarks as to the correct application of this table may be useful. In the ground-colour we allot two out of the three points for the rump, because we know if that is right all the body will be, and it only remains to give the other point to the neck and shoulders, which are also important. Thus, a bird cannot win all points for ground unless good on neck and shoulders. Both points for flights should be reckoned to the bird nearest alike on each side in the break of feather; and a bird having a Kite feather on either of the three outside flights should lose one of the two points, and if it had this fault on both sides should not be reckoned any points for flights, but lose both (it must be remembered we are here considering *both* young birds under twelve months old, as shown against each other). Some consider a white feather a worse fault than a Kite feather; but we would consider them both alike. If the faulty feather was in the fifth or sixth flight we would let it pass, especially if a white one, as it can only be seen when handled. Of the three points for tail, we would reckon one for ground-colour, and two points for regularity and standard quality of markings on each feather; so that a bird good in *either* point could not lose more than two out of the three points. Thus, no bird which is good only in one colour-point could rank high, but must really have several good qualities to make a high average for colour.

The six points for shape and carriage must be fairly estimated. This will be, perhaps, the most difficult task, giving a bird not first-class in this property, but still having some merit, two, three, four, or five points in lieu of six, as it deserved. We might, perhaps, divide this property, as three points for full breast with head thrown far back, two for trailing of the flights, and one for the rise or fulness on the rump, which gives a finished look and shows off the plumage.

The points for beak need little explanation. A beak both coarse and long will lose three points. There would have been no need to divide the beak-wattle, but that the making of the beak sometimes checks the growth of the wattle, and keeps that fine. We believe this is *always* the reason of a fine wattle on a coarse beak, whenever it occurs; but, as we cannot positively say it is so in every case, we give one point for this property, which will not be enough to overpower a bird really better in other points.

As regards the head, we must say that if we knew it to be *honest* we would give it the same value as shape and carriage; but knowing how few are so, and that others can be made to deceive the most skilful judges, we think it best to give only four, which we have found quite enough to correctly rank the birds, while it does not allow so much advantage to an artificial bird over an honest one.

Of the two points for eye, one should be reckoned for roundness. Some birds have oval eyes. Such would lose one point; but an eye bad in colour should lose both points. Legs and feet need no remark.

The only difference we would make in the adult bird, would be to add two points more for proper break or spangling of the body-feather, and count two points less for tail; since no old bird can have a really "standard" tail, and should not therefore be allowed to beat another for it by more than one point. On the other hand, a bird two, three, or four years old, and showing little or no break or spangling of feather, would lose three points for the want of this pretty property, as we think it fairly deserves to do, since it will then exhibit this point if it is ever going to do so, and no old bird looks well without it.



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith.

SHORT FACED TUMBLERS.

BLACK MOTTLED.
RED MOTTLED.

BLACK
YELLOW MOTTLED

CHAPTER X.

MOTTLED AND WHOLE-FEATHERED TUMBLERS.

THE genuine Mottle has always been a favourite variety with us; and we have often wondered at the carelessness of fanciers in allowing materials which might so easily be employed in producing it to pass unnoticed, or, at least, without employing them to restore birds which so many old fanciers have spoken of—the Red and Yellow Mottle. We will speak of these first, as coming most naturally after the Almond, and in fact, as we might say, *lying dormant* in that variety, which increases our surprise at such beautiful birds being nearly extinct. We have, before we knew better, travelled long distances to see birds which were *called* Mottles; but in nearly every case, as we have explained in the last chapter, we found on inspection that they were simply Agate Mottles; and in all our long experience we are sure we have not had, or seen in the possession of others, as many as six pairs of true Mottled Tumblers: that is, of the Short-faced, of which only we here speak; for we know several successful breeders of the long-faced Red and Yellow Mottle who have attained a perfection in feather any Short-faced breeder would be quite satisfied to reach. This is the more noteworthy because there are every day produced, in the course of Almond-breeding, so many birds, such as Red and Yellow Agates and Whole-feathers, which might very easily be employed in breeding Mottles, far more than in the case of the Black Mottle, which seems almost the only variety attempted to be bred. Some of these Almond-bred birds are so very near the required thing as even to be mistaken for true Mottles, and shown as such (whence the many wild goose errands we have spoken of); but as we explained before, on examining the quill-feathers there is found somewhere or other the *white*—either in web or quill of the feather—which denotes the Agate taint, and to get entirely rid of which is just the very task, the difficulty of which gives the zest to the breeding of this pigeon. Did no one seem to care for the pigeon itself, the scarcity we speak of would not astonish us; but we know scarcely a fancier of Short-faced Tumblers who does not repeatedly express his admiration of a good Mottle, and an earnest wish to see more of them. And hence, knowing from experience how very easily they could be bred from existing stocks, we will state clearly how it should be done.

The birds available are Red and Red Agate Whole-feathered, and Yellow Agate Whole-feathered birds—we cannot add Yellow Whole-feathers, for the simple reason that *they* are as rare, we may say, as extinct, as the true Mottle itself—and the Red and Yellow Agate Mottles. The first thing to bear in mind, in selecting birds of either colour for breeding, is to use none but such as are of a good *sound* colour. This is the chief point of all; and there are lots of Agate Mottles which it would be folly to meddle with, on account of being pale or washed out in colour, if Red, or a mealy-coloured Yellow. To breed such birds for Mottles will be time and trouble thrown away; but if the birds are a deep sound Red, or a good solid Yellow ground-colour, the chances are very good. Supposing, then, the breeder has obtained a Red Agate Mottled cock of this good colour, which has, say his head, breast, flights, tail, and rump red, and the rest, or say his shoulders and back, white, or a mixture of white and red—if mottled like what is desired in the proper

Mottle so much the better, and such marking is by no means very rare—such a bird should not be mated to a Yellow, but, if possible, to a Whole-feathered Red. Failing that, we would choose a Red Agate Whole-feather—that is, not showing any white on the surface—if possible; or if this too is unavailable, showing as little white as possible. The reason of this matching is that the white feather is by far the strongest; and if the male bird has enough of it, it will be found that this alone is quite sufficient to impart enough, if not too much of it, to most of the progeny; all that is wanted in a Mottle being the rose of small white feathers on each shoulder, and the few feathers across the back, called the handkerchief-mark, which give it its name.

The next great point to attend to is to reject every bird which has a white patch on the front of the head. This is termed a blaze on the face; and we can say without hesitation that in breeding for Mottles of any colour (our experience has been chiefly in Blacks, but we have seen enough fully to satisfy us the rule is general) one of the hardest things is to get them entirely free from this foul mark. Such a blaze, if of any size, cannot even be removed by trimming; and even when slight, though it can be removed so as to look respectable to careless inspection, the plucking of even such few feathers in so conspicuous a place can easily be detected. We are not going too far in saying that, at present, when prizes are given to Mottles, the signs of such trimming can be detected in the great majority of cases; and the scarcity of feather in front of the head is generally attributed to the birds having "moulted late in the season," whereas it would be nearer the truth to say they had moulted so remarkably "late" as the day before the show. Some cut the feathers off at the root, so as to save trouble all the season, but the moulting season brings back the foul feathers. In the case of Blacks, some exhibitors, who seem to think it wrong to pluck away the offending blaze, prefer to *blacken* the foul patch. For this purpose one man prefers a little oil mixed with black varnish; another, grease burnt over a candle; another, Indian ink; and others, lamp-black mixed with oil, while some use caustic; but this latter does not become a good black, and grease has to be used as well to make it black. A very clean white handkerchief judiciously employed will detect most of these frauds, and they can only be attempted with the Black Mottle; for even were Reds and Yellows plentiful enough to exercise the ingenuity of these clever people, nothing, so far as we know—and we think we should have heard of it—has yet been discovered which will successfully imitate the colour of red and yellow pigeons. Honest people need no such provocatives to careful breeding; but we state these things so that even those fanciers who by no means stick at trifles may see the absolute necessity of avoiding this grave fault, which is so surely hereditary as to give infinite trouble to get rid of, if birds are once bred from which possess it. We would far prefer a bird perfectly free from white on the front of the head, even if it present very little indication of the marking desired on the body, since this latter can be improved and bred up to what is desired with far more ease than the blaze can be got rid of.

In supposing a Red Agate Mottle cock for the match here spoken of, we need hardly say that if a real Red Mottle itself can be had it will be all the better; and, in either case, the nearer the bird is to the desired marking on the shoulder the less trouble will there be in breeding what is sought. If a cock and hen, such as we have described, can be obtained and matched, there is a very fair prospect of obtaining something not a long way off the mark the very first season. Certainty of course there can be none; indeed, uncertain as is the breeding of Almonds, the breeding for Mottles is if possible still more so, and we advise no one to commence such a task unless he has patience to persevere through the many vexations and disappointments which he will certainly meet with. There is one thing in his favour: Red and Red Agate hens, especially if of a good size, are usually good breeders. But now to return to the progeny of such a match as we have

described. Should there be a Red or Red Agate and a Mottle (or something near one) in the nest—perhaps a cock—though it be faulty in marking, being either too light or too dark on the shoulders, yet, if it be free from a blaze on the face, it will be a most valuable stock bird, but if it show the blaze must be discarded, unless the fancier has no others to breed from, and no means to purchase better. If one of the young Red or Red Agate hens be whole-feathered, and also free from a blaze, then we would breed her with a cock resembling the father already described, or if that fails, to the parent bird himself; and she being, as it were, already half-bred to his mottled marking, will be still more likely to reproduce it. If there be no young birds of such colours, we would continue to breed the original pair till the desired colours, or something near them, were produced, when they should be cross-matched to each parent as above.

Some fanciers consider this method of breeding parents and offspring far too close breeding, but such is not our experience. It often happens that a young bird is better than the parent, and shows some fine point which the father or mother was not possessed of. In such a case the bird is *far* more likely to impart this point to his progeny when bred to his mother, or the hen to her father, than if matched to a fresh hen, which would probably cause a reversion to the more imperfect ancestor, and thus cause the loss of a point which may not appear again in the same strain for years, if at all. In breeding for marking or feather alone this principle especially holds good, and hence it is that, when something near the mark is obtained, we would breed it back to the parent at once. Before this can be done many birds may be produced of almost any colour—say Kites, or especially and more frequently, Almonds, since all the birds we have mentioned are Almond-bred. There is, in fact, almost the certainty of occasionally getting an Almond—which as often as not is a good one; but such will not of course greatly displease the breeder, since it is quite as valuable in its way. But such birds—in which we include Kites, Splashes, or *light* Agates, as well as Almonds—are of course not suitable for the Mottle-breeding, and must either be bred separately or sold for Almond-breeding.

But another match may be tried with the Red Agate Mottle cock, if there cannot be found for him the Red, Red Agate, or Dark-red Mottle, which we have described as the preferable and proper match. This is a Black Mottle hen; or, as there are so very few of these free from the blaze on the face, a *Black* hen, but if possible Mottle-bred. We would almost as willingly have such a Black, if a proper colour, showing the green tinge on her plumage. Such a bird will be a good match for the possible production of both Black and Red Mottles, being less likely to show the blaze, while the body-colour would be grand, since *good* Black and Red, when bred together, usually produce the best colours of any; though this is not the case when either colour is bad, which often throws nasty Chequered Duns or Grizzles. With regard to the progeny of the Red Agate Mottle cock, and the Black or Black Mottle hen, we would follow the same plan as we have advised for the progeny of the two Reds, breeding any particularly likely bird back to its parent; but for breeding Reds we would always prefer for breeding with the Black or Black Mottle hen a cock bred from two Reds, in order to give as little chance as possible of breeding back to Almond feather, which might otherwise result from the mixture of feather. The only exception would be a pure Red Mottle, or a deep, clear Red Whole-feather, which, however bred, may be pretty safely bred to a well-marked Black Mottle hen as free from blaze on the face as can be got. We say as free as can be got, since there is hardly a bird entirely free. We doubt if there be indeed even one, and are quite sure that if any one were to breed all at once a few really well-marked Mottles, few would believe them to be honestly so. Some may hence ask what is the use of even attempting to produce a bird for which we can get no credit even if we succeed. Well, we suppose credit and belief would soon come, if honestly earned, and the triumph would be

great; for any one who should breed a few even so good as to be capable of being *trimmed* so as to look perfect, without showing the trimming so as to be detected, would do a great deal more than we have seen except in a stray case or two, for we have only seen as yet three pairs of Black Mottles, and not one pair of Reds or Yellows, which could even be *trimmed* into well-marked Mottled Tumblers. The nearest we ever saw to a perfect Mottle was bred by old Miles Hall, of Spitalfields. This bird, however, was coarse in beak and wattle, and though free from the foul marking on the face, it had to be weeded a deal on each shoulder and breast before it appeared with the regular marking. It was bred from a Mottle cock and Black hen.

The best method of breeding for Yellow Mottles is similar to that we have described for producing Reds. Birds are always to be selected as free as possible from foul marking on the face, and the male bird as near the desired marking and colour as can possibly be procured; and let the yellow ground be as deep in colour as possible, for if of a soft or mealy tinge it will be of little use. No doubt some will wonder we do not advocate the mating together of the Red and Yellow Agate Mottles; but our reason is that, both being Almond-bred, the mixing at this stage of the two colours is far more likely to produce Almonds. Later on such would not be the case; but the first thing is to produce a pure and true strain of Reds and Yellows which breed Reds and Yellows, and till that is done crossing them is of little use. There should, in our opinion, be at least two seasons' breeding of each colour separately, before they are crossed, in order to get rid of at least some of the tendency to throw Almond feather. Were this done, then we believe the crossing of a true-bred Black or Black Mottle with the Red Agate or Mottle would almost completely obliterate the Almond feather, and that the offspring of such, mated to the true-bred Yellow or Yellow Agates, would create a true breed of Mottled pigeons, and be the best means of getting a strain free from the blaze-mark on the face. We have seen so much progress made in even one cross towards the desired end as fully to satisfy us of the success of such a system, and do not think it would take more than three seasons to establish a tolerably true strain of really Whole-feathered Red and Yellow Mottles. When once a sound and true ground-colour is secured the *greatest* difficulty is mastered; as there will be far less difficulty, by crossing with Agate Mottles, to get the marking desired, without getting the progeny splashed all over, as is the case when crossed with the Agate too soon.

If means allow, it will be well to keep some birds breeding together for Whole-feathered Reds and Yellows, as well as crossing the Agates and Agate Whole-feathers to get Mottles. Then, if from the one strain a bird was produced near the desired marking, a cross from the Whole-feathered strain may save considerable time. We would, in fact, in such a case, cross both ways, when the breeder will soon see if he is making progress; and even if the produce be not the desired thing, he is almost sure to get a bird or two which are just what he wants for crossing back to one or other of the parents.

When strains are got true in ground-colour, or, as it may be called, thoroughly away from the Almond feather, we should advise crossing Red and Yellow, putting a good sound-coloured Red (not Red *Agate*, but true Red) cock to a Yellow Agate Mottle hen. We would then select the best-coloured yellow progeny, and if a hen, re-cross with the father, and if any of the cocks were either Mottles, Red, or Yellow, crossing one of these with the mother. If the progeny were several, and there were likely birds left, we would also pair a brother and sister; and from these crosses something good is nearly sure to result. By thus continually crossing the best-coloured Yellow with a Red, the yellow produced will be kept of a fine deep shade.

We cannot recommend pairing two Yellow Agate Mottles together with a view of producing Mottles, as we have often known done. Not only is the match too light in colour, but, both being

Almond-bred, the produce is most uncertain. The first thing is to get even a ground-colour which breeds fairly true without going back to Almond, and then to cross the Yellow with Red. A Yellow Agate Mottle cock with a true-bred, sound Red hen, for instance, would then be another very promising cross to produce Yellow Mottles, and also to produce what are so very rare—good Yellow cocks, provided the Mottle cock be not too gay in marking. Such a result cannot, however, be in the least expected unless the hen be a true and solid Red not merely a Red Agate Whole-feather; but in this way, in two or three seasons, Yellow cocks might easily be bred; and when they are obtained the work is almost done, since Red hens can always be had. It is indeed curious that there are about ten Red or Red Agate hens to every cock; and the same rule holds good as regards Yellow Agates, but not as to true Yellows, which are almost unknown in either sex. Indeed, the only good Yellows we have ever seen were two (we speak of Short-faced birds): one of these was a hen bred by Mr. Esquilant, of London, but how we never knew; and the other was a cock we bred ourselves in the manner here given, thus:—We mated a deep Whole-feathered Yellow Agate cock to a good-coloured Red hen, from which resulted three Yellows and two Reds, all hens excepting one Yellow cock. All five were grand colours, but the two Yellow hens died; the cock was so good as to win many prizes against *all* colours, both in our own possession and that of Mr. Taylor, of Huddersfield, who ultimately purchased him. This was the only time we ever attempted to breed Yellows, and our success was much greater than we expected; indeed, had we kept the birds for breeding, they were sufficient to breed a fine collection; but the head and beak of the Agate cock were so good as to induce the offer of a high price, and so our experiment terminated. That was, however, a proof to us that good Yellow Tumblers *could* be bred; and though many trials might be made without quite such a sudden success, we are quite certain success *would* follow upon a little perseverance and judgment.

When a strain was once formed, only good colours should ever be bred together; and at no time would we breed two Yellows unless both were of a deep colour, as there is no colour so soon loses its richness as this. If one bird *must* be a little faulty, let the sound-coloured one be the cock.

The shape and carriage of the Mottle should be the same as in the Almond, as, indeed, should it be in *all* Short-faced Tumblers. Indeed, we believe at one time the Mottle was superior to the Almond in this quality. This will, however, give the fancier very little difficulty, because all the birds which we have mentioned as materials for Mottle-breeding are, as a rule, extra good in carriage. Inspection of any large class almost will show how superior many of the Agates are in these points, which we have seen in the last chapter to be very easily kept up by a little care. It is also to be remembered that, even should the fancier's efforts so far fail that he cannot produce Mottles to satisfy him, he will almost certainly succeed, if he perseveres, in breeding good Yellow Whole-feathers; and as this pigeon is as scarce even as the other, and as valuable, he has at least one certain reward before him, even if he fails in the other. It is true none of the matches we have suggested are *certain* to produce what we have given as their object, or in fact anything. A large element of chance enters into the whole breeding of all Almond-bred birds; and not until one or two generations of breeding have removed the Almond taint can any certainty be attained. It is true also that meantime many disappointments must be encountered; but in the end success as regards Yellow and Red Whole-feathered birds at least is certain, and even this will be something which, at the date we write, will enable any one to say he has produced something as yet almost unknown in the pigeon fancy. There are, of course, lots of what are *termed* Yellows, but not of the true colours. In Reds there are a few of the proper colour, and these few, if well used, would produce the true Yellows.

We next come to what has always been our own especial favourite amongst all varieties of Tumblers—viz., the Black Mottle. We are quite in the dark as to the origin of this pigeon, or as to how long it has been exhibited; but the first who conceived the idea of it, and bred for it, must have had a fine eye and mind for pigeon beauty; for in our opinion *no* variety of Tumbler pigeon is so beautiful and attractive to the eye of both fancier and non-fancier. It takes an educated eye to see any beauty in an Almond, and we know many who can never see any unless it be of the true colour and well spangled, few of which are to be seen; but *all* can see the great beauty of a Black Mottle. True it is, as we have said, that a perfect bird, or such as we would accept for an ideal, has *never* yet come before our eyes; but even those which have fairly approached the standard marking are so exceedingly pretty as in *this* respect to far surpass the Almond. When we add to this that the Black Mottle, like all the other true Mottles, is harder to breed true to marking than the Almond, and, above all, that it never loses its standard character if once possessed, but moults year by year the same, preserving all its beauties, we have said enough to justify our preference for this as the *highest*-class bird of all the Short-faced Tumblers.

And here it may be well to describe what a perfectly-marked Mottled Tumbler should be. It will be already understood that the body-colour must be sound and alike all over; in the case of the Black Mottle a glossy raven black, free from any tinge of brown or bronze, the latter being apt to be derived from a Kite cross, unless judiciously matched afterwards. The freedom from blaze on the face, or *any* white about the head, we have already mentioned. Next comes the marking on the shoulder, termed by north country fanciers the rose-pinion, as they also term the marking on the shoulder of a Pouter. The term is not a bad one; but the usual marking on a Pouter's shoulder would not be enough to constitute good marking on a Mottle, which should consist of a good-sized, nearly circular, or at least compactly-shaped patch covered by *detached* white markings, each white mark being a single feather. The white feathers must not run into each other, but be distinct and separate on the black ground, to make a perfect shoulder. Next comes the marking on the back, technically termed the "handkerchief-back." This consists of a line of white marking or spangles, which, when perfect, resembles the letter V, the open part at the shoulders, and the point or apex towards the tail. This marking appears as if on the back, but belongs in reality, as will be seen, to the wing-coverts. Some have more of it than others, and some have none; while some fanciers have even asserted that there *should* be none, and that the birds look better without it. But we cannot agree to this, as the beauty of the truly-marked Mottle can be seen either from a side view or from a back or top view; whereas a bird destitute of the handkerchief-back presents an attractive side view alone. Some birds have far too much white on the back, coming down towards the rump; this certainly looks bad, especially if the bird be of good carriage, which makes it even more conspicuous; but if the V-mark be well defined, and well up towards the shoulders, it adds greatly to the beauty of the bird. It should not be an unbroken line, but each spangle be separate, forming a *dotted* line, as on the pinion. Whenever a bird is seen combining these perfections—a head free from any white, a nicely *mottled* and not "patched" shoulder, an evenly-spangled V-mark on the back, and a glossy black ground—there is what we consider the rarest and most valuable of all the high-class Tumbler pigeons, and what we have *never* yet seen without some assistance from trimming; whereas, rare as they undoubtedly are, we have certainly seen several Almonds which, as times go, we must call fairly perfect. We believe, however, that *perfect* Mottles can be bred; for, much as the old fanciers have done, there are, we might say, fifty now to one in the old times, which proportionately multiplies the chances of success.

One of the commonest faults is a bad colour, it being rare to see a true raven black through the quills of the tail and flights, which are apt to show rather a brown tinge. This is often caused by breeders crossing a Kite hen with a Mottled cock, which is done for three objects. The first is that Kite hens are generally much more plentiful and cheap than really good Mottles; next, they are generally free from that troublesome fault of the white blaze on the face; and, thirdly, they are almost always much better in head, eye, and beak properties, and hence are used to obtain a better class of head. As a rule, the only indications in the progeny of the Kite cross are on the top of the head and in the quills of the flights and tail, which instead of glossy black are of a brown or bronzy colour. If the Kite hen be of the proper colour, showing little of the bronze (and these dull Kites are generally used, being more plentiful than the good bronzy Kites so useful in Almond breeding), it is astonishing how little the cross really shows; and the signs of it on the head at least are very often disguised by dressing up the head with oil and lampblack, caustic, ink, or other means, which lasts for some days, after which the natural colour reappears. It is however when, not knowing of the cross, such a bird is bred again to a Kite hen, that the evil is found, as the Kite blood now preponderating, the colour becomes very bad, producing mere Kite Mottles, or Splashes, or Grizzles, in many cases. The Kite cross, therefore, only answers, and should only be used, when employed with a purely-bred Mottle.

The greatest difficulty, as we have already hinted, in breeding Black Mottles, even more than Reds or Yellows, is to get rid of the foul marking on the forehead; and we will endeavour to state clearly how we would advise any one to proceed. It is little use in this particular case making any inquiry about the good or bad qualities of a strain, since *any* birds are scarce, and no one will admit that his are not good, while if they are, there will be plenty of other folk to depreciate them, simply because better than their own. In this case we would go by appearances, and take such birds as we describe wherever or from whomsoever they were to be got. First of all we would purchase the very best Black Mottle cock we could afford or could procure, especially as free as possible from blaze on the forehead, but quite free no one must expect. If also quite free from Kite colour on the forehead, so much the better; but even if it should show the mark of the Kite there, provided it were well marked as regards mottling, we would not discard it if no better offered. Such a bird we would breed in the first place to a *raven black* hen, not being particular as to how she was bred, provided only she was good in colour, and fine in the beak and beak-wattle. If good in head and carriage so much the better. We would breed two or three nests from this pair; and if out of these there were no birds to give us a little satisfaction, we would dismatch the pair, and put the same cock to another deep black hen, or if we could not get such, to a Mottle hen decidedly dark as regarded marking, and of course free from any Kite colour on the head; because, as we have said, to breed two birds with any Kite taint together is ruin to the Black. We do not, in fact, recommend a bird so bred at all, but merely state how such stock may be utilised, and their faults bred out again, because such are much more easily to be had, and at a cheaper rate, while by careful breeding for two seasons, commencing as we have said with a real Black, pure Mottles may be established from them.

If among the progeny of this first pair there was a young cock tolerably well mottled, and free or nearly free from blaze, we would match him to a Black Mottle hen of the true colour; or if such could not be procured, or was not within the breeder's means, then to another Black hen, but this time making sure she was bred from Mottles. But the correct match is decidedly a Mottle, because the young cock, being already half-bred Black, if matched to Black again would be likely to produce chiefly Blacks. Then, as regards the rest of the progeny, which perhaps might not be quite free from Kite marking, we would select the best of them, and breed with other Black

Mottles, as we have already stated; or, if means did not allow of that, we would match one of the best young cocks with the parent Black hen; but taking care that the young cock had plenty of the Mottle feather on the shoulders, so as to keep up the markings in the progeny. Similarly, we would match the original cock, for the second season, with one of the young hens, choosing, of course, one as free as possible from Kite colour on the head. This will provide three pairs of birds for the second season; and in this way we would proceed, carefully weeding out as much as possible the Kite marking, as well as the blaze, until we got what we desired.

Some may wonder we should enter into the mode of breeding from materials confessedly imperfect, and even not pure-bred. The simple fact is that no perfect Mottle has ever yet been seen, nor has it been proved that the Mottle is a distinct breed from the Almond. We have known a Black Mottle and Almond, mated, produce beautifully-feathered Almonds; and, on the other hand, we ourselves allowed an old Almond to match, according to his own inclination, with a young Black Mottle hen, and reared from that pair three Mottles, as near the desired markings as we ever knew bred in one season, all three being alive at the date this is written, and so free from Kite colour that it cannot be detected without taking the birds in the hand. Hence, it appears highly probable that such Mottle strains as exist first occurred in breeding Almonds, and were bred together for the beauty of the markings, which would soon improve the colour and obliterate the Almond feather; and we see no reason to discard birds in commencing a strain because they show a trace of the Kite: the more especially as we have often noticed that these Kite-bred birds often have the *marking* more accurate than those of the pure ground-colour. The Kite cross also imparts better head and beak and carriage properties than can usually be seen in our present pure Blacks and Black Mottles, with the sole disadvantage of the colour on the head. Again, let us suppose one breeder breeds from two Mottles true in their ground-colour, and produces from them birds a raven black, but irregular in marking, and with the white blaze (almost irrepressible by this mode of breeding); while another, breeding from a Kite hen, gets progeny pretty good in all points, but showing more or less Kite in the head; which progeny will soonest produce birds free from all faults? We answer, that the Kite produce will easily, with judgment, breed in two seasons young birds free from Kite; but we should be well pleased to breed the blaze out from the other strain in four or five. We have already hinted also, that the present strains of Mottles—if such can be said to exist—are mostly plain in head and beak properties, in which Kites are apt to be peculiarly good.

When it is not desired to cross with Kites, blaze on the face is best got rid of by crossing with pure Blacks; or if a pair of these, suitable in other respects, could not be found, we would employ Mottles too dark or short of marking, black or too dark birds being those most free from this troublesome fault. If the produce showed little or none of the fault, we would keep the birds breeding together; and then selecting the best, breed brother and sister of the produce if we could not get unrelated matches for them to please us. If the first produce did not satisfy us, we would select the darkest of them and breed to the parents, as so often advised; and in this way the blaze may with care be bred out of the strain.

Most of the best Mottles we know have been bred partly from Kites in the way we have described. Of course, if there were better materials at command, we would not advise such a course; but as the matter stands, the Kite offers assistance which can be got from no other quarter. When a strain is formed, and good birds can be had, of course the breeding should be different. We would then select a cock possessing all the properties as far as possible, but valuing them as follows:—First, a raven black colour, so that when the tail or flights are opened there is seen a polish or gloss on the quills, and at least fair marking on the shoulders, with as few as possible

white ticks on breast, belly, and neck, and *no* white on forehead. Secondly, good shape and carriage. Third, fineness of beak and wattles. Fourth, a good eye. Such a cock we would mate to another Mottle hen of similar quality, but would not keep them together if the first and second nest proved both too "gay" or plentiful in white marking. In that case we would dismatch at once, and mate the cock with another hen possessing less white mottling, still carefully avoiding a blaze face; and if still too light we would try again with a very much too dark or even black, but Mottle-bred hen. Even from the best of stock there will come—at first at least—more or less of Dun Mottles, and even Grizzles and other colours. Dun Mottles are mostly hens, but when they occur in either sex they are by no means to be discarded, as they are most valuable for breeding Blacks of an extra rich colour, precisely as in the case of Barbs or Carriers. We mention this because some fanciers are very sorry to get even a good Dun, while we know such to be most valuable stock birds, when mated to a good Black Mottle.

Another cross we should strongly recommend, when the strains are thoroughly to be relied upon, would be between the Black Mottle and a good coloured Red or Red Mottle; but on no account should such an experiment be tried unless the colours of both were really good, as otherwise the progeny will be very various, and almost useless for re-crossing. And we need hardly add, that until both strains are fixed so as to breed fairly true to themselves, any such experiment would be worse than useless.

Finally, we may perhaps urge upon the committees of exhibitions the propriety of giving more encouragement to the Mottle pigeon. The want of this, in our opinion, has been the chief cause of its—we were going to say—extinction; and we believe that a class would, in a very short time, produce birds to fill it fairly, and that the fancy would be eagerly taken up by many on account of the superior hardiness and permanent "standard" character of the birds as compared with the Almond.

Mottled Tumblers should, in our opinion, be judged as follows:--

POINTS IN JUDGING MOTTLES.

Accurate markings	9
Colour of body	3
Shape and carriage	5
Fineness of beak and wattle	4
Size and shape of head	4
Colour and fulness of eye	2
Smallness of body	2
Shortness of legs	1
	30

CHAPTER XI.

BALDHEADS AND BEARDS. EXHIBITING SHORT-FACES.

We come next to another class of Short-faced Tumblers, which have been very greatly neglected, for no apparent reason, as there are few fanciers but greatly admire them. Were it not for the support during many years of Messrs. Esquilant, Woodhouse, South, Fielding, and Hale, we hardly know what would have become of them. As regards Beards we might add the name of Mr. Esden; but we hardly know any other who has really continued, year after year, to breed these birds, and every fancier must desire to have the due record of those who, with little reward, have thus from pure love preserved and handed down any variety of pigeon combining such points of beauty.

Our coloured plates will of themselves, together with the mere names of the varieties—expressive as these latter are—convey a very clear idea of what these pigeons should be, and we will, therefore, at once proceed in detail to describe what is needed in a good bird, taking the Baldhead first. The most valuable property, and the most difficult to get in a Bald, is being *clean cut* as it is called; that is, that the white on the head from which it is named should be divided from the body-colour by a sharp clean line. But, further, this line should pass just below the eye to but little under the beak; and when the bird is thus correctly marked it is said to be *high cut:* while, if the white extends lower, or at least very perceptibly lower than this, the bird is described as *low cut*, and is so far not such a good Bald. It is very seldom that birds are seen quite so high cut or clean cut as represented in our plates, unless the owners have assisted nature a little by removing a few feathers on the border line, which is often done so skilfully as to make the bird appear as if clipped all round to a pattern; indeed, malicious folks might think that from this practice the term "clean cut" was derived, especially as the more knowing exhibitors, instead of pulling the feathers out—a process which needs repeating as they re-grow—cut them off close to the skin, which lasts till next moult. This practice is so common that really no one can be secure without a *very* careful examination—and not always even then—that a bird he has purchased will present the same appearance after moult as when he purchased it.

The next property in a Bald is to be *clean-thighed*. This means that just below the breast and above the thighs the colour of the body should cease at a sharp tranverse line running right across. The more accurate and sharp this line dividing the colour on the breast—be it black, blue, red, yellow, or silver—from the white, the prettier and more valued is the bird; and from this line the white must extend back to the vent, including, of course, all the thigh, from whence the term which describes this property is taken. The white is supposed to be pure, and unmixed with coloured feathers; but here, too, we must confess that art too often is called in to assist nature, and that far more clean-thighed birds appear in the show-pen than were ever bred. There are really and naturally very few good Short-faced Baldheads which have not some foul marks on the breast or thighs in their natural state; so very few, indeed, that we may say neither fanciers nor any good judges expect to see them *perfectly* free, though, if more widely bred, there is no reason to doubt such would be the case. We say this, because there are plenty of the pleasant-faced Balds which



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith

SHORT-FACED BALD-HEADS

BLUE. BLACK.

RED. YELLOW.

are all that could be desired in colour and marking; but it is the good head, beak, and carriage of the true Short-face that are so seldom, if ever, seen with perfection in feather.

The next property is the number of white flight-feathers, which *should* be the full ten in each wing; but this, too, is rarely seen in good Short-faced birds. The reader of reports of pigeon-shows, if uninitiated, may be mystified by seeing that someone, for instance, "showed a nice bird eight and nine," or perhaps "nine and nine." This means that the Bald has so many white flights in each wing, and such a number is very good indeed, the usual average being six, seven, or eight on each side, and very frequently more on one side than the other. Nine flights is, in fact, quite sufficient entirely to hide the tenth as well as the inner flights; but, of course, the breeder should aim at the full standard number, and short of it no bird can be called *perfect*. This is a property no "dodging" can imitate, as, if the coloured flight be pulled out, the deficiency is easily discovered by counting. So also if, as sometimes happens, one of the *inner* flights is *white* (which should not be), and is plucked as being a foul feather, the gap is evident directly the wing is opened out. As regards these two faults, however, a bird with one or two of the inner flights foul and all the outer flights correct is far to be preferred to one with a "short" number of outer flights, however perfect in the inner; since one fault is only seen when the feathers are spread, while the outer flights show at once if more than the tenth, or at most ninth, quill, be faulty. It is also to be noticed that a very "short-flighted" bird (the term in Balds does not mean short in length of feather, but short or small in the *number* of white flights), having too much colour, is almost always foul-thighed, and very often disfigured by a stained beak beside; whereas, a bird with one or two white feathers in the inner flights is very seldom not clean-thighed, or nearly so, and we think we may say has *never* a stained beak. They have, however, another drawback: having too much white in their blood they are generally too "low cut." So that to get all three properties, and produce a bird high cut, clean-thighed, and "ten a side," together with the general properties of the Short-faced Tumbler, is a very difficult task, and quite worthy of the most skilled pigeon-fancier.

The tail-feathers of the Baldhead should be pure white. This is not so difficult to acquire as the preceding properties.

We have, however—though not often—seen all these properties, and even good colour of body as well, and still the bird not perfect on account of bad eyes. These should be pearl. Some fanciers, if they had all *but* this, would for it completely discard a bird, counting it of little or no value if bull-eyed or broken-eyed; but in this we cannot coincide. It is undoubtedly a great fault, and one which should prevent a bird winning against good birds; but to pass over a bird for it which is fine in all other Bald properties, and give the prize to one which is faulty in flights, or foul-thighed, or coarse in beak, or very low or raggedly cut, is what we never will agree to, and contrary to the general principle of judging which we carry through every page of this work. Either of these other faults is three times more conspicuous, and ten times more difficult to breed out of a strain, than bull or broken eyes, though we do grant that a bad eye is more conspicuous in a Bald, owing to the colour of the head, than in any other variety of Tumbler. Still, it is less so than the others, and should have its fair weight allowed it and no more.

The colours of Baldheads we have already mentioned; but Blues are the most numerous, owing doubtless to the fact that they are of more vigorous constitution. It is therefore natural that in general Blues should be found most perfect in points, as is the case; but it is a singular thing that the hens in Blue Balds, and also in Beards, are scarcely ever found as sound and true in colour as the cocks. So generally true is this, that we do not think we have seen over three pairs of each variety, fairly good in quality, which were a good match in body-colour. This fault can however be remedied by crossing with the Silver; mating a Silver cock with a Blue hen, which

will tend to produce good-coloured Blue hens. If, however, the produce was not to our satisfaction, we would select one of the young hens—Blue or Silver—and breed to the father; when any Blues produced would be almost sure to be of good colour. In this way the Blue can be improved, but there is a risk as to the colour of the bars, which are apt to be Kite or Mealy-coloured; still, we would risk this to get the colour on the body, since a Blue-chequer cock mated to one of these Silver-bred faulty-barred hens will generally improve the colour of the bars, and the result is often a bird good all over. Another mode is to breed a Blue cock to a Silver hen, the darker the bars on the hen the better, as it is in the Silver bird's bars the danger lies. In this cross the cock should be as dark a Blue as possible, as if light in colour the progeny may very likely be Silver, and few fanciers breed for these if they can get Blues, unless for variety's sake. They are also useful, as we have seen, to keep up the purity of the Blues, and likewise to get clean thighs and a high number in flights; in fact, any shortness of flights or foulness of thigh in Blues is always best remedied by crossing with Silver. In brief, the Silver Baldhead stands to the Blue in much the same relation as the Mealy Pouter to the standard Blue-pied.

Next is the Black, which is and always was the rarest colour, and most difficult to breed fully up to the properties; all partially black pigeons, from the depth of colour in the blood, being particularly liable to foul feather. Not only so, but the strong contrast makes every trifling fault or foul mark so striking, that a single foul feather in a Black is seen at once. We have seen few of this colour we could term good, and regret it, as, from the striking contrast, it is to our fancy the prettiest colour of any; but, in spite of the vast increase of pigeon-fanciers during late years, we are sorry to see that the race who seemed to find pleasure in vanquishing the greatest difficulties by skill and patience seems almost extinct, most breeders being satisfied with keeping up varieties which have already been all but perfected to their hands. We are sure good birds would be valued, and have not the slightest hesitation in saying that we would cheerfully give a larger sum for a pair of really good Short-faced Black Balds than for the best pair of Almonds we ever knew of; and by "good" we mean no more than we have often seen, and even possessed, in the Blues.

We can add little as to breeding Blacks, there being so few birds of this colour. We can only say that, if we could procure a cock of good colour and well cut, but not good in Short-faced properties, we should be inclined to cross him with a dark-coloured Kite hen, for the purpose of improving these points, and on the chance of getting even one or two resembling the Bald in markings; and if we could in this way get a hen anything near the mark, we would mate her with the father, in order to improve the Baldhead properties. If this failed, we would cross the Black cock with a light-coloured Silver hen, by which there would no doubt be bred lots of bad colours; but if one hen came Black, or even better, perhaps, Dun, we would in either case match her with the father. This plan, followed up with judgment, would, in our opinion, produce really good Blacks. If even this match could not be got (and it is not easy always to find a Bald hen good enough in head and beak properties), we would try breeding the Bald cock to a wholly Black hen, no matter if Mottle-bred,* adopting afterwards the same plan of matching next season the old Bald cock to the most promising of the young hens. We hardly need say that, in this case, the matching also of a young cock to the mother would be useless, since, the young bird having only half Bald blood and the old one none, no good could result, except by some extraordinary chance. If, however, there were more than one young hen at all promising, we would by all means, if possible, get another Bald cock to breed also with her.

* While very unwilling to suggest anything not according to Mr. Fulton's great experience, we should be inclined to prefer a Black Mottle herself, if we could get one; because, in our opinion, the tendency to *blaze on the face*, if not accompanied by too much white on the body, would facilitate the breeding back to Baldhead properties.—ED.

Of course if, besides a fair Black Bald cock, we could procure a really good-coloured Red or Yellow Bald hen, we would prefer this cross to either we have mentioned ; and indeed in that case would have very little fear of producing some good Blacks, and getting really brilliant colour. The Blacks from such a cross we would, if possible, breed to other Blacks, so as to improve that colour before crossing again with Red or Yellow. As to the Red offspring, if we had both sexes, we would breed the best together for Reds ; and if only one sex, we would match a bird with a Yellow if we could get one. If there is no Black cock to cross with Red or Yellow hens, and we could manage the reverse, we would certainly mate a Black hen with a Red or sound Yellow cock until there came a Black cock in the produce, when we would cross this bird with his mother, so as to keep the strain of Blacks. Reds and Yellows we would of course cross together, choosing the cock of the colour we desired the progeny to be, and, of course, as soon as our stock would allow of it, guarding most carefully against any deterioration of the colour by only breeding from the deepest and soundest-coloured birds.

As we have already observed, the high cut birds are peculiarly apt to be foul-thighed and short or foul in flights, whereas the low cut birds are very often unusually good in those very qualities. The low cut birds are also, on the average, better than the high cut in head and beak properties ; hence birds low cut are often the best cross for high cut birds possessing the faults referred to. Some have crossed with the Almond for the sake of getting better head and carriage properties, and we have known good *Yellows* produced in this way, but of course many birds come thus which are quite away from the mark, being what are known as Almond-splashed or Mottled Baldheads. The proper cross is a Yellow Bald cock with an Almond hen of really good yellow ground ; but we should far prefer a Whole-feathered Yellow Agate hen ; or, if one could be got, a good true Whole-feathered Yellow hen would be best of all. The first Yellow Bald hen which came should be bred back to the father, unless the old pair—as might be—were producing such good specimens that it was a pity to separate them. Many breeders fail here ; for in all high-class Pigeon-breeding it may be taken as a safe and wise axiom, that when *any* pair are breeding really grand birds, *it is best to let well alone*, and get all you can from a match you have proved to hit so well. In that case we would try to get other Yellow or Red Balds to cross with the offspring.

Such are all the hints we can give for producing or improving the Baldhead pigeon ; and as it is a variety at present far behind, we hope these remarks may be the means of inducing some to take up such a beautiful bird. We are quite sure that if this is the case, and any one produces really good specimens, there will be no difficulty in disposing of them at very remunerative prices ; as those which even now exist find many eager admirers, amongst which are plenty of those who are willing to pay for the birds they fancy, but are too much engaged to breed for themselves.

We come next to another much-neglected pigeon. If we could believe all we hear from old fanciers, there used to be many really good specimens of the Beard, in all colours ; but this has certainly not been the case so far as we can remember, and as to Reds and Yellows particularly, we do not think we ever saw a good pair—that is, good both in Beard points and as to the general properties of Short-faced birds.

The marking or "beard" which gives the variety its name has been the subject of many disputes, as to what is the really perfect type. The majority of fanciers consider the marking we have represented in our coloured plate the proper thing, and which consists in an *unbroken* crescent-shaped patch of white at the throat, below the beak. But a few of the oldest fanciers—and we must in justice add some of the best ones, and whose opinion well deserves to be respected—insist that this white patch should not be unbroken, but show a small streak of the body-colour down

the median line of the throat, thus *dividing* the white into two portions, right and left of this mark or streak. They further affirm that this streak of colour upon the white is what was called and meant by the "beard," and that birds showing the patch all white used to be called by Beard fanciers "swallow-throated." Be this as it may, our opinion is, and we have found few to deny, that the birds with the white or swallow-throats are most attractive and look best, while, on the other hand, we must admit that the style these old fanciers prefer is far more difficult to get true to marking. The difficulty of it, in fact, is really stupendous, and we have scarcely ever seen such a bird which, in its natural state, was even *nearly* true to this marking, most of those said to be so being really what are known as "pepper-faced" birds; which means that the colour showing over the white, instead of being a sharp and clean streak, is distributed in specks mixed with white, or "peppered" over a patch, and often much on one side; while in other cases it is so little as to be scarcely discernible. Some again are so heavily marked that hardly any of the white can be seen at all, and but for the white flights and tail, and the coloured body, the birds could not even be recognised as Beards. Such as these last are termed by fanciers "dark-faced" birds.

Next come the flight feathers, which should be white, as in the Baldhead. The really Short-faced birds, however, very rarely have the full number, being more inclined even than Balds to be "short" in flights, and also more seldom alike on both sides. The dark-faced birds more especially, as might be supposed, are liable to this, and it is common for them to have about five on one side and perhaps six or seven on the other, sometimes even less; whereas, birds having a well-marked white face are nearly always better in flights; indeed, such as have too much white on the face are mostly all that can be desired in flights. The number of flights, however, is another point upon which fanciers differ, some few contending that a Beard should only have seven each side, while others insist that no bird is correct unless it has eight and eight. The last, of course, comes nearest to our views, but we cannot consider a Beard *perfect* in this property unless it shows the full number of ten and ten, the same as a Bald. The only difficulty is to *get* this number, which is no sufficient reason against trying to get it, since specimens with the full number have been bred, and therefore can be bred again. Moreover, we cannot admit an altogether different standard for the two birds, since it is beyond question that they are at least very closely related, and it is well known by fanciers of experience and standing that good Baldheads and Beards bred together often produce birds of even better quality than if matched separately; in fact, the best Beards we have ever seen were thus bred. We would, however, be well satisfied with nine and nine, since this number would entirely hide the tenth in a young bird; and even eight and eight is very good; but when it comes to laying down a standard for a *perfect* bird, there is no reason whatever for saying ten a side, except the great difficulty of getting it, which to a true fancier is a strong reason the other way.

The next property is the marking on the legs; and here the Beard differs from the Baldhead; for while the latter is or should be clean-thighed, the Beard has, or is supposed to have, the "stockings" only white, as seen in our coloured plate—that is, the lower portion of the thigh white, but all the rest, and the whole under part of the body, the same colour as the upper.

The next property is the tail, which should be white; in this point corresponding with the Baldhead.

The eye should be pearly white, and the skull as high in the front as possible, like that of an Almond, though such (in an honest bird) are seldom seen. The beak and beak-wattle of course fine. The colour of the beak of a Beard depends upon that of its body; the beak of Reds, Yellows, and Silvers being flesh-coloured, while Blacks and Blues have the upper mandibles black, or at least dark, though the under mandibles remain a flesh-colour, unless the birds are dark-faced,



Vincent Brooks, Day & Son, Lith.

BLUE & BLACK BEARDS.

denotes, but they are by no means a numerous breed, even in the place of their nativity. The majority, however (in their pure and uncrossed state), are to be found in parts of Turkey, Greece, and far away into the interior of Asia Minor, at which places they are held in the highest esteem, as 'top fliers' or 'leaders' of large flights, which are generally a mixed or miscellaneous composition of non-tumbling birds, *above* which they delight to soar for hours together.



Fig. 45.—Oriental Rollers.

"The illustration represents a Black and an Almond-feathered bird; the former kind, which are perhaps the most numerous, are of a deep, glossy black, beautifully resplendent with iridescent hues, more especially when under the influence of a bright light. This brilliant colouring is not confined to neck and breast, but extends, in matured specimens, throughout the entire body, similar, but in a less degree, to a good Archangel. It is somewhat singular to relate, that all the Blacks have white, or, rather, pale flesh-coloured, beaks, with a simple tip of black upon the point of the upper mandible. The Almond-feathered ones are not so rich or variegated as our 'Almond' proper, but rather more closely resemble an 'Almond Splash;' the actual almond ground tint being altogether absent in some, and more or less apparent in others, but rarely so

rich or conspicuous; still they are pretty regularly interspersed with black and white, with the buff tint more clearly traceable upon the neck and breast, and along the shafts of flights and tail. However, as accuracy of markings or colour is not one of the chief characteristics of this breed, I shall pass it over as unimportant. There are, in fact, all colours, and white included. 'Duns' also are to be found, and I have heard of some 'wonderful' performers clad in this last-named dingy tint; but Oriental Rollers are not judged by any 'colour or marking.' Indeed, the best proof of their quality is when seen at a distance. Truly the old saying may be applied to them, 'Distance lends enchantment to the view.' Their miraculous acrobatic feats, evolutions, or gymnastic revolutions in the clouds alone are enough to win the estimation of those who admire good Roller pigeons.

"It is now many years ago since I heard of these wonderful performers, and for some few years I confess I longed for some of them; for as my experience in pigeonology commenced with the 'Common Tumbler' (as our British fliers are termed), and having kept and witnessed some startling performers amongst such, I naturally felt most desirous of possessing such as were said would 'eclipse' all I had yet seen. At length my hopes in this respect were realised; for by the kindness of an esteemed friend and fancier, three pairs were sent over here as a present to a fellow-fancier, who thoroughly appreciates a good performer; but unfortunately he did not, or could not, give them a fair trial; therefore, after a further lapse of time, I obtained them; but from previous long inaction they had become partially disabled as fliers, therefore could not be persuaded to 'get up,' so as to show me their mode of 'coming down;' thus I lost the desirable sight, and unfortunately lost the birds too; for not being used to chimneys at home, they were, in fact, abroad with them here. One cock bird fell a prey to starvation in a neighbour's warm chimney, and the others were lost, or died without my being able to satisfactorily realise their flying capabilities. However, the same kind friend sent *me* a pair of well-tried Blacks, and to these birds I soon gave unlimited freedom, and after the usual preliminaries of caution, I by degrees put them to the test, and most assuredly did I find them answer to the full the extraordinary rolling properties which I had wished to behold, and which I was correctly informed I might expect; and I can affirm, after ocular proof, that they more than realised my expectations. They are indeed justly termed 'Rollers,' for they unfold themselves, as it were, with such accuracy and rapidity, that one would at times suppose them to have outdone themselves, and descending either giddy or a lifeless prey to their extraordinary habit.

"On reference to the accompanying representation, it will be seen that they are in appearance also somewhat novel, and dissimilar to our English breed. The beak is not, as in most Tumblers, of a dove or 'spindle' character, but straight, and moderately thick and strong. Nor does the head possess the high crown or projecting forehead so common amongst our native Tumblers; but it is rather long, yet nicely in keeping with the peculiar elongated hollow back and narrow form of the bird; the neck is rather short, the legs also short, and the eye of a 'pearl' colour. I may say that *great length* and *hollowness* from neck to tip of tail is a most desirable feature, and such is (apart from a trial) one of the best signs of quality. The entire length, as I have said, should be long, still the back itself is actually short. The birds possess an elasticity of form which is quite uncommon, and whilst trotting about in search of food, &c., or after taking a refreshing draught, they will raise their tails, and thus hollow their backs to a strange degree. Another remarkable feature in them is that the little pointed oil-gland, immediately above the tail (common to poultry and most kinds of pigeons), is *not to be found* in any pure birds of this breed, which is quite destitute of this common characteristic.

"The tail also is peculiar, and quite uncommon. It is long, and composed of from fourteen to

twenty-two feathers, sixteen being about the average number in these birds; these are arranged equally on either side, one above another, and the two top ones, diverging a little outwards, show a slight division in the tail, but there is not the slightest affinity or resemblance to a 'fan' tail, as some might suppose by the excessive number of feathers, but it is a distinct peculiarity of this breed (twelve being the normal number of tail-quills in most pigeons). The greater the number of quills in 'Oriental Rollers' the more the specimens are valued. A further singular feature noticeable in the tails of these birds is, that occasionally two feathers may be found growing from one quill, separating at its pithy junction as a twin feather, each rather narrower than ordinarily, but of the usual length, and not outgrown, or causing a disordered formation of the tail.

"The foregoing simple description of the breed, together with the accompanying cut, will perhaps convey an idea of these comparatively unknown yet very interesting pigeons; therefore I will now just give a brief description of their exploits upon the wing. One pair of Oriental Rollers only are usually kept amongst a number of other breeds, but the flock should be regularly flown. No matter what kind, so that they are chosen from birds that *will fly;* those that fly compactly and steadily are, perhaps, the best, but few fanciers care to keep a large number of birds in order solely to witness the exploits of one pair of birds; the flocks are consequently often of a varied composition. But this matters little, for whatever the sorts may be, they are not associates, for Oriental Rollers do not care so much about the close companionship of other pigeons, even of the same loft or pen, and *never* mix with them or any others when flying. On liberating the entire flock, the common habit of pigeons that are regularly flown is to gradually commence their upward journey in a circular manner, until the highest altitude is attained; but not so the subject of these notes. They will probably first find the highest point of their own or a neighbouring habitation, and for a few moments perch thereon, and from this place they bolt in a straight line, just in a similar manner as would a good Homer, with his destination in view, and for a time those unaccustomed to their ways would be inclined to say, 'Good-bye! Farewell, Orientals!' 'All is lost now!' &c. &c. But it is not so. Those who know them best know full well 'their little game,' and contentedly await the interval. Sometimes a little town is passed over, but usually about from five to fifteen minutes elapse between the bolt and their reappearance mountains high, ah! and yet mounting, at which time they appear more in the fashion of 'Rollers,' but still avoiding the flock entirely until the highest point is reached; then, recognising their own loft companions by assuming an exalted position directly above them, they follow over them wherever they go; and now, at this stupendous height, the fun begins. Not that there have not been a few paroxysms already, but it is simplicity itself in comparison to what complete revolutions are passed through when the maximum height is attained. They then fly gently and easily, not in circles, but hither and thither, with a slight jerking appearance, and now and again whizzing over and over with great velocity, until they descend to the common flock beneath, then up again they mount, after each of these remarkable feats the pair of them seeming to be trying to outvie each other, for they really seem each time to regain their position as it were to make further efforts to do something on a still more extended scale; and this is the way these birds can comfortably pass two or three hours in the realms of space. Like some of our British 'top sawyers,' so it is with the Orientals; the best bit occurs at or shortly before the drop-scene. When tired of the upper regions, and, hungry, they are 'homeward bound,' they then, with extended wings—like a hawk over a mouse—appear to gauge the distance between them and home, and then down, down they come like a falling ring, with a series of rolls, more elaborate, if possible, than before, until at length *terra firma* is regained.

"Such are a few facts concerning these birds; but I should mention that they possess the

homing faculty to more than an ordinary degree, and when once thoroughly settled in comfortable quarters they are not easily to be lost, and their owners may defiantly snap their little fingers at decoys, traps, or nets, for Mr. Oriental, though a funny looking bird, 'is not such a fool as he looks.'"

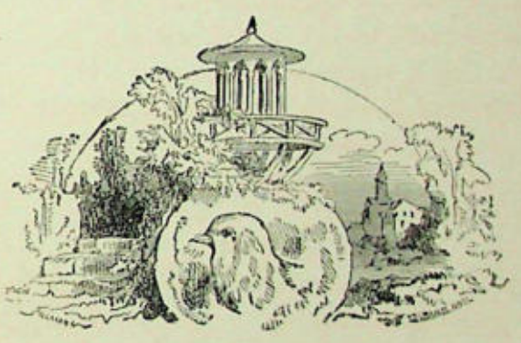
The great point in training Flying Tumblers has been hinted at by Mr. Ludlow, and only a few additional words seem desirable. We have known many purchases made of "Birmingham Rollers," and great disappointment expressed at the after performances of the birds or their progeny, simply from carelessness in their management. The best Flying Tumblers in the world, if left to fly at will, will rapidly degenerate. Each flier has his own little details of management, which after all matter very little; the *essential* point is, that in beginning to train, the birds are only let out occasionally, say every three or four days; and when *hungry*, be it morning or evening. The reasons for both precautions are—(1) The previous confinement causes them to fly actively at once upon being liberated; and (2) their appetite leads to a quick return as soon as they have had exercise enough. They must be fed *immediately* on return to keep up this habit: plentifully while only occasionally flown, but lightly when, being trained, and let out in the morning, they are going to be let out again in the evening; their full meal being in this case reserved till after the last fly. If of good stock, and first tossed when there are no birds about to tempt them to "pitch," they soon get into the *habit* of bursting off the moment they are liberated; and this habit must be very carefully preserved, weeding out instantly, as soon as discovered, any unusually lazy bird, which would otherwise be a check upon the rest, and may lead them to descend with it. No other system is needed beyond this in training Tumblers.

Flying Tumblers are not very often shown, and differ so much in many particulars that they hardly admit of being judged by points. Purity and richness of colour, and regularity of markings, with a good development of the necessary Tumbler points Mr. Ludlow has described, are chiefly taken into account in judging.

Mr. Tegetmeier gives in his book a description, from two Indian correspondents, of a most remarkable variety, called in India the *Lotan* or *Lowtan*, the peculiarities of which seem to make this the most appropriate place for mentioning it, though none, so far as we are aware, have ever reached this country. They appear generally, if not always, white; and one of the correspondents referred to describes the head as "very long and flat in profile," and with the feathers of the neck turned up to form a crest. But the chief peculiarity of these birds is that they never tumble naturally, but have to be taken in the hand, with the neck between two fingers near the head; they are then slightly shaken horizontally, and placed on the ground, when they tumble, or rather roll over backwards, giving the idea of being in a fit. Another sub-variety appears to tumble or roll upon being lightly tapped on the head with the point of the finger. Both of Mr. Tegetmeier's correspondents were informed by the natives that if these pigeons were not taken up they would continue to roll until they died, and it is possible this may be the case; but one of them tried the experiment, and before long the bird stopped, apparently from exhaustion. They are usually taken up in the hand, and the head gently breathed upon, when they seem to recover and feed as usual.

We cannot say we have any wish that these singular birds should ever be cultivated in England. Their performance, with its entirely involuntary character and total exhaustion after, must be rather a painful exhibition than otherwise; but the phenomena is interesting, as throwing possibly some light upon the nature of the tumbling propensity. Mr. Tegetmeier draws a comparison,

which we think is just, between it and the tremulous "motion" in the neck of the Fantail; and the sequence of an *involuntary* performance by the poor Indian birds upon what is obviously a slight concussion or rather irritation of the brain, is too striking a parallel to the involuntary performances of "Mad Tumblers" to require more than pointing out. We need hardly remark, however, that it by no means follows *all* tumbling is involuntary, as we have often seen very foolishly argued. The line between voluntary and involuntary is never very definite, as shown for instance in the case of a fit of hysterics, which in hundreds of known cases is entered upon in a perfectly voluntary manner, but afterwards becomes beyond the control of the foolish patient. So, again, many individuals have sensibilities, not shared by the average of mankind, which yield them the most exquisite pleasure, but which, only a little more exaggerated, occasion others the most exquisite pain: and thus also we see no reason to doubt that the wonderful aerial performances of the Tumbling pigeon, while the propensity which causes them may be so exaggerated as to be a source of misery, yet in ordinary may yield the bird all the real pleasure which it so evidently appears to do.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE DRAGOON.

In treating of this pigeon we approach a subject which has perhaps given rise to more marked difference of opinion than any other treated of in this work. Other breeds, as we have seen, are no doubt to be found which are to nearly as great an extent unsettled in some points; but the difference in the present case is, that whilst in others many have been unable to fix upon any known type, or to remain consistently supporting it, there grew up respecting the Dragoon pigeon two very distinct schools or standards, which at one time were so widely apart that there seemed no hope of reconciliation; and though, as we shall see, the difference is not now so great as it was, there are still people who differ much as to the proper standard of a perfect Dragoon.

The very name has been much disputed over. It is generally pronounced *Dragon* in pigeon circles; and hence many have argued that it should be spelt accordingly. We have not done so because, in the first place, both the word and its sound, so spelt, are barbarous and devoid of meaning; secondly, the old books conclusively show that such was not the original spelling; and thirdly, because the kindred names of Carrier and Horseman, given by the old fanciers to birds more or less allied—and the Horseman very closely so—show beyond doubt the idea which lay at the root of all three names alike, viz., that of a *mounted messenger*. Considering, therefore, that a new and ignorant pronunciation should not be allowed to alter a word of known form and etymological history, but rather the correct form if possible be retained to correct the pronunciation, we retain the old spelling as not only the genuine one, but far more elegant; and even further, ask our readers to assist, if possible, in restoring also in sound the true name of *Dragoon*.

We have just hinted that not a great while ago opinion was much more unsettled in regard to Dragoons even than it is now; and we may add that very great advance has been made in the pigeon itself of late years, especially as regards truth and excellence of colour. As a simple illustration of both these points, we may relate an incident within our own experience only a very little while ago. At one of the chief exhibitions of the year we met, along with many other breeders, a well-known Dragoon fancier, who has then and since complained as much as almost any one of the awards of judges, and combated most actively the opinions of many fanciers; and on this occasion also he drew attention to what he called the "shameful" awards in the class for Blues, saying that none of the winners *were* Dragoons. We thereupon asked to be shown his idea of a Dragoon, and were shown a bird accordingly, with the exclamation, "That's the bird should have won!" and when we asked why, he added, "Because it is the only Blue Dragoon in the class," asking also what *we* thought of it? Being on the top tier, and our personal stature being decidedly of the "short" order, we could only see its head; but from *that alone* we at once replied, "Surely you don't want a Blue Dragoon to have a white rump, do you?" He admitted he did not, when we asked for the bird to be handed down, and it had the well-known blemish, sure enough. Then he affirmed he had made a mistake, and picked the wrong bird, and another was selected; but this too had not only the same fault, but was mealy on the thighs. Finally, a third

bird was selected, and this, strange to say, proved more full of faults than either, being skewer-beaked, a "made" face, broken-eyed, narrow in shoulders, hog-backed, light on the rump, almost Kite-barred, and the body-colour so light as to be almost silver, and in size no larger than an Archangel. Now, here was a case of a professed fancier finding fault with the award of a really good judge, and making *admittedly* (for the faults were not denied as soon as we pointed them out) three great mistakes in selecting a bird to suit even his own ideas. What made this case the more striking was, that only *one* bird (the winner) in the whole class deserved to be called a good Blue Dragoon, the other prize birds even being far behind in colour, while the winner alone was the same shade of blue throughout, the right colour in beak and eye, and nearly as perfect in points, according to the standard we shall lay down, as any bird we have seen since. Since that occasion we have ceased to feel surprise that the awards in Dragoons at pigeon shows very seldom give *general* satisfaction; and while we also know that many mistaken awards really are made in these classes, we have so constantly found that those who have the worst birds are most dissatisfied and make the loudest noise, that we care nothing comparatively for fault-finding even in reports, unless the fault-finder gives at the same time some signs of having intelligent and consistent reasons for his criticism.

No one has had greater success lately in breeding and showing Dragoons than Mr. Frank Graham of Birkenhead; and as his views of what a Dragoon should be are nearly the same as our own, it will be convenient in the first place to give his description, as putting the main points into a brief compass. In going more minutely into the bird afterwards, our own remarks will then take somewhat the form of a comment upon his text. We need only premise that such divided opinion as still exists has settled down into what may be briefly described as a stouter bird both in face, wattle, and build, known as the London style; and a smaller, thinner, slighter bird, thinner in face and wattle, which used to be known as the Birmingham model. Mr. Graham's and our own remarks, then, describe the prevailing or "London" style of Dragoon:—

"A Dragoon should be nearly as large as a Carrier, and should possess perfect symmetry. The beak should be stout, measuring one and five-eights of an inch from centre of eye to the end, blunt at the point, and should fit close, the lower mandible being as heavy as the top; in fact, resembling the much-coveted 'box-beak' of a Carrier in everything but length. The beak-wattle should be tilted, that is, peaked up behind, and gradually sloping down in front to within half an inch of the point of beak. The formation of the wattle should differ entirely from the Carrier's; it should be all one piece, not divided in three or of a cauliflower appearance, but smooth; and at two to three years old the wattle should not at the highest point be above the level of the top of the skull. A Dragoon should be a Dragoon as long as it lives, and not become a Carrier when getting aged; but at the same time it should have a moderate amount of wattle. The colour of the wattle should be light and powdery-looking. The eye-wattle I prefer as small as possible, and circular while under twelve months' old, though it almost always becomes pinched behind after the age of eighteen months—not larger than a fourpenny piece—of fine texture, not fleshy, and the eye should be large and bold, and of a watchful appearance, giving you the idea that it is ready at a second's notice to be off. In fact such is the case: if any of my Dragoons are caged, for comparison or anything else, and the door is left open for a second, they make a bolt for it; and yet at other times they never beat themselves uselessly against the wires, but stand ever on the watch, clearly showing the intelligence and determination they possess over any other breed of pigeons. In describing the beak-wattle I forgot to mention that a Dragoon should be entirely devoid of wattle on the lower mandible.

"The skull should be flat, and should be raised above the eyes, sloping down to base of the beak; a straight head—that is when the skull is level with the beak—should be avoided. In looking down the skull from the beak it should gradually widen to the back. This is a great point in a Dragoon, as if it is all one width it stamps its Carrier relationship; the back portion of the skull should measure nearly twice as much as the front. The neck should be three-fourths the length of a Carrier's, with the gullet full, and coming down to good broad shoulders; the breast should be full, with the butts of the wings projecting in front, which should give you the idea of great muscular power. They should not be carried close to the body, but stand well out. The flights should be carried above, and should come within half an inch of, the end of the tail. The legs should be set well back toward the vent, with good stout thighs, well feathered; and from the hock to sole of foot should measure an inch and a quarter. The entire feathering should have the appearance of fitting like a skin. The back of the bird should be slightly hollow. The foregoing is a general description of a Dragoon, and answers for all colours. More particulars of each colour will be found in the following classification. Good carriage in a Dragoon must be insisted on.

"Yellow Dragoons I shall commence with, as I consider these should head the prize list, being more difficult to breed to perfection. Colour should be the first thing to obtain, and then set to work to breed out any imperfection you may have introduced to get the desired colour. Of course, if possible, start with perfect yellow, but this is not always to be done; and in my case, when I first started many years ago, money would not get me what I wanted. I purchased the best I could, and made it my task to improve them. My first attempt was with a Scandaroon cock, very deep in colour, and I was startled at the results. Some of the young were black, some black with bars, and one strawberry-coloured bird, which I kept and crossed with a Yellow. The result was splendid coloured Yellows, very hard in feather, with very little cere round the eye; but what spoilt all was the horrible down-face of the Scandaroon, which appeared more or less in all this generation. It took me three years to breed this out; and I should not advise another such a cross, as there is better material to work upon now than then; but it shows what can be done. However, I am happy to say I succeeded, as not a bird in my possession now possesses that defect. This, however, is only one of my attempts to get colour: I also obtained birds of a foreign variety, which, although they had very little the appearance of a Dragoon, still they had colour, for which I have worked so hard. These I crossed with my light-coloured Yellows, and first obtained the desired colour, and then again crossed with some large-bodied Reds which I had, the result being perfect Yellow Dragoons, with an occasional Red; birds of good substance, and, what is of still greater importance, hard feathered. Yellow Dragoon fanciers should always be on the look-out for deep-coloured birds of a distinct strain, as to breed Yellows without a cross for more than three generations means light thighs and rump, and a slaty tail. I have found from experience that the cock bird influences the progeny in colour more than the hen bird, and that, therefore, in pairing up Yellows care should be taken that the cock is of the desired colour, or darker, and that the hen is big and of sound constitution, as to breed from a small or weedy hen is loss of time. By following out this plan you are certain to breed good hens; and it has been the exception and not the rule lately to find a good hen at any show. Yellows should have red or orange eyes, light-coloured wattles, and a flesh-coloured beak, and the feathering should be of one uniform deep-coloured rich tint.

"Reds are only to be strengthened in colour by introduction of Blacks; and this should be done very sparingly, as you are apt to get the dull shade of red, instead of a rich glossy blood red. Once in three or four generations should suffice. Another pitfall to be avoided is the crossing of Reds *bred from Yellows*, or a cross with Yellows, with Reds; this will most certainly spoil the



Vincent Brooks, Day & Son, Lith.

YOUNG & OLD BLUE & SILVER DUN DRAGOONS.
(LONDON FANCY)

very best strain of Reds. Yellows cannot improve Reds, but Reds are very useful in improving Yellows. They should have light-coloured wattles and flesh-coloured beaks. Both Reds and Yellows are free breeders and of good constitution.

"Blues seem to carry off the palm in respect to number of admirers; simply, I think, because they are more easily bred, and because they breed truer to markings than the other varieties; and as long as this is the case I have found it is sufficient to please a great many so-called Dragoon fanciers. Although the Blue classes are very large, it is surprising how few really Blue Dragoons are shown. Some are a shade lighter on the rump, some on the thighs or breast; and but few possess the same shade throughout back, belly, thighs, and rump, which is so essential in a Blue Dragoon. The beak-wattle should be light in colour, and powdery; the eye-wattle should be of a darker shade, and the inside, next the pupil, should be black; the pupil should be bright red or orange. The bars, if jet-black and well defined, do not, at least in my opinion, matter whether broad or narrow. The neck of this variety should be darker and more lustrous than the other portions of the body, with the beak black and ebony-like. You cannot cross any other colour with Blues with the effect of improving the Blues. Blacks are, I know, being used to keep up the size, but I think this is a great mistake, as there are plenty of large Blues to cross with without going to Blacks, which, if once introduced, spoil your whole strain. A two-year-old hen to a young cock will breed better birds than two young ones mated together. I would also remark that early-hatched birds, say those in March to May, are always much longer and better in feather than those hatched later; and on no account would I advise breeding after July, as the young birds are never so good or strong after that; besides, it gives the old birds a so much better chance to get through the moult. I have been surprised to find at various shows a great many Blues with the beak-wattle more on one side than the other. I cannot say the reason of this, whether it is from injury, or whether caused by the in-and-in breeding which I know some breeders to have followed, but certainly it is so, and it completely spoils the handsome appearance of the most perfect bird in other respects.

"Silvers should have dark bars—the darker the better—black if possible. The body should be white and silver-like, not of that creamy colour which follows the brown bar; the flights, tail, and neck a shade darker. The breast should be free from the copper tinge which is seen on so many specimens. The eye should be orange. I strongly object to a pearl or light-coloured eye. The beak should be flesh-coloured, and free from any dark stain. In breeding Silvers, I have invariably found that a young Blue cock paired to an old Silver hen will produce nearly all cocks. This is a great point, as all Silver breeders complain of the greater proportion of hens which they breed. One fancier, who in one season had bred eighteen Silver hens without a single cock, on my recommendation tried the above, and the following season bred three-fourths cocks. Every second generation Silvers should be crossed with Blues, or you lose the beautiful silver body, and the bar becomes lighter in colour. To select Blues for crossing do not choose those with light rumps and light-coloured beaks. This I know is the popular idea, and which nearly all the Silver breeders have been shipwrecked on, but it is wrong. Most of those birds have already descended, on one side or another, from Silvers, and it is more than probable from brown-barred Silvers; so to be certain, get the cross yourself. Choose therefore the best coloured young Blue Dragoon with jet-black bars you can get, and mate him to a Silver hen not less than three years old; the Blues produced from this cross pair again to Silvers, taking care that they are of a different strain and of different ages. You will then have a lot of Silvers which will breed for two generations without any further need of the Blue cross. To go on breeding the Silvers together after that would end in those nondescripts called Brown Bars. It is the same with almost any of the colours when

bred without a cross; they become faded and washed out, as if lacking energy. There have been very few successful breeders of Silvers; not more, I think, than three or four; and I think the cause of the failure has been the want of knowledge and patience. The foregoing plan is what I adopted, and by which I obtained my present strain of Silvers, some of which have lately found their way into nearly every Dragoon loft in the country, and two of which were claimed at the Crystal Palace Show at the enormous price (for Dragoons) of £15 each; the one an old cock (seven years old), still in prime condition and great vigour; the other a one-year-old bird, but of quite a distinct strain.

"Whites should have dark eyes, with both beak and eye-wattle as light in colour and powdery as possible. I greatly dislike a wattle of a red tinge, whether in a white or any other colour. Whites have been greatly neglected lately, and stand no chance in a general class; and as the shows where there are classes for Whites alone are very few, the number of admirers are very small; although, I am sure, nothing could be prettier than a well-matched pair of clean White Dragoons. They breed true to colour, and with ordinary care are easily kept clean. I hope more Dragoon fanciers will go in for this pretty variety. They also show off the other colours in a loft to better advantage.

"Grizzles lately are looking up a little, and quite time too, as they are a most interesting variety, which makes one scratch his head and puzzle his brain studying how to produce a perfect specimen. In breeding, commence, if possible, with Grizzles. A Grizzle should be blue and white on every feather; not splashed, but well mixed, as if both colours were dusted out of a pepper box. I prefer the blue to predominate. They should have black beaks, with bars on the wings as black and as distinct as possible. Should your Grizzles be too light in colour, you must cross with Blues; and if the result be Blues, cross them with birds of a distinct strain, but bred the same way; you will then obtain *some* Grizzles of the true colour. I have been trying very hard the last two years to improve this variety, and have met with fair success by following the above crosses. Perhaps there may be other breeders who adopt another plan, and with better success than I have with mine; but I have been unable to hear of anyone, although I have tried to get information far and near on the breeding of this variety, but without success; in fact, there seems to be very little known as to how to breed them.

"Although the Dragoon is not ranked among the high class varieties, still they should, I think, come very near them. I have heard fanciers of other varieties say, 'Oh! any place will do for the Dragoons, as they are hardy.' Any place will *not* do for them: they require quite as much attention to be successful with as any of the other varieties. In fitting up a loft for Dragoons it is not necessary that all the nest-boxes be on the floor. I have tried many plans, but the best nests are those described on page 15 of this work, Fig. 2. I should have a row on the floor, and five rows above, and, in fact, it is as well to have as many nests as possible; if the partitions in the nests are movable so much the better, as they then make capital pairing cages. The nest-pans should be half filled with sawdust, and the floor of the loft well sanded, and, as it is most essential that Dragoons be hard-feathered, this should be done often, and as soon as the young birds are a week old the pan should be changed for a clean one. In the front of my loft are sliding windows, which I close at night, and during the cold or wet weather. On the outside (the cote is in the garden) is a wire aviary, which extends *over* the roof, thus allowing the birds exercise as well as fresh air. The ground is covered with small gravel, which is raked over every morning, and renewed every spring. In the centre is the bath, a stone four feet by two feet, which gradually deepens to the middle; this I think much preferable to a tin or other vessel all one depth, and being outside does not wet the floor of the loft, and it only needs brushing out to be quite clean;

by strewing the gravel with common salt occasionally it answers all the purposes of a salt cat. For food use the very best, it is by far the cheapest, and get it *old:* tares, grey peas, tick beans, buck-wheat; and during the breeding season I add small quantities of wheat, barley, rice, groats, millet, and canary seed, or any other small seed, as I find those in the nest thrive better, and when out of the nest they learn to pick up much sooner when the seeds are small, and I am a great advocate for a variety of food. For water, I have a small cistern lined with lead, three feet by nine inches, with wire bars all round, just wide enough to admit the head of the bird to drink, thus preventing the birds bathing or soiling the water. The water runs in at one end and out at the other. By this means they get a continuous supply of fresh water. This arrangement is in the inside of my loft. I have been induced to enter into these particulars, not for the benefit of old fanciers, but for new beginners, and for the information of those who have so often asked, 'How is it Graham's birds are in such condition?' This question has not been asked only once, but scores of times; in fact, I or my man never visit a show but we are asked it. The best answer I can give is to call attention to the above rules; and although the strain has something to do with it, it must be borne in mind that any place or any treatment will *not* do for the 'Game-cock' of the pigeon fancy."

Such is a description by a well-known breeder of the modern "London" Dragoon—we say modern, because no doubt it is in some slight degree modified from what has been shown by some London fanciers in past years. It will be most convenient to give next the description of a modern "Birmingham" Dragoon with which we have been kindly furnished by Mr. J. W. Ludlow, who has often written upon this subject, and has been one of the steadiest advocates of the slighter model.

"As there still remains considerable differences of opinion as to what constitutes a proper Dragoon at his best and perfect state, it has been thought necessary to consider fully, and in all its bearings, both sides of the question. At the present time (as nearly every fancier of the day must know) we have *two standards* of this breed; and as the Dragoon subject is not a matter that can be determined by one or a few individual fanciers, the authors of this work, I think, have acted wisely in permitting space in these pages for the expression of the views of each side on this interesting subject.

"I need scarcely say that I am not an admirer of the 'London style,' nor am I likely to be persuaded of its merits so long as I am enabled to look upon such as are to me of incomparable beauty. Both styles are of one family, and each sort are allied to *Carriers;* but the Birmingham style is the farthest removed therefrom, the London type being the coarse, rough, weedy outcasts of the Carrier loft, being too light and sprightly, or in some cases too young for show Carriers, and yet too heavy and clumsy to be worthily ranked with the neat, light, tight, and more symmetrical Dragoon proper, such as represents the 'Birmingham' fancy.

"Now, in deference to the opinions of my fellow-fanciers, I would not like to say one word too much against their views or their choice. The subject after all is simply a *matter of choice*, but I am of opinion that all fanciers who will calmly give fair consideration to this subject will give an overwhelming verdict in favour of the Birmingham style. The London Dragoon, doubtless, is a big, bold bird; the greatest fault, perhaps, is that there is *too much* of him. He is coarse and overgrown, in fact is merely the rough groundwork from which a superior and more refined stock may be propagated. Yet such birds, even to the coarsest of them, have been chosen as victors at shows almost innumerable, though happily not by judges so numerous, but merely by a small selection of gentlemen, some of whom have been as uncompromising in their judgment as they are chimerical in their notions upon this subject. Thus, by the conscientious convictions of purely

Utopian fancies, this beautiful variety have been drifted about 'at sea' for a long time, the big bulky specimens standing the storm, I must admit, remarkably well. But after a storm we expect a calm. That calm has come, and upon quiet reflection it will be seen the tide of evidence goes strongly against the awards in the Dragoon classes. For the past five years they have indeed been chosen as the 'fashion of the day,' and a good long day too they have had, considering their actual merits; but such fitful fancies are now doomed to oblivion, so far as such rough stock being typical of the *élite* of that body of elegant birds, the excellence of which on common ground all must be agreed.

"I have no doubt that the admirers of the heavy style of bird will use in lieu of argument the fact of their favourites being selected as the victors at so many exhibitions, such being the only reasonable ground of opposition; but in reality such is not material to the issue, for, as I have said, there are but few good authorities (on this breed) who have been chosen to adjudicate upon their merits; and hence the ruling 'powers that be' having once pronounced favourably upon the coarse type, must necessarily have either renounced their former opinions, been subjected to charges of inconsistency, or else follow up and indorse at every show the objects of their first choice, whether right or wrong. This is one of the chief reasons which have operated in favour of the heavy birds, and been the primary cause of their recognition as show Dragoons; but such a selection has proved a great mistake, caused much dissatisfaction and astonishment in all quarters, and also called forth much attention with a view to its rectification and settlement; but in reply to the almost imploring questions and lamentations of unsuccessful exhibitors their echo only is heard, and *no* words of encouragement, consolation, or advice from those who, by their peculiar notions, have inflicted the injury and injustice which is felt amongst Dragoon breeders, not a word of argument from those adjudicators in whom confidence has been placed, but merely a bare practical system of pronouncing over and over again the same opinion upon the same specimens. Now, I do not complain of such fanciers for having shown their preference, nor do I question the integrity of our chosen judges, but after a long course of experience as a Dragoon fancier myself, I do question and marvel at their strange tastes and want of discrimination in the selection of Dragoons, and I do also complain that from the mere fact of there being say half a dozen admirers and exhibitors of the heavy coarse style of bird, and say three or four of our most popular judges who, although their decisions do accord with their honest convictions, are ready to tack on the diploma of merit wheresoever they may meet such birds, it should be taken for granted that their opinions are absolute or incontestable, more especially as I know they are not the sentiments of the bulk of our British fanciers, and will not bear a theoretical investigation, any more than their birds will bear comparison with the smaller and more handsome kind, which I admit have unfortunately been put aside for the time, and their position monopolised by the coarsest of the species. For the power is in the hands of the judges, although they are few in number. We may have a thousand exhibitors and double that number of breeders, but so long as fanciers are silent the evil continues. Endeavours have been made to ascertain *why* these inferior Carriers should be chosen as Dragoons. Questions have been asked, discussion courted, arguments solicited, still our judges enter not into the fray, but as masters of the post they simply remain silent spectators of this confusion of styles which they have been the main instruments of making more confounding. Surely, if there are any reasonable grounds why the bulky section of Dragoons should be chosen as the better kind, we ought to have some reason for such choice, and some of which should emanate from those whose tastes and discriminating powers are supposed to be superior to our own.

"These preliminary remarks are necessary to the fair understanding of the Dragoon problem.



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith

DRAGOONS.

BLUE

SILVER, BROWN BAR) SILVER BLACK BAR)

(BIRMINGHAM FANCY)

I would rather not have expressed them, but if not generally known they should be, in order to show the reason why the coarse imperfect kind have monopolised the place and carried off prizes over the true and perfect variety, and why they have been tolerated so long.

"I will now enumerate the points of excellence of a perfect Dragoon of the 'Birmingham' type. First, then, the bird should be of medium size—not large, nor yet actually small, but the 'happy medium.' Either extreme is dangerous, for if largeness be regarded as a point of merit the more bulky and ponderous specimens must have the preference; whereas, most of the larger birds will be found of an ungraceful, unwieldly, clumsy character, and a rough and coarse appearance all over, in accord with their bulky frames, and quite out of keeping with the chief features of the breed. Moreover, largeness is a conspicuous feature of the Carrier, and in proportion with his massive head and beak, but quite out of order with all the points of a Dragoon. Again, the Dragoon, although chiefly esteemed now as a show bird, was once specially valued as the fastest and surest English flier, and still (even in his more perfect figure) retains the flying and homing faculty to a large extent. His entire configuration shows this; his points were chosen as indicative of his aerial capabilities, and to some extent this must be our guide at the present day. Of course, as a show bird, we must judge by appearances almost entirely, but remembering at the same time that we are judging not merely a pretty toy, but looking for points which are indicative of intelligence, boldness, and endurance in combination, with a neat and symmetrical configuration; not with the 'fineness' of the Carrier (which is understood to mean *largeness*), but 'fineness' in its literal sense—refined and elegant. Further, as the Dragoon is a flier, the larger the bird the less capable is he of flying, especially the nearer he approaches the shape and bigness of the Carrier; for (as most fanciers know) such ponderous birds are often puzzled to fly from the front to the rear of their own domicile, much less perform any feats of flying. Largeness, then, being one of the attributes of the Carrier, the line of distinction between them and the Dragoons should be clearly discernible, so as to be conspicuous and unmistakable; but let it be understood, on the other hand, that smallness must not be fixed as a feature of excellence; for in that idea there is again danger ahead, and amongst the train of evils arising from it would be that breeders would have recourse to close-breeding, or winter-breeding, in order to keep them small, and thus raise mere pigmy Carriers, or puny offspring of a weak and degenerated character, and by such means lose that vigour, smartness, and boldness which all good Dragoons should possess. The *medium* size, then, is far preferable—a neat, compact, and elegant form, within which is more often embodied a vigorous constitution—since largeness does not always constitute strength or vigour, nor is smallness always indicative of physical weakness; but in the middle size we are, all through creation, more likely to obtain quality and vigour in perfect combination.

"The Dragoon should be of a neat, plump body, compact form, erect carriage, graceful movements, and of a wild and nervous temperament. Although in *pose* the bird should be erect, it is not that uprightness of body, straightness and outstretched appearance of the Carrier, but presenting an outline composed of more graceful curves; erect in body, yet apparently ever ready for a hasty departure.

"The *beak* should be long, strong, close-fitting, and straight; the distance from the centre of eye to tip of beak should measure, say 1⅝ inches; the mouth-line, or division of beak, running in an exact straight line (if it were continued) through the centre of eye. The lower mandible should be of good thickness, and not—as is often the case—hollowed out; nor should there be any spiky or spindle character observable, but a nice, thick, evenly-shaped beak. The warty substance thereon should not be of the too common, large, rough, irregular 'cauliflower,' or 'walnut' character, but small, and of an elongated shape, well packed upon the upper beak, and with a fair

and equal division line distinctly apparent down its centre. This beak-wart must not overhang the sides, nor be lop-sided, rough, or irregular. Of course certain allowances must be made for the sex, the cock birds having an extra supply of wart in accordance with their general masculine appearance; still the centre division of wart, in continuation of frontal bone, should be clear and apparent. Certain wrinklings do always appear upon the male, and with age upon both genders; still the original formation is preserved—the wrinkles, or puckers, should all converge to the same point upon the top and fore part of beak. The rough, lumpy, coarse, cauliflower excrescence is a grand feature of a Carrier, and an inherent quality in them, but is a positive disfigurement and blemish upon a Dragoon. Such a superfluity is both an eyesore to their appearance, and an impediment to their vision, and is not at all in conformity or unison with the graceful contour of the breed.

"The skull should appear narrow; the top of head is not actually flat, but rather low and elongated, which gives somewhat of that appearance; the occiput, or hind part of skull, should be prominent, as it adds to the apparent length and straightness of the head, without really increasing it; moreover, it is a phrenological or cranial development indicative of a large brain, and, as a consequence, a greater probability of possessing the homing faculty, and which all flying pigeons more or less should possess.

"The eye itself should be large and prominent, and in Blues of a deep rich orange colour, with an outer circle of deep and bright blood-red colour; the fleshy lash around the eye should be small, circular, and of a pale powdery white colour.

"The neck should be long and slender. The upper part, being very narrow, adds greatly to the refinement of shape. There should be no loose or flabby skin upon or hanging from the lower jaw, but the neck graduating nicely at its upper part into a clear curve, no matter what the position of the bird may be. The entire neck is more acutely tapered and rounder than that of the Carrier, and does not fall so straight, nor in such parallel lines, but descends more acutely from narrow throat to broad breast. The upper part of back and shoulders should be broad, as denoting the greatest strength where the actual motive power is most needed; the shoulders standing well out from the body, which is rather tapering. The flights and tail rather short; the former of a sharp pointed character, carried well up, and the tail also well raised from the ground. The under parts, from hocks to vent, should be as tight up and as spare as possible, both of flesh and feather. The legs should be long, and are generally at a good angle from thigh to fore part, showing an easy and elastic *pose*, the thigh being prominent, and the feet of good size.

"There are now nine recognised varieties of Dragoons, viz., Blues, Silvers (brown bars), Silvers (black bars), Red, Yellow, Grizzle, Chequer, White, and Black. These last named have of late been admitted into the category, and I am at a loss to know what our friends of the 'London fancy' are going to do with them. I rather imagine that they will have either to ignore them altogether, or else chisel out and sand-paper down their model to our limits; in the misty distance I cannot discern another remedy; for, what with the universally admitted big Carrier, and their big Dragoon, I fear they will get their standard in a big muddle, for the fancy at large can never suffer colour alone to constitute a breed, and therefore Black Dragoons cannot be reasonably shut out of the list simply because they are black. How, then, will these two sorts of big black-warted, long-faced pigeons bear comparison? That remains to be seen. So I proceed with our midland standard, which, so far as I am individually concerned, will remain permanent and unalterable.

"*Blues* should be of a good sound colour throughout their plumage, back, belly, breast, and thigh—all of a nice uniform colour—without showing any traces of the feather markings thereon; but the entire body, composed as it is of smaller feathers than most pigeons, should look hard, feel tight

and firm, and appear as though clad in a close, well-fitting skin. The neck is of course resplendent with iridescent, vivid colours, and the beak and nails should be black. The bars should be jet-black, and decidedly narrow, as it not only greatly improves their appearance, but is in perfect accord with their hardness and tightness of feather. For, in all pigeons with broad bars, there will be found a corresponding increase in the *size of feather*, and, therefore, a consequent looseness of plumage, which is diametrically in opposition to the covering of a good Dragoon. I do not approve of the white-rumped kind: such is unquestionably a blemish; and, in my numerous arguments and writings on this subject, I am not aware that I ever upheld such as a desirable type, or considered them so perfect in colour as those of a good sound uniform hue. Although it may be supposed that I did prefer them, such was not the fact; but I still contend that the points of *form* constitute the cardinal features of the race. We should judge them as Dragoons *first*, then make close scrutiny into their colour-properties, and not entirely reject first-class white-rumped Dragoons, simply on account of that undesirable badge, and award the prizes to mere Blue pigeons, with but little or no affinity or resemblance to Dragoons in make or shape whatever, as I have known frequently done. Since that time, however, the sound, true-blue Dragoon has been produced in large numbers, so that now we can afford, in nearly every case, to ignore the white and light-backed birds. Therefore, I would say, as I always have said, look well to colour, and in this particular make choice of the brightest and purest uniform coloured ones throughout their feathering, not necessarily to give preference to smoky-tinted ones, nor white-backed ones, but, as has been very judiciously remarked with regard to other breeds in this work, give preference to specimens that present a good general appearance in all points, rather than regard one or more extraordinary features as conclusive of their superiority.

"*Silvers* (brown barred) are of a very pale, delicate, whity-brown tint, with narrow bars of a dark brown colour, and a band of the same tint near to the extremity of the tail. The flights, too, are of a similar dark tone, deepening more and more towards their outer tips. The neck is beautifully enlivened by a rich coppery-bronze colour; there should be as little green tinge intermixed as possible, the pure coppery lustre alone being preferable. The eye should be 'red pearl,' *i.e.*, the iris of a pearly-white caste, dotted around with specks of brilliant red, but no trace of yellow must be apparent therein. Beak and nails flesh-coloured.

"*Silvers* (black barred) are of a very pale, delicate, creamy-grey tint, the bars being of a very deep, *almost* black tone; in fact the more closely they resemble positive black the more should they be esteemed. The head, rump, and tail are invariably of a darker colour, with a bluish tinge conspicuous on those parts; upon the neck, too, there is a distinct green cast of colour caused by the play of light thereon. The eyes should be 'red pearl.' The beak and nails as brown barred kind, fleshy-coloured, with a streak of brown along the centre ridge of top mandible.

"*Reds* should be of a deep rich chestnut colour, and should be entirely free from variation in shade on back, breast, thighs, and under parts, which unfortunately are sadly too often of a dark dirty-looking shade. The eye should be of an 'orange-red' colour, bright and full. The beak and nails light flesh tint, with a streak of brown upon the upper surface.

"*Yellows* should be of a deep, clear, rich uniform tone from head to tail; in fact upon every feather, purity, depth, and richness of colour being most desirable; light, mealy, mossy-feathered ones betray an injudicious cross with Whites, as also does the dingy back, tail, and thigh reveal the introduction of an unwise dark cross. The neck should be enlivened with a bright, glossy, rich yellow of a little deeper tone, and as free as possible from any other colour, as such, however small, distinctly discloses an impure taint, whether near or remote. The eyes should be orange-red. Beak and nails flesh-coloured.

"*Grizzles* are the produce of a systematic crossing of Blues and Whites, in which the perfect admixture or combination of the feathering of each is clearly apparent. They are a sort of pepper-and-salt grizzly colour; the head and upper part of neck more especially being grey or 'powdered;' the flights and tail being dark externally; the quills and under-feathering *white;* the chief shafts of quills being streaked with dark colour; the beak and nails are generally dark, if streaked such is perfectly admissible. The chief desideratum is to obtain the perfect amalgamation of colour throughout, and thus produce a complete grey or grizzled aspect throughout its entire body. Some fanciers prefer those with the darker head and neck, but I rather incline to those with a more profuse sprinkling of white upon the head and neck. This kind is gaining popularity. They are, by reason of numerous crosses, of a strong and hardy constitution; indeed, I have known a first-class *show* bird of this sort that was the winner of a 100 miles fly against all competitors. This kind at present do not breed many true to type, a variety of oddly-marked birds frequently appearing, amongst which are a good number of white-winged Blues having a distinct Pouter-like *crescent* of white upon the crop, also a number of almost white birds with dark beaks, flights, and tails. The sort, however, are steadily improving since being raised to the dignity of show stock. The eye of these birds is a deep brilliant orange-red.

"*Chequers*, as their name signifies, are a dappled combination of black and blue upon the back and sides. This chequering or dappling must be regular, clear, and distinct, a sort of radiation of markings from the bars up to the top of shoulder, finishing off at its juncture with the hackle. Upon the breast, too, are faint traces of similar markings, but to a much less degree. Down the back even to the rump should have the chequering well defined, though the majority at present are minus this finishing touch. Head, neck, tail, thighs, and flights are as ordinary blue pigeons. Beak and nails black. Eye orange-red. This kind may be either kept to itself or crossed with Blues; other crosses should only be resorted to under special circumstances, which within limited space cannot be defined. They may be produced of a lighter shade by crossing with *Silvers*, or deepened in tone by the occasional introduction of *Blacks*, so as to meet exceptional cases. Care should always be observed in this sub-variety, as in all Dragoons, to match, for breeding purposes, birds with perfect properties at least between them, if perfect individual specimens cannot be obtained; but to rigidly avoid mating two birds, *both* of which may be deficient of any one or more of the essential points, but to put together either birds of a reliable good pedigree, or if an unknown but good-looking one is at hand, to take care that he possesses desirable points to a marked degree, the image of which you would like to stamp in your stock.

"*White*, as a matter of course, should be pure and spotless; eyes, dark hazel; beak and nails, flesh-coloured. Very frequently may be seen good-looking birds of fine style and shape, but with a very, very faint trace of colour in the neck. Such birds cannot be regarded as any other than Whites, still not even the faintest shadow of colour should be traceable in *proper* Whites, and those possessing any colour have some time or other most assuredly been tainted by the cross of a coloured specimen. The neck is bright and silvery, but it is, if possible, of a more pure and attractive brilliant whiteness than the other parts.

"*Blacks* should be deep and glossy throughout, and free from the too common blue black, upon which faint bars are frequently discernible; eyes, deep fiery red, beak and nails black. In other respects these (like all the sub-varieties) should possess the same properties of formation herein described, and to be identically of the same general configuration, colour only being the distinguishing mark.

Very little, if anything, need be said as to the housing and accommodation of these birds, as these points, in former chapters, have been well considered and provided for; but I would just say

that the Dragoon is a very pugnacious pigeon, and his long and strong beak is a very formidable weapon when used in combat. Irreparable injury may speedily be inflicted by him upon any smaller and more delicate kinds, and even amongst themselves; therefore ample space should always be provided, and the several compartments, or allotted spaces for each pair, should be either well separated, placed asunder, or else conspicuous marks made upon them whereby each pair of birds may easily distinguish their own quarters. The Dragoon is well suited to enjoy freedom, and if their owners live in the country, or in the suburbs of our towns, where the atmosphere is comparatively clear and the habitation somewhat detached, or entirely isolated, there is no reason why they should not have entire liberty, and be brought up, when wanted, *hard as a board*, and in perfect condition. My habit has always been to indulge my stock of Dragoons with perfect freedom for at least a few of the brightest hours of the day, and although I have but few at the present time, I have for many years kept a large stock, and been an ardent admirer of them.

"If these birds are bred and kept chiefly for exhibition purposes, rather than a pure gratification of the tastes of their owners, extra care should be taken to keep them always in the height of plume. *Condition* must be kept up, without which hopes are futile, for no matter how perfect they may be upon a summary of points, if, from ill-health or other cause they are not in tip-top condition, they cannot show off their good qualities to advantage. Remember, too, that a *good match* is half a win; an ill-assorted pair is at once an eyesore, and therefore passed by. In setting out one's plans as an exhibitor many of the pleasures of the breeder must be sacrificed, for, as is known, you cannot do *both* with any degree of success. As a regular exhibitor, you must remove your birds from eggs or young to suit the shows—in fact, toss over every consideration. This I could never do. I look with pleasure upon our winter exhibitions as they come round; I enjoy the friendly spirit of rivalry which is aroused by them, and occasionally I join the contest; but, as a rule, I prefer my birds at home; and it is through the breeding season (in a well-stocked, well-ordered stud of birds) that one acquires a thorough knowledge of the habits and peculiarities of pigeons, which no amount of study of them at exhibitions can possibly convey.

"In breeding these birds no fixed rules can safely be recorded, for under special circumstances an entire change is frequently necessary. For breeding Blues, Blues should be mated with Blues, as a rule; but under this system even, if long continued, or close breeding be resorted to, there is a natural tendency to become lighter in colour, until they approach a washed-out blue or silver tint. In such cases a cross with a neat-made Black will, if not at once, ultimately restore the deeper tone, and also insure uniformity of colour on back and thigh and richness of hackle. *Silvers* are produced from Blues; the lighter toned Blues more especially will frequently throw Silvers, and by these Silvers being selected and mated to their like from time to time the colour has been vastly improved and established. I have no doubt, however, that the majority of good Silvers now in existence are rather close-bred birds. Singular to state, of the Silver variety, from seventy to eighty per cent. are hen birds, and this, with other things, is proof of their consanguineous extraction; for it is a fact that (in pigeons) the closer the affinity to each other the greater is the preponderance of hen birds. Silvers should be kept to Silvers, but may occasionally be crossed with the faintest of Blues, and that but seldom, or the majority of the issue will revert to the original colour; the more so because with Silvers there is a natural tendency to breed to the parent stock, the chief objects of the cross being to intensify the 'bar' and maintain the stamina of the race.

"Reds and Yellows should only be crossed with Blacks. These may be mixed together in a judicious manner, taking care not to infuse too much of the Black cross, or its effect will be soon apparent in either small ticks of black throughout the body, or by a dingy back, belly, and thigh; but the rule should be, Yellows to Reds, and Reds to Blacks, in cases where a deeper and richer

tone of colour is needed; otherwise, the colours may be matched together for breeding as for showing, provided that form properties are such as required. The admixture of colours should be *gradually* made. Black to yellow is too powerful at once, for, although useful, and actually needed, it should be transmitted *through the Reds*, and by this method the colours are not developed in distinct patches, nor yet in dingy smears, but absorbed, as it were, into the body, and bursting forth in the entire web of feather, evenly, and with richer and more uniform effect.

"Dragoons are prolific birds, and very fair nurses too. They raise their own young as well as any foster-parents could do; therefore such aid is not needed. It is remarkable to watch the daily increase in the size of their nestlings, and the still more rapid growth of their *beaks*. It is not well to speculate too much upon the qualities of 'squabs,' for they are 'as variable as the shade.' There are, however, one or two parts upon which first attention should be fixed as indicative of what their merits or demerits may probably be when fully fledged, viz., the *straightness* of head and beak, and the colour of the feathers upon the rump and thigh as they burst forth from their bonds. More than this we cannot determine by any positive calculation, though there are other minor points which lead us to hope and expect that we may each day see developing new good qualities, which time only can clearly reveal.

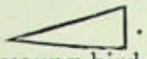
"Beware of malformation, such as wry breasts, crooked beak, twisted toes, or straddling gait, as such blemishes generally arise from a physically used-up constitution; also shun the weakly, sickly issue of an ill-assorted pair, or the produce of too young, too old, or delicate parents, or of winter-raised young. Such birds in a loft are both unpleasing to the sight, and comparatively useless either as stock or exhibition birds."

As Mr. Ludlow seems to admit that the "London" style of Dragoon has at all events chiefly *won* of late, we are quite willing to admit that the *very* rough and unshapely-wattled birds we have seen occasionally shown years ago would not and ought not to win now: but we must also add that we have little fault to find with the plates he has given as his "Birmingham" ideal, and that these are also by no means what was represented as the Birmingham Dragoon of years ago. Without further arguing this point, however, and as he especially grounds his opinions upon the necessity of distinguishing the Dragoon from the Carrier, we will proceed now to give our own detailed description of what we consider the Dragoon should be, in which we hope to make clear that while, as all admit, there is perhaps about one-third of Carrier blood in its original composition, it is really distinct from both Carrier and Horseman, and that any intelligent fancier can readily, by characteristic signs, distinguish the three.

It is necessary first to remark that the Dragoon, like all wattled pigeons, has two periods in its life at which it can properly be shown, viz., under one year and over two years of age, whence we have amongst our representations shown a young bird. Like the Carrier, the Dragoon looks very different at these different periods, and this is one reason of the differences of opinion, some forming their "eye" on the young bird and some on the old. But a more common reason we believe to be, that like all other wattled pigeons, a pair of even *good* birds will produce a lot of weeds in proportion to a few good ones. Now, in birds *heavily* wattled, the difference between good and bad is so conspicuous as not to lead to many mistakes after a little knowledge has been acquired: but the Dragoon being less marked in its head points, the amateur is less able to detect the faults which a keen judge readily sees, and thinking that the young birds from his good pair are good necessarily, and the Dragoon being a free breeder and good rearer, and giving him a large progeny, he is very apt to get his eye *falsely* educated by the majority or most "skinnum" quality class of his birds. For we must say we believe that the Dragoon is about as hard to breed really

good as a Carrier. Few have bred half a dozen specimens fairly approaching what is desired, and it is hard work even to produce *one* bird in a season, which a good judge can find no glaring fault in upon a close inspection. Such birds being thus rare, while many people do not regard the Dragoon as at all a high-class pigeon, and therefore ground their notions more upon the *average* of what they see than in other cases they would do, is in our opinion the chief reason why so many favour the thin-faced, spindle-beaked birds, which can be bred by the dozen with little difficulty except as regards colour. But such a thin beak is in our opinion one of the very worst faults a Dragoon can have. In the first place it is supposed to be a bold, strong, and powerful bird, and though not now generally bred for flying, other varieties having superseded it, we still expect to see traces of its old flying faculties. Now, when a young bird has a spindle-beak, it is almost sure to be also narrow in the flight and tail feathers, and weak in the quills, showing loss of vigour, and accordingly we generally find it is also a weak and small-bodied bird, with little substance in the bone of the leg. Similarly, such a bird very seldom carries the butts of its wings projecting at the shoulders, but tucked close in to the body; and finally, when we add that the most spindle-beaked birds are mostly those bred late in the season, it will be seen we have good reasons for our dislike of this fault, for connecting it with weakness of constitution to some extent, and for placing nearly as much value on a good heavy beak in a Dragoon as in a Carrier, the good beak being an indication both of other good properties and of a strong constitution.

In proceeding to consider the Dragoon in detail we shall take as our standard bird the Blue, as of all others usually found the most perfect in points, as being in all probability the origin of all the Dragoons, and as formerly used for flying purposes. The size we would prefer as what may be described as "one size less" than a Carrier. The beak should be rather short, thick, and as close-fitting as possible, especially when young, but with age it is apt to shrivel a little, as in all wattled pigeons. It should appear blunt at the point, and the lower mandible just a trifle less in substance than the upper. As to absolute length we care little, as if a bird be so symmetrical as to deceive the eye and "look" well, we would never condemn it for mere measurement; besides, an extra large specimen must measure rather over an average, and a small one under. Still we may say that in our opinion a medium-sized bird should not measure over one inch and five-eighths from the centre of the eye to the point of the beak; and while the mere bald rule-measure should not be laid too much stress upon, we would certainly say that a bird either measuring or *looking* long in the face like a Carrier shows a recent cross, or at least too much of that breed, and should not be allowed to compete as a Dragoon. No bird ought to measure over this unless a very large one, and a hen will usually be about one-sixteenth less than the measurement we have given for cocks. Of course a very large bird *ought* to be longer, or it would appear actually short in face. The *colour* of the beak is very important in a Blue Dragoon, as it carries with it more or less of the whole colour of the bird. We never yet saw one with a light or horn-coloured beak, but it was accompanied by a too light or soft colour of feather, approaching the Silver, and nearly always by a light rump and thighs as well. On the other hand, if the beak be the proper colour—black—on both mandibles, the body colour will be almost sure to be of the proper deep, sound shade, and it is rare to find such a bird with light rump or thighs. Generally speaking it will also be found that if the beak be light the colour of the eye is faulty too; and, on the whole, according to the standard we are laying down, we may say we *never* saw a Blue Dragoon with light beak that was good enough in other colour points for the show pen, and all the few birds—not exceeding perhaps twenty out of the thousands we have seen—which we have seen or had of the rare but only *correct* deep blue, had black beaks. Moreover, this is a second point which marks the bird off from the Carrier, and therefore to be insisted upon.

The next important point is the beak-wattle, which should appear on the upper mandible alone, lower or jew-wattle being a fault, and again to be urged as distinctive from the allied breed. The shape of the wattle should also totally differ; for while that of the Carrier bulges out, both in the centre portion and in various "cauliflower" excrescences, and is desired to tilt or arch forward away from the skull, that of the Dragoon is as true a "peg" shape as possible. This term has been sneered at as indefinite, but has been well understood by fanciers from time immemorial; however, to avoid any ambiguity, we may describe it as large at the back, and tapering as straightly and evenly as possible to almost a point in front; the back not being tilted, but as perpendicular as possible, the ideal line resembling a triangle, thus  . The actual shape is of course not so accurate as this, though not so far from it in a young bird; but like the Carrier, few remain perfectly shaped after the first season, when the wattle begins to grow somewhat wrinkled. It is apt then to become irregular and faulty as in all wattled pigeons, and perfect wattles on old birds are proportionately rare and valuable. When fully developed the wattle appears as in the annexed figure (Fig. 46), which is drawn of the natural size, and shows in profile what we consider a perfect Dragoon head. In young birds the wattle varies little in shape, and is smooth and even; and

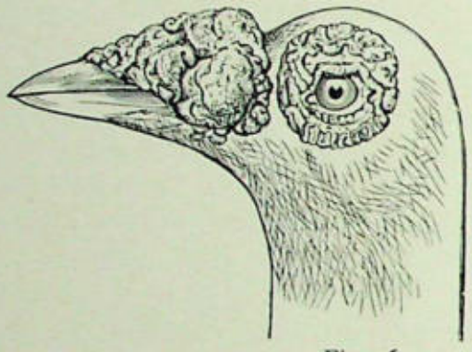


Fig. 46.

hence some say the wattle never should alter from the young shape. But we can only say that the sole shape of wattle and beak that will remain thus unaltered is the thin and "skinnum" type. Lots of these often occur as the produce of even good birds; *they* can be bred by hundreds, and will remain the same type till the end of their lives; but the very fact that it is so, and that the other type demands so much judgment and care to produce, is in our opinion a conclusive proof as to which is really the high-class or fancy pigeon. We may add that the wattles both in the figure above and in the coloured plates are not ideals, but such as we have seen many of in actual Dragoons.

In early-bred birds the wattle will begin to "break" before the age of twelve months, and at about fifteen months, as in the Carrier, the style of wattle can be pretty nearly guessed. Before it thus "breaks," it is clearly divided into two apparent portions, by a line down the centre; and as it grows and wrinkles it should still preserve this character, and ultimately reach such a growth that the highest part at the back should be on a level with the top of the skull. It reaches maturity at three to four years old, and should then measure about two and a half inches round at the biggest part, and not more, unless in a bird very large altogether. The length should be rather short, say three-quarters of an inch from front to back at three years, and rather less when younger; and the length of beak in front should not exceed three-eighths of an inch, so as not to show that property so much desired in a Carrier, viz., length of beak before the wattle.

The skull, after the age of eighteen months, should be flat, and wide at the back, gradually

tapering towards the beak, giving a wedge shape when looked at from the top. This is clearly shown in Fig. 47, drawn natural size from the same old bird as Fig. 46, and which also shows the very same, and what we consider a perfect beak-wattle viewed from the top. But this wedge-shape is only seen at about the age stated and later; when young the skull always appears rounder, or what is known as barrel-shaped. This has been another cause of error, as fanciers seeing fine young birds known to be good, have imagined that the old ones would be the same shape of skull, and hence have preferred those which really were so, not knowing that such were in reality the worst of all; whereas the very young birds on which they founded this idea, if seen by them when mature, would be found as we represent.

While we have said there should be no jew-wattle, we must add there are sometimes slight signs of it in large fine birds, at the base of the lower mandible. Good birds are so rare, we would never discard one only for this fault, which was possessed by the best Blue Dragoon we ever saw. We may add here that it is difficult to "improve" the wattle of a Dragoon much, by cutting, as is so often done with Carriers. There is so much less stuff to work upon, that without taking off a

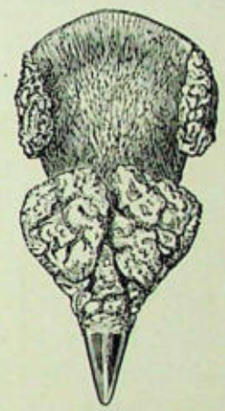


Fig. 47.

great deal more than most wattles can afford, the places cut appear so unnaturally smooth and free from the proper wrinkles or roughness, that any experienced judge can detect it. A very little is possible without detection; but such cutting as some Carriers are subjected to is simply impossible in a Dragoon.

The eye-wattle, or "lash," as some call it, should be in a young bird smooth and fine. Here again is a source of mistake; people being told that some young Dragoon is a "grand bird all over," by a known good judge, try to carry the type "in their eye" as it is called, and think that no bird is good unless it is the same, forgetting that the pattern they are thinking of was shown them as a grand *young bird*, and not a mature one. In short, no one can ever properly understand a Dragoon who does not understand and remember that all wattled pigeons are *quite different in nearly all head points* at young and mature age. The fact is recognised in Barbs and Carriers; it is often *not* recognised in Dragoons, and hence the mischief and the unjust suspicion, when the judges have simply been considering young and old birds. At about the age of fifteen months the back part of the wattle begins to lose the circular shape and become what is known as "pinched," showing more of the cere at top, bottom, and particularly front, than at the back; it also becomes more and more wrinkled and hard-looking. If the beak be of the proper black, the inner edge of the eye-wattle is dark or nearly black also, adding much to the smartness of the bird. The real dark eye is also generally accompanied by a darker blue and a good sound-

coloured rump. In fact, the dark or "gipsy" eye-wattle is one of the most important points in a blue Dragoon. It shows the bird is really *Dragoon-bred;* and such a one rarely becomes too heavy in eye-wattle, as the light-wattled birds often do, and is also less likely to become overgrown even in beak-wattle.

The size of the eye-wattle should never be larger than a sixpence in cocks, and rather less in hens. It really looks less on the living bird, the large bold eye occupying so much of the centre as to diminish the apparent magnitude.

The neck appears in a young bird about two-thirds the length of that of a Carrier, but when older it scarcely appears more than half. The shape is also quite different, the Carrier being as thin as possible down to the very shoulders, while the neck of the Dragoon is rapidly and gradually tapered from being broad at the shoulders to the throat. And this brings us to the gullet. Several very good fanciers prefer a large gullet, and others not. It is a point often found with good-beaked birds of mature age, and was bred for by old fanciers, who considered this as another point in which the bird should differ from the Carrier. When so bred, it is a true point of a true bird: but for our part, as it tends to prevent a bird being straight-faced, and spoils the beauty of the best Carrier otherwise that ever lived, we cannot see how it improves a Dragoon; and this is the only point on which we are inclined to disagree with the old fanciers. As, however, they certainly did breed for it, we will not here pronounce either way, but simply state our own preference for a nice clean run under the throat. True, the gullet should be what a Carrier fancier would term full, or at least rather full, as comparison of the respective heads will show; still, it should in our opinion *not* be so full as to spoil a nice clean curve from beak to breast, much less show any loose skin.

In regard to the carriage of the wings, the butts should stand sharply out at the shoulders, projecting as much as possible; and in this property only does the Dragoon resemble the Carrier pigeon, and should be as alike as possible, the projecting shoulders being highly necessary to give the appearance of wide chest and graceful carriage which is desired. As to length of flights, however, this is usually less, only reaching to within about an inch and a half of the end of the tail, as stated by Mr. Graham, whereas the flights of the Carrier reach within half an inch. In some very early-bred birds the flights will be rather longer, and in many good birds this difference is not seen owing to the tail being shorter. In birds with good beaks, if the flights be opened there will be found to be great strength in the quills; but if thin-beaked not: so that, as before observed, the beak alone is a good test of the strength of the bird. The length of tail and flight feathers greatly depends on the time of year the bird is bred, the parents, and the place where it is kept; as cleanliness and a good flight will increase the length of feather. But it is always shorter than in Carriers, and no Dragoon such as we describe will ever be found of such length, or at least such *apparent* length of flight and tail as the Carrier. There is another difference: the flights of the Carrier, when of the proper length, are often seen crossed over the tail at the ends of the two longest flight feathers, whereas the flights of the Dragoon lie so close to each side of the tail as almost to make the whole look as if carved out of one solid piece, especially when in high condition.

The legs ought to appear thick compared with the size of the bird, and should be set well back so as to allow a good upright carriage of body. It is only when birds are well put together in this way that the back can present the slightly hollow appearance between the shoulders which gives so much smartness to a pigeon, one whose legs are too far forward almost always being clumsy and hog-backed. The length of leg from foot to hock should be rather long, we prefer not less than one and a half inches, but the thigh should be short, or rather *appear* short, being thus

again different to the Carrier, which is wanted to show as much thigh as possible. The birds some people call the "true type" will often show even more length of thigh than a Carrier; and we will go so far as to say we would not make a leading point of this, and condemn an otherwise good bird for a long thigh; but still it *should* be short, in order to keep up the distinction.

Of the plumage, so close and hard, we need say nothing beyond Mr. Graham's description, except that to look its best a bird must be both healthy, clean, and in good condition.

The bars of a Blue Dragoon we prefer narrow, as looking more stylish. When broad they appear more as if running into each other, are more irregular at the edges and in shape, and not so neat altogether. Still we would never discard a good bird for the width or shape of the bars, provided they were black; often, however, we see signs of a brown shade, showing a cross with the Silvers, which those who desire really good Blues should keep from using as much as possible.

In order to meet still further the statements of those who say that the type of Dragoon we have now laid down cannot be distinguished from the Carrier, and to help the young fancier to keep distinctly in his mind the proper and distinguishing points of both breeds, we will put them in brief, in parallel columns. It will be seen that they only agree in at most three points—projecting wings, hollow shoulders, and carriage, and in neither of these do the "Birmingham" fanciers at all differ, they being in fact not points peculiar to any pigeon, but belonging to general symmetry alone.

CARRIER.	DRAGOON.
Face as long as possible, not less than one inch and seven-eighths from centre of the eye.	Face not exceeding one inch and five-eighths, unless a very large bird.
Beak-wattle—1. On both mandibles. 2. Four and a quarter inches round, and as much more as possible. 3. Tilted, and largest at centre parts.	Beak-wattle—1. On upper mandible only. 2. Not exceeding two inches and a half round. 3. Not tilted, but a true, straight peg-shape, largest at extreme back.
Beak—White or flesh-colour. Long in front of wattle.	Beak—Black. Short in front of wattle.
Eye-wattle—Very large, not less than one inch and one-eighth in diameter, even or circular, and soft-looking.	Eye-wattle—Small, wrinkled, pinched behind, hard-looking; dark in colour, called "gipsy-eyed."
Skull—Narrow, and same width from front to back.	Skull—Broad; very broad behind, and tapering to the front.
Gullet—Small, and clean cut.	Gullet—Opinion varies, but at least rather full.
Neck—Long as possible. As nearly same thickness as possible from throat to shoulders.	Neck—Moderate length, and tapering or widening gradually from throat to shoulders.
Breast full and wide, wing-butts projecting.	Breast—Similar to the Carrier.
Flights—Nearly as long as tail, and often crossed above it.	Flights—One inch and a half shorter than tail, and never crossed; the shorter it appears the better.
Thighs and legs both as long as possible, the thighs especially.	Thighs short. Length of leg good, say one inch and a half.
Back—Slightly hollow.	Back—Similiar to Carrier.
Whole bird—Slender, and as long as possible in feather.	Whole bird—Compact, and rather short in feather.
Carriage—Upright and stretching.	Carriage—Upright and tall.

On the other hand, taking the so-called "Birmingham" model, we think it will appear that in every single point, except that of size (easily bred either way, and we simply prefer the larger bird as the stronger one, and for no other reason), and rather less beak-wattle (which being *infinitely* easier to breed of the proper shape, makes the bird so far more opposite to our idea of a "high-class pigeon"), it approaches nearer the Carrier than the standard we have laid down. The long, thin beak; the narrow skull, of same width from front to back; the eye-wattle, larger, thinner, circular, and fleshy; the pale beak, which, though we must admit not recommended by Mr. Ludlow, we have far more often seen than dark beaks upon "Birmingham" Dragoons; the long, thin neck; the long, slender shape of body; the long thighs; all these are points in which the so-called "pure" Dragoon type resembles the Carrier and not the Dragoon.

They are points of *bad* Carriers, simply "bred down" or dwarfed, and, in fact, bad Carriers in miniature; and any who wish this type can easily breed it in the following manner: Get a Blue Dragoon hen of a *clear* blue, even if of a silvery cast; and match it to a fourth-rate or very late-bred Blue Carrier cock with a white rump. By this cross you are almost sure to get good colour, good black bars, a nice long skewer beak, narrow skull, and circular eye-wattle; and also another property Blue Carriers are seldom deficient in, a good length of feather, and long legs and thighs. Any who desire them can easily obtain them in this way. But as our own ideas of the Dragoon were derived years ago from those very districts which, in our opinion, *made* the bird and then handed it down to the present generation, viz.:—London, Manchester, Newcastle, and the districts round them; we cannot depart from the traditions which we *know* have been thus handed down from father to son. We have not, it is true, sought to force our ideas upon others, and hence we have requested Mr. Ludlow, one of the steadiest and most able advocates of the so-called "Birmingham" Dragoon, both to state his ideas of the bird, and to represent that ideal as with the "London" fancy; but passing by the fact that his ideas, as now described, are not in all respects the same as formerly advocated and pourtrayed by him, there are considerable differences in even the three birds he has put before us; and as he has freely criticised our views, it is not unimportant to point them out. The brown-barred Silver, then, shows a fine pointed beak, though somewhat thicker than what Mr. Ludlow has formerly upheld. The Blue, however, shows quite a different class of beak, being a great deal larger and thicker than the Silver, and in fact having the appearance of a "made" Carrier's beak, and looking nearly, if not quite as long, for the size of the bird, *as* a Carrier's. Thirdly, we come to the dark-barred Silver, which differs both in length, shape, and thickness of beak, and which we would, in fact, willingly accept as *our* ideal of a *young* Dragoon's head in all but eye-wattle, and is, indeed, in all but that one point even more to our taste than the young Blue Mr. Ludlow has drawn as *our* ideal of a young "London" bird. Seeing, then, these three types, differing even from each other, we cannot wonder they differ from us; but we must add that we have never yet seen a specimen of the so-called "Birmingham" Dragoon, which resembled either Mr. Ludlow's Blue or black-barred Silver, and for many years now we have attended the Birmingham Show and various meetings of the Birmingham Dragoon fanciers. This, however, is perhaps scarcely a fair objection, since no doubt the birds are given as ideals to be aimed at. Taking them in that sense, the eye-wattle we may pass, though we doubt if a Dragoon was ever seen as represented in the shape of that part; but coming to our friend's main contention, that a Dragoon should never at any time show more beak-wattle than is seen in these representations, we say positively that such is possible if they stick to the fine beak of the brown-barred Silver; but that they will find it *impossible* to breed birds with such *beaks* as represented on the dark-barred Silver, or Blue, which will not show, when mature, much more *wattle*. Such never *has* been seen yet, and we believe never will be; for as soon as you get a well-formed, thick beak on a Dragoon, so soon do you, willing or unwilling, get with it a beak-wattle of fair dimensions; while a thin spindle-beak, on the contrary, is an equally sure guarantee of little wattle on the beak and generally too much round the eye. Our own plates, on the other hand, are not, as is the case with many pigeons shown in this work, mere ideals; we have seen and know now birds fully equal to them in the possession of various fanciers, and they are not in any sense artificial standards, except so far as the reproductive process of printing them may have failed in some cases to convey the exact shade of colour in any of our pigeons. But we do *not* consider a bird showing more beak-wattle than we have represented (the plate of the Yellow Dragoon showing the outside development we would allow) eligible to

compete as a show Dragoon. We do *not* advocate a bird with a lot of either eye or beak-wattle; and we consider and maintain that it is as difficult to obtain a perfectly-shaped wattle on a Dragoon as on a Carrier. There are, indeed, very few birds comparatively which we can regard as perfect, or nearly so. The first pair of really good Blues we ever saw were shown by Mr. Jones Percival at Birmingham, and so good were they as to make all the others insignificant. These passed into

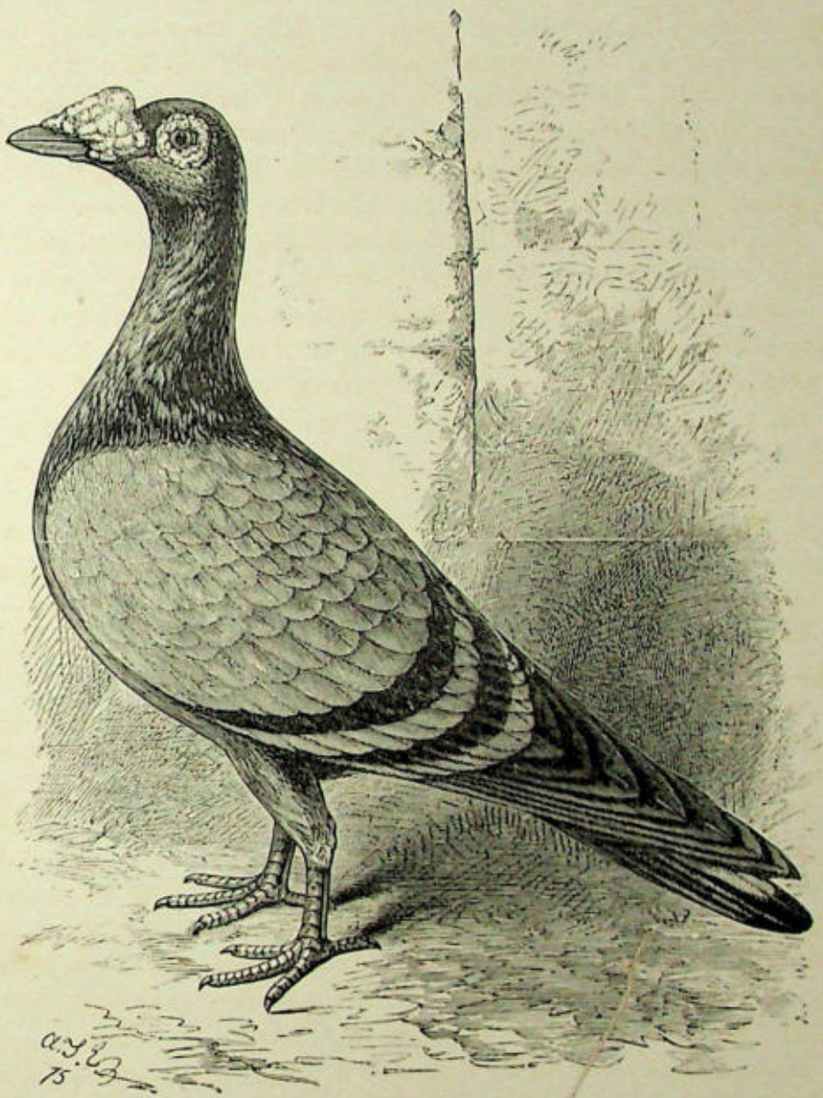


Fig. 48. - Blue Dragoon—Cup at Crystal Palace, 1874.

the possession of Mr. F. Crossley, and gained more honours in competition than any pair of birds, so far as we know, ever shown. The following season came a pair from Mr. South, which took first honours at the same great show as Mr. Percival's had done the preceding year; and so good were they that, as they never were shown together in our presence, we never could make up our minds which were the best. We do remember, however, that they were so marvellously well matched as to give rise to a strong suspicion that both were cocks, but this was proved wrong by the birds breeding; and singularly enough they then *produced* more really fine specimens than we ever knew bred by one pair of Dragoons. Both these pairs were the true type, as here described,

and we must confess we have never since seen their equals as pairs, as it is extremely difficult to obtain hens good enough, really, to match the cocks. But some very grand single birds have been shown; and some of our readers may like to see a portrait of one which, shown by Mr. F. Graham, won the cup at the Crystal Palace in 1874, and was, in our opinion, the best bird of his year. Drawn many months after the sketches for our coloured plates, it will show that these are not "fancy" sketches, but that birds have been and are shown possessing all the points described.

We have next to consider the breeding of the Blue Dragoon. Most fanciers seem to prefer breeding the Blues and Silvers together when a cross is required, and this is the right course for breeding Blues of the silvery tinge of colour; but this colour and this cross are nearly always accompanied with the light rump and pale thighs, which accordingly disfigures nearly nine-tenths of the Blues seen at exhibitions. It is also too often accompanied by a light beak, a horny colour taking the place of the true black; and also by too light colour in the iris of the eye, which is orange instead of the proper deep red; and even the eye-wattle frequently shows the too light blood also, by being pale and fleshy, destitute of the dark inner lash. This cross and its results are, in our opinion, the reason why so many profess to regard an orange-coloured eyeball and pale eye-wattle as the proper colour. We do not, therefore, by any means approve of breeding Silvers to Blues as a rule, and we include in our exception both black-barred and brown-barred birds: the only case in which it is advisable being when the fancier has got his Blues of a sooty colour, which will from time to time happen, and in which case a Silver is the proper cross. But in general, to breed the much-coveted deep, sound Blue, the best match is a Blue to a Blue-chequer. This is a cross also within the means of most amateurs, being a colour little appreciated for showing, but the most valuable and certain cross for breeding both the sound feather free from lightness on the rump, black beak, black eyelash, and dark eye; but perhaps the most convincing argument we can use is to say that it is this match which has actually produced the very best Blues exhibited. It is a singular thing, too, that most of the fanciers we have known to use this cross have been men who used it simply because their means were small, and they could not *afford* to get a Blue to their liking, and thus "put up with" the Blue-chequer simply as being less in price; since few have known its great value, and many are so obstinate that they will not believe it, or go out of their old beaten track, even when told, for fear it should "spoil their strain;" but a little experience soon teaches quite differently. As specimens of this we may state that the Blue Dragoon, just now figured as having won at the Crystal Palace Show of 1874, and which was declared by all the judges to be—all in all—the most perfect specimen ever seen, together with another as good, if not still better, in all points except upright carriage, were both bred by such a poor man, by this identical cross of a Blue-chequer to a Blue. We are inclined to think some of the old fanciers bred this way, since they occasionally produced very sound-coloured Blues; but the case we have mentioned will be sufficient to show that we do not advise the cross from theory only, but from having seen its results in many cases.

Of course all Blue-chequers are not suitable, some having white rumps as well as some Blues; but a blue-rumped Chequer must be found for a blue-rumped Blue, if possible; but even if the Blue be pale on the rump, the dark-rumped Chequer will be the most likely cross to produce from it *some* blue-rumped birds, from which a strain may be started. It matters not if the Chequer be cock or hen, though, of course, as a rule, a young Blue cock to a Chequer hen will be most likely to produce Blue cocks, and *vice versa*. In all cases, however, the Chequers produced from the cross should be carefully preserved for re-crossing, as, until Chequers are more valued than at the time we write, it is not easy to procure Chequers of the right stamp, and these blue-bred Chequers are, of course, the very best, unless perhaps such as are bred from *pairs* of dark Blues, which are better

still. Even if any birds come from the cross with white rumps they will be most valuable for breeding Grizzles, if the amateur's fancy at all inclines that way; but if not, they must on no account be bred back to Blues; for it may be taken as a leading principle in breeding this colour, that if the white rump be once really introduced into the Blues it will be a long and wearisome task indeed to get rid of it again; whereas, if a few birds be once procured or produced of a good sound colour on the rump, there will be little trouble, with care, in preserving it.

It is worth noting, also, that Blue-chequers are comparatively rarely found with much of the Horseman type about them, whereas, the light-rumped birds, unless of the Skinnum type, are far more likely to be loose-textured and too coarse in the wattles. Sometimes, after crossing with the Chequer, a sooty blue is produced. *Then* is the time, and this alone is the colour, properly to cross with Silvers; but we would strongly urge that the cross in such a case be with the brown-barred variety, all our experience proving that this is far less likely than the dark-barred to produce light rumps, the dark-barred Silvers being too often the offspring of much too light-coloured Blues. Many will doubt this, and being guided by first appearances may consider the dark-barred Silver the proper bird. All we can say is let them try, and they will find that we speak from facts. But, as a rule, we would advise earnestly to keep from *all* Silvers until a sooty tinge in the Blues showed it was really necessary to use them. They come often enough, as with Mealy Pouters, without breeding for them, so that they can always be had when wanted.

This leads us to brown-barred Silvers. They are the offspring of Blues, as the Silver-mealy Pouter is; and when once produced there is little trouble in keeping them up, as they breed true to colour. Hence one or two pairs will readily produce what is wanted, or if not, all the crosses required can always be obtained without difficulty. Now and then they may breed a fair Blue, reverting to the colour whence they sprang, and these Blues may be used, but of course with caution.

As to dark-barred Silvers, we can add but little to the remarks of Mr. Graham. We call them dark-barred purposely, though they are often called black-barred by people who ought to know better; but a real black bar on a Silver was never yet seen, the colour at best being but a very dark and deep brown. Should such ever be bred, we feel certain the birds will be found to possess black beaks, and that the colour will be somewhat like that of a Powdered Blue Owl. Fanciers who breed these must not expect, as some seem to do, to get Blues of the proper colour and Silvers from the same stock. The colour for breeding Blues we have already described, but the Blues for breeding dark-barred Silvers are the lighter shades, with often light rumps and thighs, and not unfrequently even faulty-coloured beaks and eyes. Now and then a deeper-coloured Blue may breed a good Silver, but as a rule it is these light birds which breed the best Silvers and the darkest bars, whereas they are what the Blue breeder should shun as he would the Plague. We wished to lay special emphasis on this point; but for the rest can add nothing to the remarks of Mr. Graham.

In our comparative estimate of the Yellow Dragoon we must say we differ from Mr. Graham. not considering it equal to the Blue in rank for several reasons. First of all, the original Dragoon was a flying bird, and was till lately considered the best of the flying pigeons. Though not much employed in this way now, we believe that if carefully trained it would be little inferior to the Antwerp; but owing to the many crosses employed to get colour we could never hear of any Yellows that were the least use for flying purposes. Owing to the crosses employed, it is generally longer in flights and tail, and shows much less of upright and graceful carriage, and is also apt to show more beak-wattle than is desirable; and by all these defects it is by so much the less a true Dragoon. Moreover, it has less properties, since, if the beak be of good shape, the wattle and

eyelash well formed, and the colour good and uniform, little more is expected; whereas, the Blue or dark-barred Silver has many more even of colour properties, besides being rigorously scanned for every point of shape and carriage. Owing to these differences, which make the Yellow Dragoon in reality quite a different bird, in spite of the great difficulties in getting colour with fair perfection in other properties, we venture to assert that for every Blue or dark-barred Silver seen approaching perfection there are at least three Yellows which are nearly all that is expected. The Blue, in fact, alone is, in our opinion, at present entitled to be called *the* Dragoon as regards *all* the attractive properties of the breed; and hence, in spite of the special difficulties attending the Yellow, we cannot admit the latter to an equal place.

On the breeding of Reds, Yellows, and Whites we have nothing of our own to add to the clear directions and suggestions of Mr. Graham; but the following valuable paper on Reds and Yellows, by Mr. D. C. Betty, enters even more fully into the breeding of those two varieties, which this gentleman has long been known to make his special study. Hence both ourselves and our readers are much indebted to him for so fully placing his experience at the service of others.

"In writing of Dragoons, Red or Yellow, I would, at the onset, assign to them their definite and due place in pigeon classification by designating birds of these colours 'a variety of the Dragoon breed,' allowing to the Blue its claim to be the Dragoon typical in colour, and, to render it bare justice, in points also. For what characteristic qualities, then, is the Yellow Dragoon so popular among fanciers as to exhibit a striking example of the progress of pigeon culture? The reply would be, that it is a self-coloured bird, and difficult to breed, thus affording an additional incentive to its production. Its colour is of many shades: prismatic, delicate, and yet so brilliant as to be the most coveted feather in high-class pigeons.

"The Yellow Dragoon should be treated of as regards its colour, how it has been produced, and how it is to be sustained, and as to the standard of its points. It should undoubtedly possess the shape and proportions of its prototype, the Blue; the boxed beak with the gentle Dragoon proclivity, its point measuring to the centre of the eye one and five-eighths of an inch—the standard of the old Carrier. The skull should be somewhat rounded at its anterior, and flattened and widening out at its posterior portion, so exhibiting the happy medium between the chuckle-headed old Dragoon and the Carrier, its shape, as viewed in a line from the tip of the beak, being that of the letter V. The wattle regular and compact; the irides brilliantly red, the whole organ bespeaking courage, strength, and vivacity. The eye-wattle, though not perfectly round, should yet not be obtrusively pinched or imperfect in its circle, the texture not fleshy as in the Carrier, nor smooth as in the Spanish fowl, but puckered moderately and evenly, as not to intrude its substance and hide the orb of the eye, or detract from its expression, nor project over the plane of the skull—giving it the appearance of a furrow—a beautiful feature in the Carrier, but out of place in the Dragoon. The neck in length should be proportionate to the size of the bird, broad at its junction with the body; the back broad and flattened, even slightly hollowed; the shoulders not cuddled up and hidden among the breast feathers, but standing out in bold relief, like the limbs of an athlete, showing an attitude of never-tiring muscular and nervous energy; the sweep of the wing graceful, and the legs not long enough to give the body a stilted look. A bird bred to this standard would show good carriage as naturally as a racer does his paces.

"I have thus epitomised the most salient points in the Dragoon to insist more emphatically upon their presence without attenuation or exaggeration in the Yellow and Red varieties.

"The Blue Dragoon is noted to have been bred from a Carrier crossed with a Tumbler, the produce crossed again with the Carrier; and the colour is inherent in the breed. In the Yellow variety more complications ensue to produce colour; divers foreign varieties, the Scandaroon.



Vincent Brooks Day & Son, lith.

RED, WHITE, & YELLOW DRAGOONS.

(LONDON FANCY.)

Runt, the Yellow and Red Tumbler, the Black and Dun Carrier—*cum multis aliis*—have all possibly been pressed into the service to convert the Blue into a Yellow, and may be useful in the future to sustain its deeper tint. Now, until we can eliminate all traces of this admixture from the Standard Yellow Dragoon, as we would separate the gold from its ore, we shall at our shows continue to see specimens exhibited as Yellow Dragoons which more appropriately should have been penned in the 'Any Other Variety Class.'

"It has been truly stated that not one *perfect* Carrier has yet appeared in the flesh. Even of Blue Dragoons how many *really* perfect specimens exist? Of Yellows and Reds I have not seen half a dozen that could challenge criticism. Too prevalent is the hard-coloured eye, the skull, the unmistakable countenance and gait of the Runt, the beak of the Skinnum, the neck, the length of face, of feather, and of leg, and other properties of the Carrier. How many are really self-coloured birds, and display not the rudiments of the black bar on the wing covert feathers?

"Time will produce more perfect birds, for the culture of the Yellow Dragoon, though it has emerged from its infancy, is far from having attained to maturity. Some good colour has been attained, but from varied crosses, which intrude their incongruities under the Red and Yellow feather.

"I have succeeded in producing Yellows and Reds of average quality, from birds purchased at auctions, with others claimed at exhibitions, or kindly placed at my disposal by my friend Mr. South, and with others purchased from dealers; also by the aid of the foreign Runt and the Carrier. Starting on the assumption that the Dragoon is a composite bird, I dealt with him in detail. The first consideration was colour; and I was fortunate in securing some birds of a soft yellow tint, though small. These mated to stoutish Reds, imperfect in colour, produced Reds with dirty rumps, Mealy Yellows, &c., which in their turn, matched with Yellows, produced sound, light Yellows, and an occasional good Red. The long-faced Yellow Runt was now introduced; the first crop gave birds of a rich tint but most ugly. This drawback was mitigated by another cross with my original Yellows and others as good as I could purchase. Thus was formed the material of a strain, good in colour but with the faults of their forefathers apparent in them. I found the Runt was most effectually obliterated by a Carrier cross. The produce of the Scandaroon cross and my original strain of Red cocks were matched to two Dun hens; these bred Blacks and Duns, one of which, matched to a Red cock, reared a sound Yellow, giving me a good step towards a Yellow Carrier, at all events a bird valuable to control the Scandaroon element. From another Dun hen, matched to a Yellow cock, I bred a Yellow Mealy hen of great substance. She has been breeding with a Yellow cock, producing broken-feathered birds. With a Red cock I shall do better.

"I would observe that I have always tried to intermingle the Carrier blood with that of the Yellow, through the medium of the Reds. In all cases it is essential to have a deep sound Yellow as a basis, *i.e.*, Reds bred from Yellows, and having secured one dip of the stronger feather and bred it out again, to have done with such an admixture, breeding Yellow with Yellow for two or three generations.

"The Yellow feather is of great delicacy, and, like many things beautiful which art engrafts on nature, it is evanescent; so that you cannot perpetuate beyond three generations a sound Yellow tint, unless by the introduction of a distinct strain, the foreign Yellow, the Red, or the Black feather. Constant Yellow breeding produces the whitey-brown thigh, the light rump, and the suspicion of the black bar on the wing, characteristic of the Blue from which it sprang. Above all, it behoves the fancier to be ever on the alert to secure any good Yellows of a distinct strain. Thanks to the labours of our Yellow Dragoon breeders, there are arising various strains which may suffice to sustain colour in our stock by Dragoon crossing only.

"A problem connected with the Yellow Dragoon and its crosses remains to be solved. Shall we ever behold a Yellow Carrier? I am well aware that certain fanciers in the National Peristeronic Society are at work on the task of producing them. I trust their energy, perseverance, and skill will result in the attainment of the greatest triumphs in modern pigeon culture; that the Yellow Carrier will be witnessed in my time, and afford additional matter for a future and not distant edition of 'Fulton's Book of Pigeons.'"

We have little to say about Grizzles, also, beyond what Mr. Graham has said. The Grizzle is not a bird we particularly admire for the show pen, and there is, and always must be, so much variation in their exact colour as to make judging them at best a matter of opinion, some liking a dark grizzle, others a light, and others a medium tint. The best mode of starting to breed Grizzles, if no Grizzles can be had, is to mate a Chequer (either light or dark in the rump will do) to a White; and if the progeny comes too light to pass as a Grizzle, as it often will, to match it again to another Chequer, or to the parent Chequer if another could not be obtained. If the sex of the young bird did not allow of this, we would try the too light one with a *sooty* Blue, but this last we would only try when better could not be done. Grizzles have been known to come from a pair of Blues, and also now and then to produce a Blue, whence their connection naturally with Blues is manifest. It is singular that all properly-coloured Grizzles we ever saw had fine dark beaks and dark red eyes. The cocks are generally most perfect in colour and markings. Some advise crossing with Blacks, but we never knew this cross produce any good result, the Black being only adapted for crossing with the Reds.

And here we may add a word or two to Messrs. Betty and Graham's notes on this cross of Black with Red. It is a proper cross; but many fail in it simply because they do not get the right and proper Black. No one must expect to improve a Red by this cross, unless the colour be a pure and raven black; and if it can be found, a bird combining this with a light beak. Most of those we have seen trying the cross have used birds of poor colour, and in such cases little benefit arises, most of the Reds bred having dun rumps and tails, and spots of dun through the body feathers. The same mischief will sometimes come from the cross of red with yellow, and in this case, too, the reason is the same—not using a pure and clear red. If the red bird should have even a few white feathers—and it is singular that very beautiful red birds often have—we would far rather chance this than breed from a red free from white with a dun rump, tail, or flights. In fact, as is the case with Tumblers, the colour of the rump is the great point in Yellow and Red Dragoons, and if that be right there is little fear of faulty colour elsewhere, except that very beautiful Yellows with good rumps will sometimes show a tinge of dun on the edge of the short or inner flights. Any faults of this kind, or white feathers, usually increase with age, so that any faulty bird should, if possible, be crossed with an *old* bird of sound colour, the age being a guarantee of thorough soundness in tint.

One good pair of Whites will start a strain, as they breed true. The want of contrast, the fewer properties to breed for, and the comparative ease of maintaining a good type when once got, make this colour far less esteemed by most fanciers.

A few remarks must be added on breeding for wattle properties, which will be found nearly as difficult as in the Carrier. The fancier who desires to succeed in this point should let no chance pass him of securing any bird with a well-shaped wattle; for if not needed just then it soon will be, and it is better to pay for the bird's keep than be unable to find it when it *is* wanted. No one must expect that all the progeny will be like the most perfect parent; still it is generally the case that an extraordinarily good specimen of a Dragoon is bred from an extra good wattle mated with a fairish one, the fine young one being like one parent and not resembling the other.

Therefore, a finely-wattled bird is always likely to produce one or two like itself; and, of course, if a match as good can be found for it all the better; but this is difficult, and hence it is rare to get good cocks and hens from the same pair, though, if good birds of each sex can be mated, it sometimes occurs. But even if both are good, care must be taken not to match birds, both of which are *fully* developed in beak and eye-wattle, unless for some special purpose. If such be done the progeny will probably have more wattle than is desired, as the Dragoon, like other wattled pigeons, can readily be increased in the development of these points by careful breeding, and would then, though as purely bred as possible, be too much like a Horseman, and unfit for competition as a Dragoon. If one bird has as much—fully as much—as it should have, it should, therefore, be matched to one very slightly under the mark; and on the contrary, a spindle-beaked kind of bird, if bred at all, should be matched to one with too much wattle, but of fair shape. We do not like breeding from such birds as these last at all, but such a match is the only way of getting any good from them. But there are more trifling variations from the right standard without going so far as this; and, as we have already stated that whenever a cock measures more than two and a half inches round the wattle, or at most a quarter inch more, he should be no longer considered a good Dragoon, and a *little* less is to be preferred, still, a trifling excess may make a good match with a hen which, though not spindle-beaked, has less wattle than she ought.

Those who, after what we have said, still prefer the thin-faced "Birmingham" style, have no such difficulties to contend with. The proper blue or other colour will have to be attended to as by others; but as regards beak and wattle they will have *no* trouble. A single pair of thin-faced birds will breed as true as steel in this point, and give them all they want.

Some may wish to have good and stout beaks, but less wattle than we have shown, though not altogether the Skinnum type. Such should match birds well bred, but both under eighteen months old, and whose wattle is not, therefore, fully developed. This is the only way to preserve a stout beak with rather less wattle, and in this way the amount of wattle may be controlled; but there is no point so easily lost, and so hard to regain, as the stout beak, if thin and spindle-beaked birds be once allowed to contaminate the strain.

JUDGING DRAGOONS.—We hardly know at which age the Dragoon appears most attractive. When young it certainly has a grace and beauty of contour which to some extent it loses later on, while at mature age it shows certain properties that age alone can develop. We differ from no one who may prefer one period or the other; but as we have already pointed out, when the two meet *in one class*, judging them fairly together becomes almost impossible, and has led to much of the mistake as to there being "two styles," when it has been simply young birds in the one case, and old birds in the other. Still there is one important point to remember. Many Dragoons, when young, show all the qualities of beak and wattle that can be desired; but as age comes on, and the head "makes up" and the wattle "breaks," then comes too often disappointment and vexation. One side will come too much peaked, or too ragged, or some other glaring fault will appear—that is, in the type we advocate. The thin-faced birds can be bred by the dozen with no difficulty, and that is the very reason we cannot consider them a correct or high type of pigeon. But this being so, it can hardly be said that the finest young Dragoon does more than *promise* to be a good one; whereas a good old bird *must* have been good through all his successive stages; and for these reasons we consider that a really good *old* bird should *never* be beaten in competition by a young one. But with fine young birds in a class this course, too, fair as we consider it, must give so much dissatisfaction, that all who have studied the subject will admit there can be no really fair competition in Dragoons except in separate classes for young and mature birds. They

require it quite as much as Carriers; and their large numbers at all modern shows leave the authorities who neglect to provide such needful classification without any real excuse.

In giving our points for judging Dragoons, we shall take as our standard the Blue, as containing both the most properties, and showing almost universally the highest type of excellence.

POINTS IN JUDGING BLUE DRAGOONS.

Beak: shape, 1; colour, 1; length, 1	3
Beak-wattle: general shape, 3; evenness on both sides, 3	6
Skull: flatness, 1; true V-shape, 2	3
Eye-wattle: size, 1; pinching, 1; dark eyelash, 2; called "gipsy-eyed"	4
Colour of eye (dark red)	1
Fulness of gullet (slight)	1
Shape of neck	2
Breast: width and projection of wing-butts	1
Back: flatness between shoulders	1
Flights and tail, proper length of	2
Feather: closeness or tightness	1
Colour: uniformity down back and rump, 3; shoulders, 1; breast and thighs, 2	6
Wing-bars, colour and regularity in shape	2
Uprightness and carriage	3
Legs, shape and position of	2
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The Silver Dragoon will have the same scale, less the point for dark eyelash, which is wanting in this variety, and two other points for colour, since, if the sides of the Silver are correct this is enough, and four points are sufficient. The Blue-chequer requires the same scale as the Blue in all except the two points for bars. Hence, it counts a point more even than the Silver, which may offend some Silver fanciers. But a *good* Blue-chequer is as hard to breed as any other, and has, besides, a superior value for breeding Blues, and the time will come when it will be thought more of, as in the case of Antwerps.

Yellows and Reds should be judged by the Blue scale, less one point for dark eyelash, and two points for having no bars, leaving four colour-points for colour of body all over. Grizzles may be judged the same as Yellows, but the colour-points must be *fully* deducted if the Grizzle is not good. White Dragoons should have *no* points for colour (this point gives no difficulty; and, moreover, a bird either *is* white or it is not), and only two for beak, the same as Reds and Yellows. It will also count, of course, none for bars. All Reds and Yellows should have pale or flesh-coloured beaks.



Vincent Brooks Day & Son. Lith.

BLACK & DUN BARBS

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BARB.

THERE can be very little doubt that this pigeon did, as the name implies, come to us originally from the north of Africa, and was first known as the Barbary pigeon, under which name it is once or twice mentioned by Shakespeare. It has been generally spoken of, written of, and considered as one of the high-class "Toy" varieties of pigeons; but we could never understand this, and shall in this work at least give it what we consider its due place as one of the "high-class" birds, thus raising these to four varieties, viz., the Carrier, Pouter, Tumbler, and Barb. Our reasons for this scarcely need stating, but we may say briefly that in the first place the Barb has very nearly as many properties, and is as difficult to produce as the Carrier: and that, like this bird, it takes a long time to come to maturity; so that after being shown as a young bird, it is several years before it is developed enough to be shown again. The age of maturity may be stated as three years; and, though there are exceptions, any possessor of a Barb that can compete with mature birds before that age may be proud of his specimen. Owing to this cause, and the pigeon not being generally classed quite so high, it is perhaps not wonderful that there are comparatively few fanciers of this variety; and we have almost always noticed that such as there are—especially what we may call the "breeding" fanciers—have been breeders of many years' standing. The rest get tired and go off to some other variety, and hence we always look upon a Barb fancier as a true lover of the pigeon he keeps, since he cannot even be a good judge of the right class of young bird which will grow into a fine old one, until several years' experience, there being so many different styles of bird.

Here we may be found fault with by some, who contend that there can be but one correct style of bird; but to this we cannot agree in the present case. Some prefer the smallest and most diminutive bird they can get; others a medium size; and others, again, a fine large bird, condemning the others. Now, we cannot consent to class size as a property at all in this pigeon, as all three sizes may show in due proportion the proper points of head; and as nearly all the points of a Barb lie in the head, we shall always consider as a good model any bird which shows a fine head and skull in just proportion to its size. This we consider the essential point; as, for example, an extra large bird having only a comparatively small eye and beak-wattle, though well formed, if shown against a small specimen all that could possibly be desired would, if both heads were placed together, far surpass it in measurement, showing more width of skull and greater diameter of eye-wattle. Still, though some judges might thoughtlessly give it the preference on that account, it would be in point of excellence not to be compared with the smaller one. Hence size and proportion is always carefully to be considered, and if this be done we would admit any size in reason. We have heard many say the bird "cannot be too small," but we have generally found these decided opinions came from fanciers who thereby upheld a class of birds then in their possession; and in too many cases we have found their ideal changed to a startling degree after a sale.

Owing to the comparatively few who have bred and kept Barbs, however, it does happen that

there is less difference of opinion respecting this pigeon than any others we have yet treated upon, and we do not anticipate any serious exception being taken to what we shall lay down in this chapter. We might, indeed, almost count the past and present Barb fanciers on our fingers, and had it not been for such fanciers as Messrs. Hedley, Jones, Gell, Firth, Heaton, Montgomery, Frame, Whirland, Perrott, Dowling, Hawley, Horner, and at most one or two more, the "best" style of Barb obtainable would have been but a sorry one. We must not forget also to give due credit to the foreign fanciers, from whom we received this pigeon, upon whose birds the gentlemen named have worked; for although their skill has greatly improved the foreign bird, yet, even originally, the best of the foreign stocks were grand specimens; and when we consider that our foreign friends have not the stimulus of competitive shows, and heavy prizes and medals, which act so powerfully as a stimulus upon the British fancier, but that what they have done has been from pure love of their bird, and without the advantages of public comparison and inspection of other specimens which we enjoy, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that their enthusiasm and perseverance must be even greater than our own. Some of their choicest productions in the Toy varieties are really marvellous; and should the system of public exhibition ever really extend itself on the Continent, as we sincerely trust it may, we know not what we may not expect from these enthusiastic cultivators of the pigeon race. The Carrier, the Pouter, and the Tumbler, were, no doubt, brought to perfection in this country, and by British fanciers; but the Barb, though undoubtedly improved, came to us in the main as we now have it, and it is but fair to give due credit to those from whose hands we received so attractive a pigeon.

A great deal of the present stock, curiously enough, comes from one importation, which we have been at the pains to trace to many quarters. They were the best foreign Barbs we ever saw, and were the property of Mr. W. Smith of Halifax. By judicious matching he bred even better birds from them; and, indeed, though we have seen many better single specimens, the best collection of Barbs exhibited by one fancier we have ever seen in one pen was that shown by him at a meeting of the Philo-Peristeronic Society; and still further, we have no hesitation in stating that there is scarcely a single first-rate specimen we know of at the present day which does not trace its descent to some of that pen of birds. In fact, at that time fresh blood was sorely needed. Some of the best of the collection we speak of fell into the hands of the well-known fancier, Mr. Peter Eden, and going from him to various Irish and Scotch fanciers, were the means of these producing, especially in cocks, some of the finest specimens ever seen. A further large portion—perhaps the largest portion—of the same collection were acquired by Mr. Stevens of Barnstaple, and through him, when he gave up the fancy, by Mr. Hedley, who is and has been the most enthusiastic fancier of the Barb pigeon we ever met with; so much so that we believe he must have had through his hands more specimens than any one, not even excepting ourselves, and this is the only case in which we think our range of experience as regards number of birds can have been surpassed. But such was the quality of this strain of Barbs, that others again of them, coming into the possession of various Yorkshire and Lancashire fanciers, also produced similar results, with this curious difference, that while the Irish breeders who got possession of them bred the finest cocks, the Lancashire and Yorkshire breeders produced the best hens we have ever yet seen; and although the original collection was uncommonly good in quality, the progeny, as produced by various of the breeders we have mentioned, became still better, showing what can be done by judicious matching.

We are quite sure none of those who have done so much in improving and perfecting the Barb will question either our assertion that it is as difficult to breed to perfection in points as the Carrier, or Pouter, or Tumbler, or its title to rank as one of the high-class pigeons; while it has

this advantage over either of the three, that it is hardier and much easier to rear. Hoping, therefore, that many more may be induced to take up this fascinating pigeon, we will proceed at once to consider what a Barb should be. And first of all we will present a paper, written by one of the oldest and most steadfast fanciers of this variety we know, Mr. P. H. Jones, of Fulham. In only one point do our opinions differ from his, as we will explain in due course; but with nearly all the following remarks do we heartily agree, as will be seen from the more detailed exposition afterwards of our own views:—

"In treating of the Barb it is pretty well known to many, especially old fanciers, that I am writing of a variety for which I have had a strong predilection for the last twenty-three or twenty-four years, and I may say that I am still as much attached to them as ever, although from force of circumstances I may not have been able to do so much with them during the last year or two as I have done, and hope to do again.

"I look upon the Barb as one of the most valuable and interesting of all Toys; indeed am not sure that it ought not to rank with the high-class Carrier, Short-faced Tumbler, or Pouter, and have little hesitation in saying, as the result of my long experience, that it is as difficult to breed *and rear* a specimen of this variety approaching perfection as it is either of the above so-called high-class pigeons. It will be observed that I use the term *approaching perfection*, and as I consider advisedly. I *have* seen birds of some varieties which could scarcely be improved upon; but how seldom do we see a perfect Barb! I am free to confess that during the last three or four years I have seen a few notable instances of birds which were considerably in advance of the ordinary run of prize-winners twenty years ago, but they could almost be counted on the finger ends; and if the ambitious fancier is desirous of possessing any of these choice specimens let him ask the price, and I fancy the amount named will convince him that first-rate Barbs are not as plentiful as blackberries in autumn.

"Some twenty years ago a few good Barbs were imported by Messrs. J. Baily and Sons, and the Messrs. Baker, from the French Mediterranean Ports, which served very much to improve the strains already existing in this country; but from these importations only a few first-class birds could be selected, many of them, the hens especially, running long and thin in face and beak, although they had a fair development of eye, and some of the cocks were tolerably good in skull. Since that time several breeders have paid much attention to the breeding and improving this beautiful pigeon, so that on the whole I believe the type to be considerably in advance of what we used to see; but I still say that there is a wide and profitable field of improvement open to the young and ardent fancier who will take the Barb in hand and *stick to it;* and as an old fancier I would say to the youthful one, *there* is the grand secret of success; make up your mind what variety you think will please you best, take to it, *and stick to it.* And it must be borne in mind that although, as I have hinted above, exhibitors will not part with their best specimens unless at long prices, there are frequent opportunities of getting birds from good breeders, and of good strains, at moderate prices. Strain and pedigree are of the utmost importance in the Barb. Of course it is possible now and then to produce from inferior and obscure parents a bird showing some good properties, but which, if bred from again, only produces disappointment and vexation of spirit; therefore again I say go in for strain and pedigree if possible. By examining the prize lists of the principal exhibitions it is easily ascertainable who are the persistent winners in any given class, and to some or one of them apply, rather than pick up a chance bird here or there. These remarks would naturally apply to any variety of stock, but among pigeons I believe they apply with extra force to the Barb, the properties of head and beak especially requiring much

care in the selecting and matching birds for breeding, the beak showing a great tendency to run out long and thin, the eye to lose substance at the back, and skull to lose width.

"I will now proceed to give my ideas of the properties of the Barb, and, as a natural consequence, commence with the head, which should be broad, square, and massive; flat across the top of the skull; the beak short, thick, and inclining downwards, forming in profile a continuous curve from the front of the head or skull, not appearing as if artificially bent down, but with the bottom mandible thick and supporting the upper one. I have seen birds a few years ago which had this *dozen*-faced appearance in excess, but they looked too much as if they had been *framed* into shape, and did not long retain their position in the fancy, although they created a slight sensation when introduced. The beak, in addition to being short and thick, should also be *wide* at the gape; this almost necessarily insures the head being of good and equal thickness, and not falling away or getting narrow towards the lower part of the cheek or chop; the eye well placed in the centre of the side of the head, not sunken, but fairly prominent, and surrounded as evenly as possible with an ample wattle of soft, even texture, bright red in colour, standing well out from the skull in a fully developed bird. But, although it should be soft and fine in texture, it should still have sufficient substance to stand up in its upper circumference without the aid of artificial means, which have been sometimes resorted to, such as gumming and stitching. When a Barb arrives at such an age as to require these aids, his proper place is the breeding-loft, when his owner may do as he pleases, and not the show pen. I am aware that the full properties of a good bird are not wholly developed until he has attained a tolerable fulness of years; but I still maintain that when, from old age or want of condition, the upper portion of the eye begins to fall over like the ear of a lop-eared rabbit, he is not a pleasant object to look at. A little sponging with a zinc or alum lotion, as much for the comfort and cleanliness of the bird as anything else, I hold to be perfectly legitimate and allowable. Beyond this we should not go. Small ulcers, which often appear inside the bottom lid, may be carefully cut out with a pair of fine sharp scissors. The eye itself should be proportionately large and full, of a clear white or pearl colour, although many otherwise good birds are bred with red or gravel eyes; but this detracts very much from the appearance of the bird, the contrast between the white eye and red wattle being very pleasing. The beak-wattle should be neat and fine in texture, evenly shaped, with the central division clearly defined, and nearly white in colour, with a healthy, powdery appearance on its surface, not rough or seedy; in an aged bird a little jewing or wattle on the lower mandible appears, and is an improvement. There should be no appearance of gullet or dewlap under the beak, the head being neatly and cleanly set on to the neck, which should be somewhat fine and thin, especially in hens, at its insertion into the head; of a moderate length, certainly not short, and expanding with a bold graceful curve to the shoulders; this adds much to the carriage and general contour of the bird, while a short, thick neck, gives a coarse and heavy expression; the chest full and prominent, and the breast-bone well covered with muscle. The legs should be short, scarcely any thigh being shown below the wings; the lower limb, from the knee to the toes, of a bright carmine red; the neater and finer the scales the better. I do not like a long tail on a Barb, but the flights should be proportionately long, reaching quite to the tip of the tail, and carried snugly and compactly, not dragging or drooping, which I consider a fault, or sign of ill-health, or want of condition. On the whole, in appearance I should describe the Barb as a compact, hearty, gay, *debonnaire* sort of bird—dear to the heart of a fancier, and very taking and attractive to the eye of the general observer.

"With regard to colour I would *now* classify them thus:—1st, Black; 2nd, Yellow; 3rd, Red; 4th, Dun. In former days we saw good Whites, but now very rarely. I need hardly say that the brighter and purer these colours are the better. We now approach the important



Vincent Brooks Day & Son, lith.

RED & YELLOW BARBS.

and difficult question of breeding for colour. It is a somewhat generally received axiom among breeders of all descriptions of stock that to a certain extent, 'like breeds like,' and this, no doubt, is nearly true with regard to breeding for colour, always providing you are breeding from a strain *thoroughly established for colour*. For many years I had a strain of Red Barbs, the individuals of which almost invariably bred one or both young ones with one or two white feathers in the tail, and *always* on the same side of the tail; but they were good birds, and very valuable for crossing, as, when matched with Yellow, the white feathers very rarely re-appeared; but as long as I bred individuals of the same family together they still showed the white feather, *and I rather liked it*, for I always knew I had a good stock bird, and many prize-winners can be traced back to this strain. There are few good sound-coloured Reds to be found, many of them running ashy on the rump, or grizzled in flight and tail; and I must confess that I do not even now know how to eradicate this fault. I can improve Yellows with Reds, but do not know how to produce a perfect Red with any degree of certainty. For breeding Blacks I believe, as far as colour is concerned, no match is equal to two Blacks; but as Dun hens are sometimes found very full and soft in eye, it is advisable to use them with Blacks, and a soft Dun may be matched to Yellow with good results if the Yellow is on the cock side; still I would prefer breeding from two Yellows if both were sound in colour. Birds bred this way, however, are apt to run grizzly, and pale in flights and tail, so that I believe it necessary now and then to fortify Yellows by a cross of some other colour. I have had good birds bred from a Yellow cock and Black hen, and on one occasion, many years ago, I bred from a single pair of birds in one season every known colour of a Barb, viz., Black, Red, Yellow, White, and Dun. The cock was a Red of the strain I have previously referred to, the hen from a Yellow and Dun, but not a good-coloured bird in herself, and yet all the young were good and sound in colour. I once also bred a bird which was nearly blue, but did not admire it, and do not think it a desirable colour for a Barb. All the usual colours harmonise well with the red eye-wattle, which the Blue would not. I believe I once recorded my opinion that a *good* Barb cannot be of a bad colour, and, *for breeding purposes*, I still hold the same view, and if I knew the pedigree of a bird, ever so bad in colour, would not for a moment hesitate to breed from it if it possessed the properties I required. I never meant to convey the impression, as some one suggested in one of our periodicals a short time ago, that a badly-coloured bird was equal to a good coloured one, and it was a piece of absurdity in the writer to attempt to father such an idea on me. Whites, as I have stated before, are not so numerous or good as they were a few years back, and yet, for a country fancier, they are a charming variety; in towns, as with other white birds, they are not so suitable. I have seen a few Whites with pearl eyes, which I consider a great improvement. With regard to size I most decidedly advocate a somewhat small and neat bird, and give *my ideas* of what the relative proportions of a good bird should be, although, of course, it is impossible to lay down anything like a hard and fast line in this respect, but the following, I believe, to be pretty nearly right for a good specimen:—Weight, 13 ozs. to 1 lb.; length, beak to tip of tail, 12½ inches to 14 inches; inner edge of eye to tip of beak, ⅞ of an inch; width of skull, a full inch to 1¼ inch, measured between, not over the eye-wattles; diameter of eye-wattle, 1⅛ inch; length of limb, measured as Pouters, 4½ inches to 4¾ inches. These dimensions would apply to cocks, and would be a little modified for hens, more especially in width of skull. I have no doubt that a few birds might be found to exceed these dimensions in head properties, but I consider the above a fair standard.

Barbs are fairly good breeders and feeders, though sometimes a very good and promising young one will require a good deal of attention in the way of feeding by hand. The young Barb, when in the nest, gives a pretty sure indication of what sort of bird it will be at maturity. If the callow

nestling has a broad, thick skull, with an ugly, bull-dog-looking beak, although it may for a few months after assume a somewhat plain and common appearance, yet it is almost certain to develop into a bird of good properties. In conclusion I would say, that to the ardent and patient fancier no better variety exists on which to exercise his skill and judgment in matching and breeding, or which will better reward him in watching the gradual development of those much-coveted properties which gladden his heart, and compensate for many disappointments."

Such are the views of one of the best Barb fanciers we know. In giving our own, as before in this work, we will consider each point in detail.

One of the first and most important of all points in a Barb is the *beak*. Some judges think less of this point than they should; but however fine even in other head properties, we for our part refuse to consider any bird a really first-rate specimen without its beak is good, any more that we would a Carrier. In the mature bird it should not be more than about three-eighths of an inch in a fair average-sized specimen from the front of the beak-wattle to the tip, and if less the better; some of the small specimens of course will not exceed a quarter of an inch. But still, shortness is of less importance than *thickness* of beak. Both mandibles should appear equally stout, the lower looking as massive as the upper, and this is the difficult point. It is quite easy to get a fairly heavy upper mandible, but a thick and massive under mandible is comparatively rare. When thus short, thick, and the mandibles equal in thickness, it much resembles the beak of a bullfinch; and the head of the young bird shown further on represents, without the least exaggeration, a beak all that could possibly be desired, though on a small bird, which as a rule are more often seen with good beaks than large ones.

The colour of the beak should be pale or flesh-colour, as in the Carrier; and it unfortunately happens that in Black Barbs some of the best-shaped beaks are of the wrong colour. It is little or no fault for the upper mandible to have a dark stain on the top; but however good the beak may be, if both mandibles be black it always looks coarse, and such birds are also much longer in developing their wattle properties than birds of a softer texture (for it will be found on trial that the pale beaks *are* really softer than the dark ones). Still, we are no advocates for a fine bird being either disqualified or discarded from breeding because of a black beak; this would be to throw out some of the finest black specimens; it is simply to be avoided as much as possible, fairly allowed for in judging, and got rid of by judicious matching—say with a pale-beaked Dun, as we shall speak of further on.

There is one more property about the beak: the more it points downwards, or, in pigeon-language, the more the bird is "down-faced," the more valuable it is so far, and the shorter the beak appears. Still, though this be an attractive property in a Barb, it must not be laid too much stress upon, for the simple reason that, as in the case of Tumbler skulls, it admits of being to some extent produced artificially in a bird which naturally is deficient, and if done carefully, so as to defy detection in such birds as have massive beaks, though it can easily enough be detected if the beak be at all thin. The plan adopted is simply this:—At about the age of four days the beak is taken between finger and thumb (thumb under and finger on top), and gently but firmly bent or pressed downwards at the point by the finger. This is repeated every third day for about four times; and if thus frequently done, with comparative gentleness, and the beak be thick enough, no sign of the process will remain, and no pain seems to be suffered; in fact, there are but few fanciers who do not give to the beaks of their birds a little gentle "persuasion" of this kind. But we have known such a wrench given that the little sufferer has died, and even cases where the beak has broken off a day or two after the barbarity, upon which we need scarcely express our

opinion. Indeed, we must state that while such very gentle manipulation as simply *inclines*—if we may use the word—the beak to grow rather more downwards, appears neither to give pain nor to involve any other ill-effect, if it be attempted to go beyond this, though it may be impossible to detect what has been done, there is still a loss in other points. The beak looks shorter and more down-faced, but the beak-wattle is neither so large, so full, or so well-shaped as if nature had been allowed to take its course, and what would have been perhaps a fine cock, has more the appearance of a hen, and retains the feminine look to the end of his days. If still more overdone, besides the cruelty, there is often caused an opening or space between the mandibles, which probably produces canker, as described in earlier chapters. For these reasons we protest against *too* much stress being laid by judges upon "down-face," and none at all if confined to the beak alone, since such can only be the result of art. A good and natural "down-face" will show one unbroken sweep over the whole head to the point of the beak, and cannot be improved save by such very mild measures as above indicated.

Next we come to the *skull*. First, as all fanciers know, this is to be as broad as possible from eye to eye. But not only so, it should be of the *same* width both at front and back of the eye-wattles. This is a comparatively rare point. Many are the winning birds we have seen which do not possess it, the two eye-wattles tapering towards each other at the front, though a fair width, or even more than fair width behind; but in the *square* width, or parallelism of the eye-wattles, lies the chief and greatest beauty of the skull of the Barb. No matter how wide the skull is behind, if not at least *nearly* as wide in front, it will only look "mean" and coarse, the fault being seen not only when looked at from the front—perhaps the most attractive point of view of all for seeing this pigeon—but in any other position. This equal width in front to back is both the most valuable property, and the most difficult to breed correct. A bird possessing it, though only of a fair moderate width of skull, looks wide, and is far more valuable to breed from. It makes the eye-wattles seem as it were to rise above the skull equally on both sides; and adds greatly to the apparent shortness of face. Moreover, it is generally accompanied with another great beauty, in the shape of an apparently *indented notch or groove* on each side of the front of the head, between the eye and beak-wattles, as if a little hollow had been sharply cut or scolloped out with a penknife. This groove on each side of the forehead is another great beauty, making the head appear sharply "cut out," and showing off to greater advantage the *back* of the skull, which should show a sort of rise or projection, giving to the whole, when perfect—very rarely indeed is *all* perfect—a peculiarly neat, attractive, and "well-chiselled" appearance, which belongs to the *Barb alone* among all pigeons. These skull properties—some of which seem not generally understood—cannot be too highly valued, and not the less so because no art or manipulation can either produce or increase them, and they are accompanied by the best class of eye-wattles.

If such a skull be valuable, it will easily be understood. on the other hand, that the tapering or wedge-shaped skull is to be carefully avoided, not only for the native ugliness we have already mentioned, but because it leaves no room for the beautiful indentations just mentioned, even if the bird does possess them, which in such circumstances is very rarely the case. In fact, the eye and beak-wattles appear crowded together, completely covering the part where the groove or indent should be; and though to remove this some will cut off a portion of wattle, this still looks ugly, and moreover soon grows again.

Such a skull as last described, again, is very rarely accompanied by the next great point of a Barb—a well-formed *eye-wattle*. This should be large, circular, and evenly distributed round the eye; whereas, in those birds with taper skulls, the wattle is generally far too much developed on the front side, with much too little at the back and bottom, in fact, badly "pinched," which makes

the best bird in other points look coarse, common, and bad. Such a wattle at the age of three or four years looks hideous, especially in the eyes of a good judge, and though a portion is in such cases often carved away from the front or top of the wattle, to make the bird more presentable in appearance, little improvement results; the bird is bad at the best, and cannot be made a good one. But, as a rule, the correct, wide-*fronted*, "square" skull is generally attended with the next important property of good and even eye-wattle, something near equally large and equally thick all round the eye. Even of good eye-wattles, however, there are two classes. One may be called a soft or fleshy eye, which is preferred by many, and is generally pretty regular in build all round; besides which, it takes much less time to become fully developed than the other kind, which we may call, for convenience, the hard, wrinkled, or laced wattle. Still, though with these advantages in build and time, it has its faults, being very liable to show the same formation which is so *admired* in the Carrier (as adding to narrowness of skull), but is correspondingly *hated* in a Barb. This form consists in being *convex* in shape, or thicker towards the eye than at the edges. At a side view this does not matter; but from the front this makes the wattle look as if rolling over the skull, and thus to appear narrower than, perhaps, it really is. In fact, a really wide-skulled bird, or one which appears so, is rarely seen with such a wattle. We may, in fact, compare the two classes of wattle to one of the old-fashioned "dished" bone buttons. The soft wattle resembles the convex side, making the skull wider at the eyes than at the edges of the wattle; whereas, the other wattle resembles the dished or concave side, the eye being in the hollow centre, and the skull, as will be readily understood, appearing far wider. The thicker one of these last wattles is, the wider and more square does the skull appear; and when looked at from the front, the wattles seem to "stand out" well from the skull, adding yet more to the finely-chiselled appearance of the head we have already spoken of as *the* great point. The soft wattle again, being so thin at the edges, appears there nearly smooth, most of the wrinkling being towards the centre, whilst the other is regularly indented or wrinkled round the circumference. Certainly the last class of eye-wattle is what we most admire, and which shows up to most advantage the various head properties of a high-class Barb; and it is also less liable than the other to disease; the soft wattle, as in Carriers, being much more liable to catch cold, to become inflamed, and also to form spouts, which then require removal; and as the wattle of a Barb is so very much thicker than that of a Carrier, in order to give width to the head, such surgical operations, which should be performed in the same way, are in this pigeon attended by much more risk, and give much more trouble to bring to a satisfactory conclusion; in fact, it is no easy matter for even an experienced fancier to operate for "spouts" with complete success on a fleshy-eyed Barb.

The hard or wrinkled wattle therefore is, on the whole, to be preferred, though it takes one season more to develop, and, in fact, can rarely be shown genuinely with much hope of success under twelve months old, the soft-wattled young birds looking so much more fully-developed and attractive to the eye. Hence, a breeder who wishes to compete with young birds, even though he prefers the same style of wattle we do, should also keep some of the soft-eyed sort in order to produce his winning young birds. If he selects these with judgment, and especially if he can get small birds with thick beaks, he is almost sure to succeed, since all fanciers admire small Barbs, if only well-developed in head and wattle points in proportion to their size, which these soft-wattled ones generally are. A very large bird, indeed, even if really fine in head, looks coarse by the side of such, and on the whole a *rather* small bird is preferred by all who can get them good enough; and while, as we before said, we would discard no size, but judge by proportion, we would give the size of a common Flying Tumbler as the happy medium which all might seek

for with safety, and name that pigeon because it varies less in size than any other of the proper dimensions we know, and hence makes a good standard. If a bird be larger or smaller, no matter; but a *very* small bird scarcely ever shows a really good skull, and a very large one looks coarse, whereas this size seems what best shows really fine properties to advantage.

To resume, then. If the fancier can obtain for matching two rather small fleshy-eyed birds, with good beaks, they will be almost sure to produce some birds even better beaked than themselves, or, at least, which appear so the first season; and if fairly good in eye-wattle, the young will look, at say five or six months old, so much more developed than much larger birds of the other kind, as to be sure to win the day. The very smallness makes the bird *look* young and pretty, while the other bird will look both older and coarser in comparison, and has little chance unless judged by a very old and experienced breeder. Sometimes such an one will reverse the decision; and we cannot in truth blame either, since both are right from different points of view. The one bird as it stands looks far the best, and really is the most developed for its age; whereas, it is generally the other specimen, which cannot win as a young bird, which in the end, when it *is* maturely developed, makes the finest bird. Winning young Barbs comparatively seldom make winners in good company over three years old. Hence, we advise different studs of birds to breed winners the first season, and such as are intended to win when old birds; and this is, in fact, the rule adopted by our oldest breeders and exhibitors, and the explanation of many facts and apparently contradictory decisions which may have puzzled some of our readers. The Barb is almost the only pigeon of which it is true; and it arises from a *thick* eye-wattle, as well as a large one, being desired in this case; whereas, the most prized Carrier-wattle, though large, is thin in comparison.

Next we come to the beak-wattle, which varies in its way quite as much, though less conspicuously, than the eye-wattle. This chiefly depends on the size and formation of the beak itself. When this is massive and well shaped, it should and does resemble, as nearly as we can describe it, an oval-shaped bean, split nearly into two slices, and then laid like a saddle on the beak, one half on each side. The longer, smoother, and fuller it is, and the nearer it comes to the point of the beak, the better; and this length, fulness, and regularity can be traced in a very young bird. It helps the shortness of face, and, filling up the profile, gives a fine and high-bred look generally. Such a wattle is, however, scarcely ever seen but on a fine and massive beak. When thus found it remains with little variation until two years old, when it generally wrinkles a *little;* it is, however, but little, and, when properly full in the centre, little hinders the appearance of the skull. It should allow the front edges of the eye-wattle to be clearly seen, from a full front view, with a space between them and the beak-wattle; and when this is the case it is rarely that fine indented groove is absent, which is, perhaps, the *best* test of a really well-bred bird. Such a bird will be sure to have a thick under mandible.

Other wattles are the opposite of this, being ragged, flat in front or on top, or even hollow, instead of convex, and spreading at the back behind, over the edges of the upper mandible, so as to cover or destroy the space that should appear between eye and beak-wattles.

We come next to the under or jew-wattle. Some of the coarser specimens have this very full and large; and though by itself we greatly admire such, as it causes the bird to appear shorter in face and thicker in neck, still it has great disadvantages. Nearly all heavily-jewed birds are much pinched in the eye-wattle, the evils of which we have already seen; and are besides, and as combined with this, too often narrow in front of the skull. But again, the jew-wattle is scarcely ever seen unusually full without the bird having a great deal too much at the root of the mouth; and lastly, it is usually accompanied with a thin or poor under mandible, the growth

of wattle appearing to absorb the substance of the beak. Hence, much as we admire a heavy jew-wattle by itself, and as improving the shortness of face, on the whole we prefer a smaller amount, consisting only of three small divisions resembling pimples, which we will show by-and-by. Still, with all this, the heavily-jewed birds are so valuable as well as so scarce that we would not have them disparaged. From them come some of the very best specimens



Fig. 49.

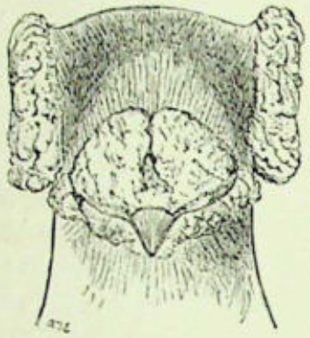


Fig. 50.

OLD DUN COCK.

and they are especially valuable for breeding *hens* of the proper shape and character of beak. It is a singular fact that breeding for extra large eye-wattles almost always produces, before very long, beaks too fine and long in front of the wattle, especially in hens; and to counteract this there is nothing like a cross with a heavily-jewed bird, which seems to restore both shortness and substance at once, and also the masculine appearance, since, without some stoutness of beak and some moderate jew-wattle, the best bird looks more like a hen than a cock.



Fig. 51.

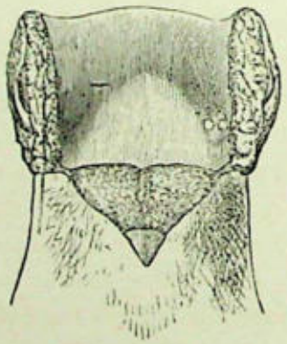


Fig. 52.

YOUNG BLACK COCK.

Finally, as regards the shape of the head, though we have already conveyed that there should be a clear space between eye and beak-wattles, the whole should be so combined that the entire "face," measured from centre of the eye to point of beak, be as short as possible, with no perceptible indentation or "stop" in the forehead, but the whole front of the head and upper mandible forming a kind of unbroken arch, or curve, into which the beak itself naturally falls, and thus terminates it. Having now described it point by point, we give in Figs. 49 and 50 two views of such a head, drawn very carefully from an old Dun cock, perhaps the best we have ever seen. These views are not in the slightest degree exaggerated as regards appearance, though we have found

measurement deceiving, a bird drawn the actual size appearing much too large all over. We have, in fact, seen even beaks quite as thick as here drawn, though not, perhaps, in quite so old a bird, age always shrinking it a little. We add two similar views of a young head, also drawn from life, and, as will be seen, from a rather smaller bird, at the age of about seven months. The beak here shown could not possibly be surpassed, and the fine chiselling of the skull in front was as conspicuous as in the old bird. We could not find, at the moment, a large young head sufficiently good for our purpose, but in all except mere size, Figs. 51 and 52 represent the head and skull of such a young bird as would develop into the old one above, except that the beak of the young one (a Black) is perhaps several degrees better, as regards thickness, than that of the old one. We ought to explain that one in each of the above views is neither taken directly from the top or from the front, but from a somewhat slanting direction between the two.

We hope these two views and our explanations will make the points of a fine head plain to all our readers, and also show them the class of young bird which will grow into a fine old one. But to make our meaning still more clear, we add in Fig. 53 a representation of a *bad* head. The

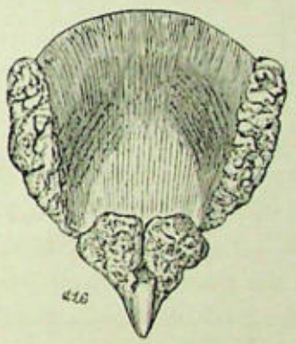


Fig. 53.

head here shown is not indeed bad in *all* points; such would defeat our object, since any amateur could have, in such a case, no difficulty. It has a good eye-wattle, though rather too convex, and a very fair width at back of the skull. But it tapers from back to front, where it is not nearly so wide as behind. The beak-wattle is narrow across, and the beak itself too long in proportion, as indeed is the whole skull; and these are the points to be particularly avoided.

We have next briefly to discuss the "colour-points" of the head, which in a Barb have some importance. The colour of the beak we have already mentioned; but we may here add that a black beak generally affects the colour of both eye and beak-wattle also, and thus makes birds of really the same head properties look far worse than others with pale beaks. Hence, colour as well as shape of beak must be studied in breeding, in no case matching two birds having a black one. It is also to be noticed that a dark-beaked bird is generally much longer developing its wattle than a soft-beaked one; and when it is fully developed, never seems to show half the properties it really possesses.

The beak-wattle, when young, is of a pinky colour, but as age comes on it seems as if covered with fine white powder. The eye-wattle is desired to be as bright-red as possible, but some allowance has always to be made. We have often noticed how much deeper in colour, both in eye and beak-wattle, are the Barbs imported from abroad than such as are bred in this country, and also that some strains produce a much deeper colour than others. As the deepest colour is preferred, the wattles are always washed before exhibition, which produces a little deeper and

brighter colour than is generally seen. Some exhibitors it is to be feared go beyond this, and apply a little magenta, or some other dye, which—bar the danger of detection—greatly freshens the appearance of an old stager; and while not always easy to detect, we fancy a professional *dyer* (who would be the most likely expert to call in) could throw an interesting light on some birds we have seen exhibited. Washing is, however, not only quite fair, but should be performed at least every fortnight on a good bird, whether shown or not, the wrinkles in the eye-wattle being very liable to get filled up with the dust of the loft, which, if left too long, may corrode or fester the skin, and cause canker and other diseases, which a regular washing to a great extent prevents. Some have thought that the rich colour of the foreign birds is owing to some difference in climate, and have considered this proved by the fact that some of the richest-coloured wattles have bred in this country very pale progeny; but in our opinion the cause lies in the use, by English fanciers, of the *Dun* colour for breeding. We have constantly observed, that the oftener the Dun feather is used in matching the paler will the wattle become, and also softer and sooner developed; it is, in fact, by this matching chiefly that the great improvement has been made in head-points, over the standard shown by imported Barbs; and knowing the preference of nearly all foreign fanciers for colour, it is probable they breed for colour both of feather and wattle, and neglect the Dun. This is borne out by the fact that while, as we have said, the Dun cross certainly does produce pale wattles, Blacks, Reds, and Yellows, bred together, generally produce good colour, as does also the White; hence we believe that our fanciers, while improving the quantity and shape of wattle by the Dun, have lost colour; and as this is of less consequence than good size and shape of wattle, we must, if so, be content.

The next point is the colour of the eye itself, or rather of the iris, which should, in a perfect bird, be white or pearl. But here we are perhaps most likely, if at all in this chapter, to displease many by saying that some judges lay far *too* much stress upon this property, and that a change in their view of it deserves at least the most serious consideration. Many times we have seen some of the finest specimens in all other points passed over unnoticed as worthless, on account of an orange-coloured eye, and this we consider one of the most unjust mistakes ever commonly made in judging pigeons. No one can say that the colour of the eye constitutes the Barb, as in no pigeon perhaps are what may be called "structural" head-points so largely what is breed for. Not that we would on that account have the colour of the eye indifferent, or wish an orange-eye to compete on equal terms with a pearl eye. No one we ever met with would pretend to such a thing; but for a bird possessing every other good point to be passed over, *as we have seen done*, for a bird which possessed no other really fine point except colour of eye, is what we protest against as simply destructive to all true breeding. It is within our knowledge that the best pearl-eyed specimens have occasionally produced orange-eyed progeny; while, on the contrary, by judicious matching with a pearl-eyed Red or Dun (for it is generally Blacks and Yellows which fail in this point) the fault is very easily corrected. On the other hand, a black beak is not only far more conspicuous and offensive to the eye, but far more difficult to eradicate; yet we never once knew a Barb good in all other points passed over for this fault, and indeed some of the talented judges, who have signalised themselves in the way we complain of, did not even *know* a black beak was a fault at all. Not that an orange-eye is not a great *fault*. Such we would consider it, and allow a fair number of points for it; but we protest against its being considered a disqualification, and a bird good in all other points thrown out of competition, when shown against birds really fine in no other. If a bird happened to be faulty both in colour of eye and beak, we would not complain, as such a bird could hardly win against decent quality, and it would be very foolish to even breed from it; but we do consider no bird should be disqualified for either

fault alone. Some of the very best foreign Barbs, from which the most improvement in our strains was derived, were orange-eyed; and from this source indeed we believe the fault was derived. There is a third colour of eye called gravel-colour, being as it were half way between the pearl and the orange, which is, however, as offensive as orange to some fanciers; but we never knew a bird yet disqualified for this; and, on the whole, what we think enough is to allow fair points for eye, and then deduct all three points for an orange-eyed bird, two points for a gravel-eyed bird, and one point for an eye sometimes found which can hardly be fairly called even gravel, but is also certainly not real pearl. It must be noted that a bird has a right to be called pearl-eyed, provided even the inner edge of the iris be a pure unbroken white, even though outside this there should be a little red or orange. With this allowance, the pearl-eyed bird must be very poor quality indeed if it could not beat an orange-eyed bird, unless it was very young; and this mode of judging would do justice to all parties, and assist judges in what is often their most difficult task, viz., to first satisfy *themselves* why they make certain awards, and then be able to inform all competitors who asked them in a becoming manner *why* they awarded prizes and commendations in any given manner.

What we have now described comprise nine-tenths of the properties of a Barb; and no matter how well-shaped in body a bird may be, if deficient in head it can never compete with any chance. Still, there are other properties. The neck should be short and thick, the thicker the better, as the better the bird is in this property the shorter in face does it appear. Hence the gullet should be very full; indeed, this is where the thickness of neck should be, and many birds owe much of their apparent shortness of face not to real excellence in that point so much as to an unusually good gullet, especially if down-faced, when a bird with full gullet hardly *can* look other than short. This is the one point where we must say we decidedly differ from Mr. Jones, who recommends a rather long and thin neck, with a clean run under the gullet. We can only say that we do so, not so much from any preference, as from observance of actual facts; for we do not think we ever saw an unusually good bird as regards shortness of face, which did not owe much of it to the point now described. This property does not develop much, however, till the age of at least two years, and must not therefore be looked for in a young specimen, which is the chief reason why these look so much longer in face when viewed in *profile*, as the want of thickness which age gives to the wattle is the reason of their looking so much narrower in skull from the front. For this reason, a bird that looks very short in face under a year old must really be something extraordinary in that grand property. The chest is broad, and becomes broader with age, but not remarkably so when compared with flights and tail, which should be *long*. A Barb may be *too* long in feather, certainly, as it should be a *compact*-looking bird, and hence extreme length is no beauty as in a Carrier. Still, we have generally noticed that a bird faulty in too great length is apt to be good and well bred, while those too short in feather are mostly very small and rarely more than very moderate quality, thus denoting late breeding. A nice, easy-looking, *harmonious* proportion, when compared with the short neck, is what should be aimed at. Lastly, there are the legs, which must be short compared with the length of body and feather, making the carriage and gait of the bird somewhat like that of a duck, in fact "waddling" considerably. These short legs, which should be free from feathers on the shanks, are what harmonises with the entire shape of the bird. Still, we do not think any judge, if he did find a bird with good head properties, would lay much stress upon too long legs; and even as regards feather, though it is a fault, still we have seen many specimens having the legs covered to the feet with soft downy feathers, somewhat similar to those on a grouse; and in nearly every case these were otherwise grand birds, and to our knowledge produced progeny free from the defect. Hence, too much

stress ought not to be laid on this point, the leg of a Barb being a very subordinate member after all.

We next come to the breeding of Barbs; and would say, first of all, that the fancier must not expect to rear many really good specimens unless he pays attention to providing a staff of good nurses or feeders, or can give the care required to feed by hand. Not that they are by any means delicate; on the contrary, Barbs are hardy, and good breeders, and the commoner ones will rear their own offspring well. But if the parents possess the much-coveted short and bullfinch beak, and their offspring inherit the same, then, while they will feed very well from six to eight days, after that time the shortness of the parents' beaks, and the fast-increasing thickness of the youngsters', will not allow of the latter inserting their beaks into the side of the parents' mouth, and feeding fails. The throat or gullet also becomes closer or smaller with age, especially in short-faced birds, which often become as small in the aperture as a Foreign Owl, and thus unable, when the time comes for feeding with grain, to allow of its free passage. Some even of the best specimens will rear their young well up to about two years of age, but after that time the shortening and hardening of the beak, and shrinking of the gullet, will almost always prevent it, the latter being seldom suspected, perhaps, and the fancier wondering, since most pigeons feed better as they get older, why his will no longer their young. We have known fanciers even give up the breed from this cause, Barbs being generally classed as good feeders; but this, as we have explained, is only so with medium-quality specimens when at mature age. The best class of birds for nurses are, first Dragoons, from three to five years old (when they have more space at the opening of the mouth, where the young beaks are inserted), which fill the crops of the young birds in less time than any other pigeon, but are rather wild. Secondly, we advise Barbs themselves; that is, the longest and largest-beaked ones the fancier can find. These can always be found in plenty, and when long in beak, no bird can be better adapted for the purpose. Beside these, many good *young* birds will make capital feeders, especially those which do not win as young ones, but are kept on hand to grow into good old ones. Such often look far too long in beak the first two seasons, waiting for more wattle and greater width of skull to take off the apparent length; and while in this state they generally make good feeders. And large-headed coarse Antwerps, short-faced or medium-faced, will also feed well. But we mention the common Barbs in order that those who prefer to keep only one breed, and have their stock look uniform, may know what is to be done; but no very short-faced *old* birds must be relied on longer than from a week to ten days. They will generally feed for that time; and of course the young can, if preferred, be fed by hand when they fail, as directed in Chapter IV.

The next point to be considered is of course the matching; and first as regards the colours. Though some other colours are more difficult to breed, the black is always, and probably always will be, the most liked, as no other colour shows off the wattle to such advantage. If it be desired to breed such birds as we have described, then, in Black Barbs, let first of all the cock be the black, yet, if *possible*, his beak all white, or rather pale flesh-colour. We say if possible, for such are not common; and if the lower mandible be pale, and the upper one only stained on the top, this will do nearly as well. Put him to a hen, if such can be obtained, with a good beak; this last being as we have seen a leading property, and to be much studied in both cock and hen, but more especially in the cock. The next quality will, of course, be width and *shape* of skull; and this in perfection is so rare, that at all times, when a bird of either sex offers at a fair price possessed of the square, parallel, well-chiselled formation already described, and illustrated in Figs. 49 to 52, we would strongly advise its being secured, if the purse allows, to strengthen the

stud, this being the *most* valuable of all the properties, so that we would even be satisfied with less substance in beak to secure an extraordinary good skull. The skull and a good beak we would therefore look for most in the cock; and as these points are very apt to be accompanied, say with some deficiency of wattle behind the eye, we would look for a hen to correct this fault. One very usual plan is to match the Black cock to another Black; and this very often answers well if the hen really has the points the other bird lacks; but it is so seldom we see Black hens not themselves faulty in eye-wattle, that it is not easy to match Blacks well. If we *had* a Black hen really good in skull, wattle, and colour of beak, she would be a capital match; and we would even risk the closest relationship for a really first-rate match, though not repeating it. It is, however, very rarely indeed such matches can be found, the Blacks being more than any colour liable to the faults both of pinch eye and dark beak. For the improvement of either or both these, then, with a Black cock thus faulty but fine in skull, we would select a Dun hen, this colour generally having a much softer and more regular eye-wattle, and very often also a wider and better class of skull than the Black hens, and almost invariably white beaks. Hence a Dun hen, besides producing a good black feather, is *almost* always the best match that can be found for a Black cock. The colour of the Dun matters little; if it be dark she will be very likely to produce pairs of Blacks in the nest, while if of a very light Dun, there may perhaps be both Duns; and if of a medium shade, there may probably, as with Carriers, be a black and a dun in each nest, the cock in the case we suppose being almost always the black one. Few Dun Barbs are, however, so light as average Dun Carriers, many being nearly black, and hence breeding more Blacks than Duns, which is another reason why the breeder need not fear using Duns, even if he does not care for the colour compared with Black. Most of the best Black cocks we know have been produced by this match of a Black cock with a finely-wattled and good-skulled Dun hen.

There are very few Dun cocks in comparison to the Blacks; but those few are, as a rule, very good. Their superiority lies more particularly in eye and skull properties, but they are seldom so good in thickness of beak, or have so much jew-wattle. For these reasons we would match them, if possible, to suitable Black hens, which are more apt to be faulty in eye-wattle and form of skull, but better in beak and beak-wattle, each supplying the deficiencies of the other, and at the same time keeping up the desired pale colour in the beak, and preserving the beak-wattle from that particularly unsightly fault of a black tinge. Of course in either of these matches we do not mean that it is any use *merely* to match black with dun because they are those colours, but solely to mate such properties as we have described. The great thing to avoid in breeding Blacks together is not to match on any account two birds *both* having black or even stained beaks.

If a Dun cannot be had, and a good Red can, by all means breed it to the Black, as all Reds have white beaks, and will besides greatly improve the *colour* of the eye-wattle, which the Dun does not. For this reason, if a Red of equal quality can be had, we would even prefer it to the Dun, the deep scarlet of the wattle, which almost always proves soft in texture, being a point adding greatly to the appearance of any bird. It is, however, very difficult to get a really good Red hen, owing to their being not much used for breeding with Blacks. The commonest fault in Red hens is absence of the coveted form and substance of beak, and this we suppose is the reason they are little used. With more Reds to choose from, however, this would no doubt mend, and as they are mostly good in eye-wattle, we hope to see the cross more used, as the most likely means of seeing more really good Red Barbs. It is singular that while the Barb, owing to the many crosses of colour, "sports" more than almost any pigeon, so that we have seen almost every colour produced from one pair during the same season, we can hardly, if indeed ever, remember to have seen a Red yet all over of the proper colour, there being always some variation from the rump to

the tail, besides which the quills of the tail-feathers are almost always stained as it were with dirty black. There may not unlikely be also a white splash or two in the tail; and we can suggest no better means for getting rid of these faults than the steady crossing of the Black with the Reds. To correct white feathers in the tail of a good Red, we would advise even a black-beaked Black, nearly all dark-beaked birds being harder in feather, and thus more likely to cause the disappearance of the foul marks, and even to make the Red itself more uniform throughout the body.

In either the Dun or Red cross, there is very little fear of getting faulty-coloured eyes, as either colour is scarcely ever seen with the orange eye, and we might say never with a dark beak —at least, we can never remember seeing such.

We come next to the Yellow. Many fanciers would put this colour before the Black as more difficult to breed, but we agree with Mr. Jones as to the comparative rank, the Black being so much more attractive. It is also to be remembered that all Yellows of the right colour are indebted to the Blacks for their colour, it being hopeless to breed really deep-coloured yellow birds from almost any of the Reds at present accessible. In fact—and, as in other cases, it is facts which we have observed that in all cases guide our opinion—all the best Yellows we ever yet met with were bred by crossing with the Black. Of course there are birds *called* Yellows that are at best only a poor mealy colour; but a true-coloured bird, the same colour on the rump as on the shoulders, is not only a most beautiful bird if good in skull properties, but, as far as we have seen, *never* fails to have a bright, deep-coloured, coral-red eye-wattle; whereas the pale feather is often accompanied by a pale wattle. This class of bird usually owes its faults to the poor colour of the Reds from which they were bred. To breed good Yellows, then, get if possible a good Yellow cock, which is generally far more easy than to get a good hen; but endeavour especially to get one with a good massive beak, since if this be wanting in the cock, a *hen* good enough in that point to make up for it can hardly be expected. Hence it will be best to choose the Yellow cock young and the hen older, in order to get his beak at its best. We lay stress on this point, because, as Yellows are very apt to fail in beak, it is the more needful to use every means in order to avoid losing so fine a property. Then mate him with a black hen of good properties, older than the cock, by which the yellow will be likely to predominate. At best, however, there will be very few Yellow pairs produced; still there will be more yellow birds than if a Yellow hen and Black cock is employed; though this, too, will sometimes breed many yellow birds when the hen is young and vigorous. If the cock cannot be got with a thick beak, then the black hen must be chosen with the more care as being good in that point; and Blacks having the best beaks of all, a good match can generally be found. Real deep Yellows may be bred together; but though *good* Reds would be the best cross of all, we cannot recommend the use of such Reds as are actually to be found at present, and consider the Black cross far preferable. There is, however, one cardinal precaution, which is, never to use in such a cross a black bird with a *black beak*, as we have found such nearly always imparts bad colours, the young coming chequered Duns and other bastard colours instead of rich Blacks and Yellows. Some of these faulty-coloured birds are useful in breeding, especially in breeding back to black; but there is always much uncertainty when once they get into a strain as to what they will breed.

The cross of a Black cock and Yellow hen may also be employed. And when by careful matching, and crossing with the richest Blacks, or otherwise, really *good* Reds can be had, they also may be bred to the Yellows with benefit. Both the latter colours have the advantage over the Black that they make up more quickly, and are less liable to have faulty-shaped eye-wattles.

White Barbs are, as a rule, much inferior to all the other colours, in all the characteristic

points, save colour of eye-wattle, which, as a rule, is a brilliant coral red. We cannot, as we write, remember to have seen more than *one* really good pair; that is, good enough to compare, *as Barbs*, with exhibition birds of other colours; and this pair was a chance product or "sport" from Blacks and Duns. Pure Whites generally breed true; but the other colours are so far from fixed, that any one desiring to improve a strain of Whites could readily do so by procuring as good a young White cock as possible, and mating him to a light, *soft* Dun. Some of these light-coloured Duns are really extraordinary in head properties; and as such a hen would probably breed, if not Whites, several birds with a great deal of white, suitable for matching to Whites again, the fancier would soon get what he wanted; and after the pure colour was once got, all difficulty would be over. Blacks more or less marked with white are also to be had, and are suitable for the purpose. We cannot say, however, that in our opinion the white would be so attractive as other colours, lacking the fine contrast which gives such beauty to especially the Black Barb.

As regards general points in breeding, if more wattle is desired, we would advise breeding together of old or matured parents; for it is found, as in all wattled pigeons, that the progeny of birds which are fully developed in their own wattles soonest develop their own. It may be too much to say that if a young and old pair be of the same quality, the progeny of the old pair will ultimately have more wattle; but we should certainly expect them to show it sooner. In breeding for shortness of face and beak, the general mode is to select the *smaller* specimens, by which unusually short-faced birds can soon be secured, while, on the contrary, such will not present the *width* of skull desired in a Barb. For these reasons it often happens that birds extraordinary in both properties are more often produced from a small and short-faced parent mated with a fine, large, wide-skulled, but rather long-faced one, than from the medium birds; and the crossing of one with the other is therefore advisable. A *thin* beak is, however, to be refused at any price. The size and development of a bird also depends much on whether one or two birds are reared in a nest, a single one reared by good feeders often becoming too large and coarse, while, on the other hand, if a pair be brought up by poor nurses, they will be stinted, and never become what they really might have been, well nourished; thence, again, their real good quality may be dormant, yet come out when breeding with stronger birds.

The Barb being a wattled pigeon, its diseases are generally very similar to those of the Carrier, and are to be treated in the same way. It has the same liability to canker in the ear and about the head, and needs the same protection against draughts, and a similar watch kept from time to time upon the condition of its eyes and eye-wattles. In *good* Barbs, it will often be found that about the age of three months, when the first moult begins, is a critical period, the bird either appearing roupy or dwindling away without any apparent cause. If a capsule of cod-liver oil be given every other day, it will generally bring the young birds safely through, and it is as well to do so, whether the birds appear ill or not, if the moulting time happens to occur in chill or damp weather. Pills of tallow, given once a day for a week or two, have somewhat the same effect.

Barbs need little preparation for exhibition. A careful washing will bring out all the honest colour there is in the eye-wattle, and any *dyeing* (which is beyond doubt sometimes practised) is at the exhibitor's peril. Sometimes a few ragged feathers project over the outside of the eye-wattle, and they may be removed without much wrong, as injuring neatness; there is fortunately no inducement to go beyond this, as diminishing the apparent width of skull. The legs, of course, will be carefully washed. We have seen some eye-wattles much cut

and carved; but the signs of what had been done were very evident. When the birds are fed from hoppers, the upper mandible will overgrow the under one; and this overgrowth must be removed from time to time, not only for show, but that the bird may preen itself properly. To attempt more is not only wrong, but will be found useless. Care will of course be taken to get the plumage in the best condition; and beyond this we do not know of anything that can assist in exhibiting Barbs, except that after washing the head of a black Barb, and whilst still wet, a *very little* butter—a mere trace—may be rubbed in with the corner of a towel, afterwards carefully endeavouring, as it were, to rub it all off again. If there is enough used to be perceptible, it is a ridiculous failure; but if not, the lustre of the plumage is refreshed after the washing, and the coral red of the wattle better brought out in contrast. We do not see that this can be called fraudulent; but whether or not, it is practised by all exhibitors. Only the head should be treated in this way.

JUDGING BARBS.—We have already given our general views so fully, that no remark is needed to explain the scale of points, except that all colours may be judged alike except white. This variety should count no points for colour of body when judged *as* Whites; but if judged against other colours may count them fairly, in order to make up for the difficulty in getting head-points. That is, although a White Barb deserves no points merely for body-colour, which gives no difficulty, it may fairly be allowed two points in judging against others; so that if a White and Black Barb were really equal in head, the White should have the prize, owing to the rarity and difficulty of producing such quality; so long at least as good Whites are so rare.

POINTS FOR JUDGING BARBS.

Beak: shortness, 3; shape, or equal fulness in both mandibles, 3; colour, 3; down-face, 1	10
Beak-wattle: regularity on each side, 3; fulness in front, 2; jew-wattle, 2	7
Skull: width, 3; squareness, or parallelism from front to back, 4	7
Eye-wattle: size, 3; regularity or circular shape, 4; thickness at edges, 2; colour, 1	7
Colour of eye: pearl or white round the pupil	3
Size of body	2
Thickness of neck	1
Length of flights and tail (proper medium)	1
Legs: shape and position	1
Depth of colour of body	1
Plumage and condition	2
	42



Vincent Brooks Day & Son. lith

RED & YELLOW JACOBINS.

CHAPTER XV.

THE JACOBIN.

THIS is a very ancient variety, both in England and on the Continent, the name of both the perfect variety and sub-varieties (such as Capuchin) evidently related to it, conclusively showing that the origin of all alike was the resemblance of the white head under the hood to the shaven head covered by a cowl. Moore describes it as follows, after mentioning what he calls the Capuchine and the Ruff as evidently related to or derived from it:—

"The Jacobine, or, as it is vulgarly called for shortness, 'the Jack,' is, if true, the smallest of all pigeons, and the smaller still the better. It has a range of feathers inverted quite over the hinder part of the head, and reaching down on each side of the neck to the shoulders of the wings, which form a kind of fryer's hood; from hence this pigeon has its name Jacobine, because the fathers of that order all wear hoods to cover their bald crowns: hence the upper part of this range of feathers is called the hood, and the more compact these feathers are, and the closer to the head, so much the more this bird is esteemed. The lower part of this range of feathers is called by us the chain, but the Dutch call it the cravat. The feathers of this chain ought to be long and close, so that if you strain the neck a little, by taking hold of the bill, the two sides will lap over each other in some of the best; but there are but very few now to be found in England compleat. The Jacobine ought to have a very short bill, the shorter the better, and a clear pearle eye. As for the feather, there are reds, yellows, blues, blacks, and mottles; but be the feather what it will, they ought to have a clear white head, white flight, and white tail. Of these pigeons some are feather-legged and footed, others are not, and both sorts are equally esteemed, according to the various inclination of different fanciers."

So far Moore, from whom it is quite plain that except the allowance of either feathered or bare legs, the best pigeons known in his time were, in all but one point, practically the same as now known. That point is the *mane*, the want of which is proved not only by all absence of even mention of it, but by the preference shown for *extreme* smallness of size, which, as we shall presently state, is incompatible with great excellence in mane. Having, then, noted this difference between the ancient and modern pigeon as interesting, we proceed without further preface to describe the Jacobin of the present day.

We have always considered the Jacobin the first in rank among *Toy* pigeons, as they are called, having, as before said, taken the Barb out of that category altogether. We do so both because of its great intrinsic beauty, and the number of properties apart from mere colour which are required to constitute a first-class bird: in this last respect there is but one other bird which can be compared with it—the improved or Russian Trumpeter. This high excellence is chiefly the work of English breeders; for though, after comparing old Moore with Mr. Brent (who spent much time in Germany) and others, it seems to us most probable the breed originated on the Continent, no one can deny the immense advance in nearly all points effected by the fanciers of England, and we can safely say we have never seen a single imported specimen which could be

even compared with good English birds as regards fitness for the show-pen. This arises chiefly from the best Continental birds only being bred to the old type as described by Moore, where smallness is made so much of, and no mention is made of mane at all. Hence these foreign birds have generally nice round heads and short thick beaks—both qualities without which no bird can be considered first-class—but are almost always deficient in hood, mane, and chain; and surely no thorough fancier can ever admit that two such qualities as the first, however good, and which are easily enough obtained alone, should be allowed to compensate for the want of those special properties from which the bird derives its very name. They give certainly the finish to a good bird; but as the properties of a Barb or Carrier lie almost entirely in the head, so nine-tenths of the beauty of a Jacobin lie in hood, mane, and chain, which we would place in the order named.

Many fanciers, following Moore, repeat that a Jacobin cannot be too small in size. We must say at once that we consider this a great error, only to be tolerated at a time when the properties were but half developed as they now appear; for it will be found impossible in an exceedingly small bird to get the properties above named in any such marked degree as is necessary to present a really striking appearance. Many say, for instance, that the bird should be as small as an Almond Tumbler. Now, we have seen and bred numbers of such, but in no one case did we find one with really fine Jacobin properties, for the simple reason that such small birds never have *feathers long enough* to show these properties. At the most, they may look well while held in the hand, as the feathers being so short may show much *regularity* of growth, and thus make the hood nice and close to the head. The feathers also forming the chain may be similarly regular, and even meet together for perhaps half way up from the bottom; but for the chain to meet together even under the throat is one of the difficulties of the breeder, and there the small bird will fail, the length of feather not being sufficient for it; besides which the cheek-feathers projecting outwards may keep the feathers from meeting. To remedy this we have seen the projecting cheek-feathers, or whiskers, as some call them, removed before showing, so as to allow the chain to come closer in front; and in some cases we have seen some of these extra small birds so good, that with this assistance it would meet, or nearly so, and some even without it, being, in fact, all that could be desired in chain, though this is rare. But even such birds have failed in the hood, though pretty and close-fitting, not coming forward over the head nearly so far as is desired. And above all, even if, as just now stated, the bird did look nice when in hand as regards these points, as soon as liberated it would in every case—for in this point we never knew *one* exception—show little or no *mane*, a point now so highly valued, though never mentioned in the old descriptions. All its good qualities appear in a front view, and especially in hand, but as soon as let loose the weak point appears.

While, then, we would certainly give preference to the small specimens as soon as they can be produced good enough in the main Jacobin properties, we can never agree to sacrifice these for mere size, which, after all, is chiefly a sign of too much in-breeding, and gives not the slightest difficulty in dwarfing at any time. The Jacobin, in fact, is such a vigorous bird that it will usually bear a great deal of in-breeding, and we have produced in this way some birds nearly as small as Foreign Owls, and which showed very fair Jacobin properties for their size; but when put beside really grand medium-sized specimens their inferiority was apparent at once. In fact, we reached the views we have now expressed through experience. Knowing the good constitution of the birds, and the little difficulty in rearing, we wondered at the few good specimens, and began to try what we could do ourselves. Like most other fanciers, we began with the extra-small specimens; but before the end of our first season changed the system, and procured some large-sized birds having plenty of the chief Jacobin points of hood, mane, and chain, though too long in beak and large in

body. This we remedied by crossing with the best small specimens, getting the best young ones towards the end of the season, those bred early being generally too coarse for show purposes. This was the foundation of our best Jacobins, which were equal, if not superior, to any then known. The second season we produced birds which far exceeded even our own expectation, one pair of which we had the honour of supplying to Her Most Gracious Majesty after winning with them at Birmingham. Such, in fact, was the quality of the strain thus originated, that from a cock bred by this identical royal pair we bred Blacks with a black hen, Reds with a red hen, and Yellows with a yellow hen of such merit, that this one bird's produce in three years, with the final sale of himself, realised the sum of £170. Several of his progeny won first honours at the principal shows, and it is well known that most of the best specimens at the present time are descended from this very pigeon. We mention this principally to show the great value of a really well-bred bird, and the usefulness of birds even much too large, for crossing with small ones to make up the latter's deficiencies; and by this means judiciously employed, with the fanciers now at work on this beautiful pigeon, we quite expect yet to see even small birds with all the qualities desired, when we need not say we should prefer them.

The first point in a Jacobin, then, is *hood;* and this is to some extent connected with the form of skull, for which reason it will be convenient to take them together. The head should be large compared with the size of the bird, and somewhat resemble in shape that of the Short-faced Tumbler, from which probably its character was derived, being broad and round, and rising well up in the front, and nicely arched from eye to eye. Many birds will be found to have a wide and flat skull somewhat like that of a Dragoon, which is called "mousey-faced," and makes the bird look much longer in face than it really is. Age adds much to the size of the head, as in all pigeons, but still if the form be not what we have described at the age of say ten months, it will never become so afterwards. When the skull is of the right shape, it is generally accompanied with the further good point of a short, thick, and nicely-shaped beak, inclined to be decidedly "down-faced," which increases the effect of the hood, whereas the flat-skulled bird, generally long also in beak, and straight in the face, never shows off the hood well, even if good, which it seldom is; whereas, when the skull is of the proper shape, it is almost always accompanied by a nice close-fitting hood. This should lie close, and come as far forward as the front of the eyes on each side, so that the hand can be placed over the hood without the bird seeing it; and lastly, should appear even and unbroken at the edges, and especially the front. It generally is found so in a good-headed bird, the only thing to be dreaded being a few feathers which will sometimes grow rather twisted just at the root of the hood feathers, and appear to come through them, or at least to prevent their lying close down on the head. To avoid these, many fanciers pluck such feathers out before exhibiting, and others cut them off close to the root, so as to allow the hood to lie down. The latter can always be detected by passing the finger over the suspected places, when the stumps of the feathers will be felt unless cleanly shaved off; but the best manner of detecting such trickery is to take the beak between the finger and thumb, and then making the finger and thumb of the other hand into a sort of loop, draw it over the head and neck, so as to "scrape" the plumage backwards. By this means the roots of the hood feathers are exposed, and it will be seen at once if the bird has been robbed of any, which we have seen done to such an extent that the whole back of the head was bare under the hood, so as to allow this to lie close. The long-faced birds, again, are mostly deficient in closeness and neatness of feather; so that even when, as often happens, they have good length and quality of feather in hood, mane, and chain, they seldom or never look nicely finished when let out of the hand, the edges then appearing loose, unfinished, and ragged.

The *mane* and *chain* must be considered together. The former, as we have seen, is a modern "finish" to the bird, and formerly, no doubt, the parting of the neck and shoulder feathers, one part growing forwards in continuation of the hood, and forming a kind of ruffle irresistibly reminding the beholder of certain Elizabethan costumes, and the other pointing backwards, was all that was required. It is scarcely or ever that a bird with good head and hood fails in "chain," which is now understood to denote the front portion of the parted feather. The perfection of this chain is, first, to come as low down the shoulders as possible, some small specimens leaving off with it little more than half-way down the neck; and secondly, for the feathers to be so long and so forward in their set, that the two sides *meet* together in front, from almost directly under the throat all down to the bottom. This can hardly be if the chain feather is either short or deficient in "set." Again, it must not only be so, but to make a first-class bird must be even on each side,

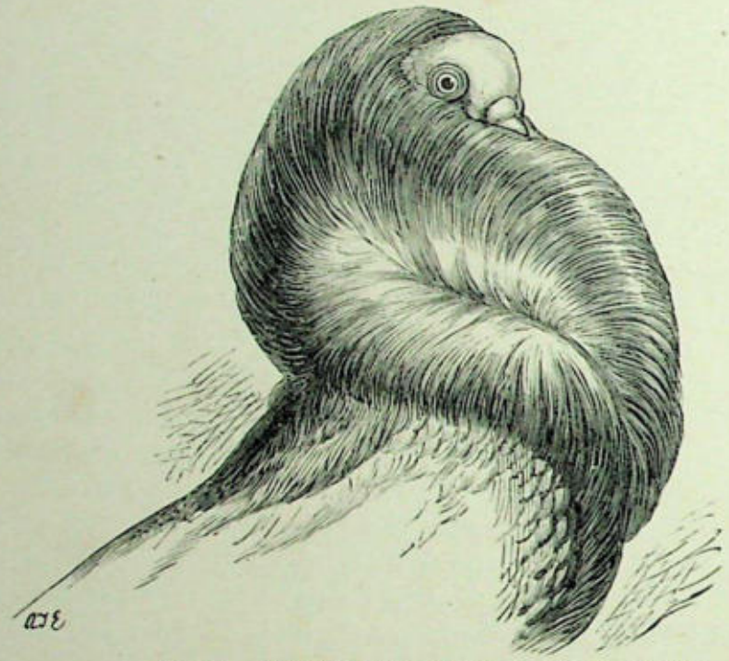


Fig. 54.—PERFECT HEAD, HOOD, MANE, AND CHAIN.

and so well filled up and *regular* in growth as to show a tolerably smooth and even edge, free from gaps or raggedness. When all is tolerably perfect, the effect is as if the head were closely encased in the hood and upper portion of the chain, which meets under the chin, and the apparent breadth or thickness of the neck, chain and all, when viewed in front, will not exceed one inch. Faulty birds, on the contrary, and especially some of the long-headed ones, either from the chain feathers being too short (which is the usual reason in very small birds) or not well set forward, show an open space down the breast between the two sides of the chain. Of course we do not mean that even a good bird never shows a glimpse of it; still the feathers should *about* meet, while the faulty ones will show a gap of an inch or more. To remedy this many cut or pluck some of the inside feathers, which allows the chain to meet closer; and according to Moore, some of the old fanciers used even to cut out a *strip of skin* down the centre of the breast between the two sides of the chain, and then stitch the edges of the wound together, which of course would draw the chain closer together; but we much doubt if this ever met with much success, since the effect of the scar "drawing" would almost certainly be to make the chain very ragged, crooked, and

uneven. Perhaps the old fanciers were less particular in these finer points of regularity and evenness than we are now; at all events, we know from experience that *no* artificial means can make a bad bird really equal in appearance to a high-class one, in the eyes of any judge who fairly understands the variety; and on the other hand, birds are bred now with chains so much better than in Moore's time, that such operations are really not needed, plenty of stock being obtainable which requires nothing of the kind. These are, however, almost always long-faced; and we have only seen very few indeed of the short-faced birds which were quite satisfactory in chain.

On the other hand, some of the long-faced and otherwise faulty birds often excel in one point in which the short-faced are, conversely, apt to fail, viz., the *mane*. This is also the great fault of the very small specimens. The mane is formed by the feathers which grow towards the



Fig. 55.—Long Head, Faulty Hood, and Short Chain, showing no Mane.

back, growing out so full, and so falling into what we may call the *sweep* of the chain and hood, as to form a full crest, in place of the notch which is seen in poorly feathered birds, formed by the parting of the feathers. It is not easy further to describe this feature, but we think all the foregoing remarks will be understood by comparing Figs. 54 and 55; where Fig. 54 shows the Jacobin points as desired, with hood, mane, and chain well developed and finished, and with a short head and good carriage, and Fig. 55 represents a long-headed bird, with hood loose and irregular, and no mane. It will be seen how the notch or hollow behind of the faulty bird is replaced in the model one, and in our plates, by the full crest or mane formed by the abundant growth of feathers behind. The more depth to the back of this mane the better, and in a first-class bird it will be as much sometimes as four inches from the front of the chain to the back of the mane. It is not, however, so hard to get sufficient depth of feather as to get the proper shape, which is termed by some, especially Manchester fanciers, the "hog-mane." It is wanted as full or convex as possible; smooth and even at the crest, not ragged or irregular; and thin, like a piece of paper folded, and not thick from side to side. It is strange that this grand property is oftenest seen in perfection on

large coarse birds, having no other good quality; and when all really is combined as in our figure—the neat close hood, the chain meeting nearly under the beak, and keeping almost close all down the front, the mane reaching far back and well-filled up in a neat uniform curved crest, and all the feathers nicely lying on each other, so as to look almost as if cut out—when all this is seen on a small, or even medium-sized bird, the result is a most beautiful pigeon, which all can admire, even if not fanciers; but such is seldom seen. On the other hand, all the faults in Fig. 55 are seldom seen together either, and in particular a good mane is often seen on a bird with just such a long, coarse head; but we collect the faults in one drawing for the sake of convenience.

If these points are good, there will be seen another property called the *rose*. This is formed by the parting of the feather at the mane and chain, showing the light under-fluff; and the perfection of it is for the feathers to spring evenly and smoothly as from a common centre, showing as much of the light fluff as possible. This will also be seen on reference to our plates, or to Fig. 54. It cannot be seen to any perfection except with good carriage; and, in fact, as it depends upon and presupposes a high degree of excellence in the preceding points, and cannot be dissociated from them, is itself a very fair indication of a good bird.

Such are the properties which really constitute the Jacobin. We have not by any means described ideals; for though such birds are rare, and we cannot say we have yet seen them on such *very* small specimens as some admire, we have not stated anything but what we have repeatedly seen, and now possess of our own breeding, on really neat and compact birds; except that we must confess that we have hardly seen quite such good mane as here drawn, unless on rather coarse specimens. We have next to describe what more is required to set off these, the essential properties; and as the bird is to some extent one of colour and marking, we will, for convenience, take as our text our chief favourite, the Black, both because it has been of late so much improved, and that it shows the contrast and points of colour so strikingly. We may note the curious fact, by the way, that a black Jacobin, when it *is* black, is far the best of all black pigeons, even the Magpie not equalling its colour in intensity and green lustre. And we are not sure the same might not be said of the Red.

But to resume. There can be no doubt that the Jacobin, as we have him, was produced by crossing with the Baldhead Tumbler, and the head *should* be the same marking as that bird, namely, white to just the bottom edge of the eyelash, going in a straight line from here to the bottom of the beak. This, as in the other case, is called being "high-cut;" and some fanciers place so much value on it, that they think nothing at all of even a good low-cut bird, which has often caused us to wonder greatly, especially when it has been so with some really good fanciers, whose ideas in general, we have been obliged to acknowledge, demanded every respect. For really three-quarters of the whole properties in this breed lie in the hood, mane, and chain; and to discard some of the *best* birds in these real Jacobin points for a mere fault of marking is what we cannot at all understand, and is at least contrary to all the principles on which we have treated *every* breed throughout this work—our guiding principle all through being to establish a fair value and balance of properties and no more, making absolute disqualification only of what is really destructive of, or at least highly injurious to, the breeding of the pigeon. Now a large portion—if not even a perceptible majority—of the best hood-mane-and-chain birds are low-cut; and not only so, but these birds are badly wanted to correct a far more glaring fault on the other side; for where is the fancier who confines himself to high-cut birds who is not constantly troubled with foul flights? Almost *every* high-cut Jacobin, in fact, is what is termed "too short" in flight feathers, or possesses, instead of ten white flights, some lesser number, even to as low as three or four only; and where is the fancier who will not readily admit that this fault is a far more conspicuous eyesore and more

difficult to breed out than mere low-cut marking? On the other hand, it is very seldom a low-cut bird is not good in both flights, and the fault is a great deal easier to get rid of than the otner; for faulty flights can seldom be bred out in less than three crosses at best, unless the breeder has recourse to the despised low-cut bird; and, indeed, we have known many fanciers who *never* could produce good flights in their lofts until they had recourse to this cross. We do not think there would be so much of this magnifying less important faults, either in Jacobins or other pigeons, but that when good fanciers get together, they will point out *every* fault in each other's birds, some from genuine appreciation, and not forgetting any merits it may have as well, and others from a little jealousy. This is all right enough; but there are almost always some listeners who really know nothing, but who suppose they have now got hold of a fault well worthy to be borne in mind (though perhaps of the slightest); and, grasping at it, on some subsequent occasion "air" the same remark as if emanating from themselves, and as if the fault *spoilt* the pigeon, which most likely the really good judge who had first uttered it never implied. There are plenty of these would-be authorities in the fancy, who seek to make a reputation for themselves by thus using up other people's remarks; but in most cases they spoil and *distort* them in repetition, and do much harm by making people think that what was only first spoken of as a blemish was tantamount to a disqualification, and thus discouraging and driving them out of the fancy. Equally culpable are those—and we have a certain anonymous writer who has systematically acted in this way, and drawn largely upon information derived from ourselves, particularly in view—who have, from the fact or suspicion that certain questionable practices are occasionally resorted to, and cannot always be discovered in the short time allowed for judging at a show, gone so far as to ape a kind of virtue for themselves, by accusing exhibitors and judges of *generally* practising or conniving at such things, and stating that "the honest exhibitor has no chance," which is simply either an ignorant or a wilful and deliberate falsehood. Either way, this narrow, evil-minded, carping, plagiarising spirit has done so much mischief, that these few words seem called for, and we hope may be self-applied by those whom they more particularly concern.

However, in itself the standard marking of the head is no doubt to be the "high-cut." Next comes the body, which should in our opinion be black, both over and under, back to the vent. This is the marking known as "dark-thighed," that is, the thighs the same colour as the body, a marking never seen on birds low-cut, and very seldom on one at all bad-coloured, so that it is a good sign of rich colour in either black, red, or yellow birds, as well as generally going along with the right head-marking.

Next come the flights, the colour of which is the most difficult part of all the markings. The desired colour of flights is readily to be found in coarse, common birds, but only rarely in grand specimens, and especially on *high-cut* birds. And as the flights are, next to the hood, mane, and chain, the most important features, we give some illustrations which will enable the reader more easily to see what is meant. The long flights should consist of *ten white feathers*, and in Fig. 56 we represent a perfect wing opened out, and so as to show how the outer and inner flight feathers turn in *opposite directions*, so that should a foul feather be fraudulently plucked it can be instantly detected, and any judge or purchaser deceived in this way really deserves no better. The next, Fig. 57, represents the flight far more frequently met with, especiallyin high-cut Jacks, namely, five of the outer flights white and five foul. We also represent in this figure another blemish which frequently accompanies it, though not always; namely, a foul feather among the *inner* flights, which should be all dark. This fault is, however, more often seen perhaps in low-cut birds, which have the outer flights right; but if in a good bird, some people will remove it as an eyesore, especially before exhibiting the bird. We say this is done by some; but as with many other of the

"dodges" named by us before, and with especial reference to the "honest exhibitor having no chance," as so often falsely represented, we have simply to say that it is the judge's own fault if he does not detect it, since he has only to open the wing and *count the flights*, unless, of course, it be just at the moulting season. Flights being a point of merit, it is the duty of every Jacobin judge thus to open and count the flights of any bird to which he gives an award, and every good judge does so; whence we would strongly advise the fancier to leave such a small blemish to the mercy of the judges, few of whom would attach very great weight to it, than to draw down on himself almost certain disqualification. Of course, in very equal birds the faulty feather would and ought to count, but it would seldom "throw out" a really grand Jacobin. Passing, however, from the foul inner flight, the class of outer flight shown in Fig. 57 is that to which we referred as "short-flighted," and which is so difficult to avoid in high-cut birds.

The next drawing, Fig. 58, shows a foul feather between the fifth and seventh flights, and is another fault often found in the high-cut birds, but rarely or never in the low-cut ones, just as we before saw in the Tumblers; the propensity to dark feather about the head coming out also in the wing, and the white flight with dark head being the difficulty.

Having shown these three flights opened out for examination, it will be as well to see them closed also, which is done in Figs. 59, 60, 61, so that the young amateur may know where to look for the fault on the bird in the pen. First of all it will be seen that in even the perfect flight only *eight* white feathers appear. This is simply because a young bird tucks up his wing so tightly, that only eight, or even seven, will show, and hence plucking one or two may pass so long as the bird is not handled; but opening out the wing will reveal the secret. But owing to this, two foul feathers only are not any great detriment to the appearance of a young bird, which tucks them up under the others, and we have seen even three feathers so hidden; but when the pigeon has bred two or three seasons, the wing becomes more slack, and the fault is seen even in one feather. Still, eight or more good flights, with other properties well developed, make a Jack by no means to be despised, though we must not regard as a standard less than "ten and ten" as in the Baldheads. In a case of actual competition, if a good bird had eight and nine a side, the remainder we would regard as probably the smallest fault the bird had, as probably scarcely appearing; but the *seventh* flight being foul would count far more seriously, as scarcely any bird can conceal it. This is seen in Fig. 60, where the really eighth feather, but apparently tenth, appears as foul in the closed wing; and we would again ask any fancier to look at such a wing, and again at a bird low-cut, and say if the wing is not by far the worst fault? If they disagree on this point, let them further try which fault is the *hardest to breed out*, and they will soon come round to our opinion. Finally, in Fig. 61, we see closed the same wing as in Fig. 58, which is even more objectionable, as being more conspicuous than the other, but which, like it, is also found in the high-cut, dark-thighed, and best coloured birds. Another singular point is, that the high-cut, dark-thighed birds here described are as a rule deficient in hood, mane, and chain. Hence to breed continually from them would be to risk the obliteration of the chief Jacobin points; and much, therefore, as we ourselves admire the high-cut marking, we feel bound to caution all breeders against placing too much value on it, and especially from depreciating or discarding the very birds which are most necessary to correct the faults with which it is so accompanied. We would certainly place more value upon good beak than upon mere high-cut marking.

The tail of the Jacobin, like the flights, should be white; but this point will give little difficulty.

There are also *whole-coloured* Jacobins, namely, birds which have flights and tail the same as the body. Some of these are very good Jacks, and the white bird in fact must be whole-coloured; but the want of marking is undoubtedly a great want of finish to the bird, and makes it of far

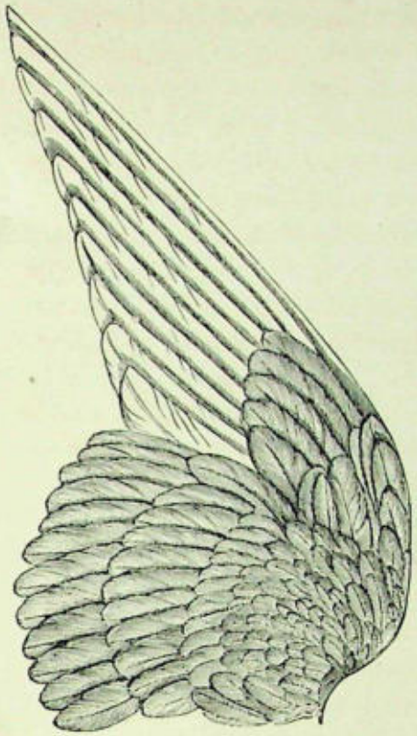


Fig. 56.
Ten Perfect Flights.



Fig. 57.
One Inner and Five of the Outer Flights foul.

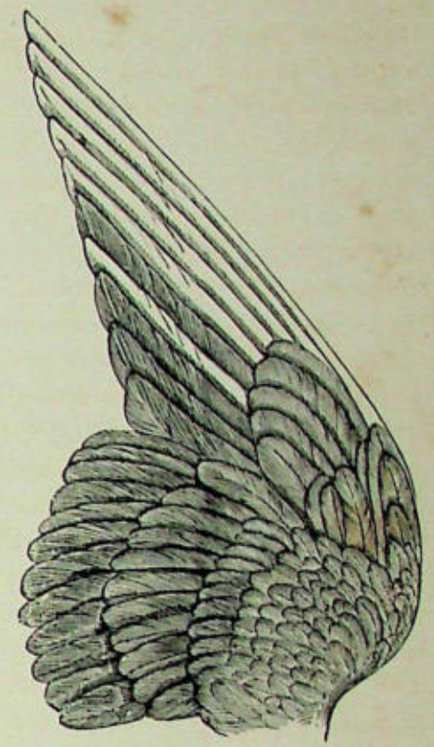


Fig. 58.
Sixth and last Three Flights foul.

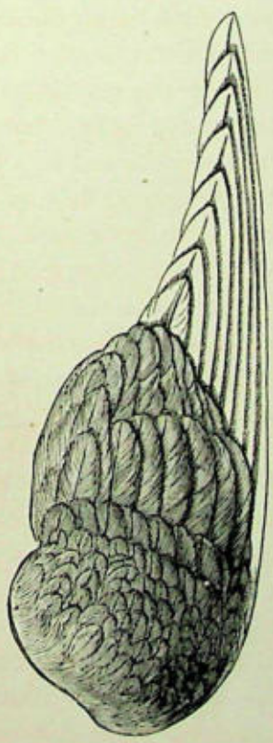


Fig. 59.
Perfect Wing closed.

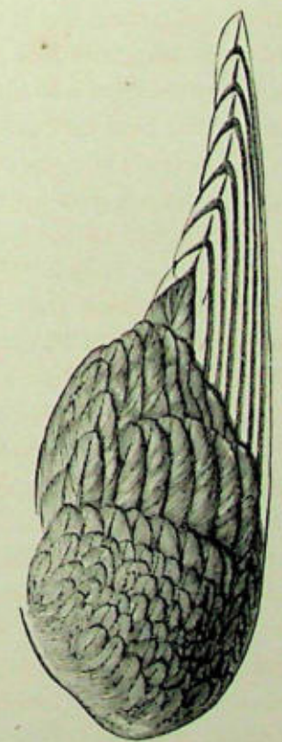


Fig. 60.
Three Foul Flights closed.



Fig. 61.
Flights as in Fig. 58 closed.

less beauty. Being also of much less difficulty to breed, we do not consider that whole-coloured or white birds should be allowed to compete on equal terms.

Low-cut birds are more or less white or clean-thighed, sometimes quite so; and some fanciers like this marking, while others consider it so great a fault, that no matter how good a bird may be possessing it, nor how bad one dark-thighed, they would throw out the clean-thighed bird. We need not repeat reasons already given why we cannot agree to this; but we may note the strong probability it adds to the belief of the Jacobin having been first produced by crossing the Baldhead with the Capuchin or some similar breed, and then developing hood and chain, some of the progeny taking after the clean thigh as well as head marking of the Baldhead, and others the dark thigh of the Capuchin. However this may be, and though we much prefer the dark thigh as so much removed from the Baldhead, and even prefer a bird high-cut, we can never, as some have done, rank a high-cut bird with dark thighs, but with foul flights and bad in hood, mane, and chain, over one fine in these points, but just low-cut and clean-thighed. Indeed, at one time the clean-thighed birds were fashionable, and as we have said, some admire them now. To find one perfectly clean-thighed is as difficult as to find one perfectly dark, but it would certainly be easily bred if wished. Were it not so we would as soon have it as the dark thigh, and almost even prefer it as far as looks go; but something is always to be allowed in a fancy pigeon for difficulty of production, which is on the side of the dark thigh. But either way, we would always wish for one *or* the other, and the greater part of the Jacobins to be seen at present are neither, but a mixture of both, which pleases neither party and is to be avoided. On the average, we certainly know the *best* birds we have seen in hood, mane, and chain have been clean-thighed and low-cut.

The eye of the Jacobin shows a black pupil surrounded by white or pearl. This colour, as in all short-faced pigeons, greatly improves the appearance of the head; but many birds, good in other points, have bull or broken eyes. These, or orange-eyes, would be with some judges a disqualification, and certainly we much dislike either. Still, we cannot agree with such extreme measures, having often noticed that birds so disfigured were apt to be the best in colour. We would simply allow it to tell fairly in competition, and judge the bird as a Jacobin, as with the other blemishes already mentioned. Moreover, a bull or gravel-eye can be got rid of in one judicious cross, and even the orange-eye in two, unless perhaps in deep Reds, which may take more time.

The colour of the beak should be pale or flesh-colour, except in whole-coloured Black birds. Some otherwise good birds have beaks rather stained, which, if not really black, is in our opinion of no great consequence. Blacks are very subject to a stain in the lower mandible.

The flights and tail should be *long* in comparison to the size of the body. This is, in fact, a *necessity* for a good Jacobin; for it will be readily seen that as a good length of feather is indispensable to form a good hood, mane, and chain, these points can hardly exist without the long feather also in flights and tail. Hence birds hatched early are apt to be the best in all these points, while, on the other hand, generally too large.

We like a bird to be rather tall on the legs, such birds being generally tight in feather; and a Jacobin at all loose in feather can never look well. Birds never look so well, in fact, as just after the first moult, when all the plumage is at its best; though, as regards colour and head, the old bird looks better. Longish legs also allow of a nice upright carriage, which sets off the peculiar points to better advantage, not only in mane and chain, but even the flights are better carried.

So much for what a Jacobin is or should be. Much of what we have said will give some assistance in matching for the breeding-pen; but we must now add a little particularly on that subject; and we will begin with the Blacks, as generally most efficient in the essential properties except perhaps the Blue, which is still worse, being as a rule inferior in hood, mane, chain, and

rose, to the Reds, Yellows, and Whites. Of course the White can show no true rose, which requires two colours to make it evident; still the formation is there; but the Black, too, owing to the fluff being dark like the body, often shows little of it, and hence loses a great beauty, since the contrast of white under fluff shows off colour as much as the white head. We have seen, however, some Black Jacobins with nearly white rose, so that we think the reason of not having it is simply not trying to get it. We should advise, then, the seeking first a good-coloured Black cock, by which we mean a deep raven colour, and showing no bluish or other different colour throughout, particularly on the belly and thighs, and with just as good Jacobin points as can be got with this. Such a bird should be matched to a deep-coloured Red or Yellow hen, but either of these *must* be true in colour, not washed out or mealy. If the hen can also be got dark-thighed, so much the better; and Reds and Yellows are *particularly* apt to be neither one nor the other, but a mixture of the two. Such birds are so very apt to breed an unsightly chequer sort of colour on both belly and thighs, that rather than risk it we would far prefer either one or both birds to be fairly and really clean-thighed. In fact, while we would far prefer both dark thighs, if this could not be we would next choose both clean thighs; but failing either would choose one bird with perfectly dark, and the other perfectly clean, thighs. If both parents are really good colours the progeny will almost always be the same, and frequently one of each; but sometimes what is called a "strawberry" colour will be produced, which would be more correctly termed a sandy, and is often intermixed with small black ticks through the feathers. These may be bred back to the Blacks if good enough in Jack points to be worth while; and, of course, if the breeder gets at once what he wants he has no more to do than go on his way rejoicing, breeding the best of his Blacks to the Black again, so as to get the colour true, the use of the Red in this case being not so much to gain colour as to impart hood, mane, and chain, which the Red chosen *must* have plenty of. This is why Red usually makes the best cross; and if even build, or close and neat formation be wanting, let there at least be *plenty* of it, this being where the Black, though usually very neat and trim, is deficient. The imperfectly coloured birds spoken of above as often produced by the first cross are also very frequently fine in these points, and hence valuable for breeding again to Blacks. Often, also, Reds are produced with black ticks; and these are not only valuable for breeding to the Blacks, but if bred to the Red generally improve that colour too, resulting in a splendid deep Red. If crossed with very faulty-coloured Reds they sometimes produce Duns; but these, too, are very useful in crossing with Blacks, provided the Dun be not chequered, when the result is unsatisfactory, being usually black, barred or chequered with an inferior or duller shade.

In crossing with the Yellow instead of the Red, the greatest risk is that of getting some of the yellow feather intermixed through the black, something like a Kite Tumbler. Of course such birds do not look well, and are useless for showing themselves; but crossed again with Blacks they breed beautiful colour, and in fact the most lustrous Blacks we can remember were so bred. So that we would just as willingly use a Yellow as a Red for breeding Black Jacobins; and consider the only reason there are so few good Blacks to be met with is owing to the constant breeding together of Blacks alone, which are, as we have said, generally deficient in Jack points. Blacks constantly bred together are peculiarly apt to be stained in beak and "short-flighted"—only four or five on each side; which fault, too, is most easily corrected by the red or yellow cross, which most frequently possess the proper number of flights of any colour. It is also to be observed that such Reds and Yellows themselves as are bred from this cross are generally of splendid colour, much better than when bred to their own colour; the cross producing even in Yellows a lustre which the Red cross itself does not impart to that colour.

We come next to Reds. which are most generally bred with Yellows, so as to get progeny



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith.

JACOBINS.

BLUE. WHITE. BLACK.

of each colour. The yellow thus bred is of course very good, but the red, as we have so often seen in other breeds, of course loses. On this account, unless the Yellow bird was really wanted to improve some other point, we would rather breed the Reds to themselves if we could find suitable matches. We would do the same with Yellows until the progeny began to come too pale; and to avoid this as long as possible, carefully avoid breeding together two *young* birds, which, as we have before remarked in this work, causes the yellow to become too pale much sooner than if the same birds were bred from when mature. Always therefore match a young bird to an old one, the younger, if possible, being the hen; and in the case of Reds, which improve more than any other colour with age, breed if possible two mature birds together, which will both produce better colour and also better heads and beaks. And when crossing is required, either Red or Yellow may be crossed with a rich Black, as before noted.

Whites of course have not and cannot have the same attractive qualities as the other colours, and in fact in scarcely any variety has white any right to contend on an equality with other colours which present any difficulty in marking. Whites have originally, no doubt, "sported" from Reds and Yellows, and hence have often very fine Jacobin qualities, which make them attractive. No one has done so much for the improvement of White Jacobins as Mr. Van Haansbergen, of Newcastle, some of whose specimens have left scarcely anything to desire; and indeed we scarcely know of one *good* White at the time we write which does not owe its origin to this gentleman's strain. It is a beautiful sight to see in one pen four *good* pairs, one of white, one black, one yellow, and one red; when the white seems to set off all the others, and each borrows attraction from the rest. To show the vigorous constitution of the Jacobin, and how much may be done by judicious breeding, we may state that to the best of our belief all Mr. Van Haansbergen's strain came from *one* pair claimed at a Glasgow show, and which we believe were the produce of some Reds. The great difficulty in breeding Whites is to keep up the hood, mane, and chain, with the *pearl eye;* white Jacobins, like all other white pigeons, being so subject to bull-eyes. It is strange that if an otherwise white bird have even a few foul feathers on its body, it will often have nice pearl eyes; but if *really* white, there is the difficulty, and very few indeed are the Whites with pearl eyes which do not owe a little to a "sudden moult." To improve Whites we should advise matching one *pure* white—no matter if bull-eyed—to a pale-coloured Yellow, and selecting the nearest to white for crossing back to the white parent. If another White can be got we would match it to another of the half-bred Whites, and keep on selecting till the produce was pure white. If again a *clear* red bird splashed on the body can be had, as it often can, we would gladly cross such too in with the Whites. It is in such ways the colour of eye is gained along with pure white body, and that hood, mane, and chain are kept up; and when these points are once got with really white plumage, the result is a most beautiful and much-valued Jack.

There are, as before said, whole-coloured Black Jacobins; but very few, if any, fancy them. Their breeding would give very little comparative difficulty.

We have never seen a really good Blue Jacobin. The difficulty is that there seems nothing to start with, beyond a cross with the blue Baldhead. We believe, however, that bad-coloured Blacks would produce blue-chequers, and a pair of these Blues. To improve the Blues can only be a work of time, though being the strongest feather, they would be easy to breed when once produced good.

It is often necessary to breed out faulty-coloured eyes in otherwise good-coloured birds. If the fault be a bull-eye, one cross with another good-coloured bird will often erase it; and, if not, re-crossing certainly will. The colour which gives most trouble to get rid of is the orange-eye. Should it be a Red with this fault, breed it to a Black or Yellow, but not to another Red, which

will often fail. In all cases, in fact, the fault, according to all our experience, is much easiest got rid of by crossing with *another* colour, and not to another even pearl-eyed bird of the same. Of course, no such bird would be bred at all unless it had other useful qualities; but grand properties in hood, mane, and chain are not to be rashly sacrificed for any other points.

To breed the essential Jacobin points to a high degree of perfection will require some degree of patience, unless the fancier has the good fortune to start with a much better stock than ordinary. He will usually have to mate one good bird with another much inferior, and then, by breeding back the best of the progeny, work to what he desires. In particular, it is especially difficult to get good *mane*, which, as we have hinted before, is very often, indeed generally, found best on very large, coarse birds with long beaks, and which possess scarce anything else. Match, then, such a big bird to a small specimen, which will almost certainly be wanting in mane, and probably also in even depth of chain from front to the centre of the rose, though very likely trim and neat in what it *has* got. Then select such of the progeny as nearest resemble the pattern given both in Fig. 54 and in our coloured plates, and re-cross again with another small pigeon as good as can be had; for it is wonderful the great amount of hood, mane, and chain which can be got by even *one* good cross with a large bird having plenty of feather, and more especially if bred early in the season, when all feather breeds strongest; and of course these Jacobin points depend very greatly from their very nature *upon* getting strength of feather, but on small instead of large, coarse birds, in which lies just the difficulty. Hence the crossing of the large, coarse, early-bred bird with the small one; by which means also constitution is kept up while still keeping down the size to at least a medium, which is what most of the best Jacobins are; and when an extra-small bird does happen to be thus produced, there is some chance of its being what is desired. The mane, however, has difficulties of its own. It is not so very hard, though not easy, to get abundance of feather in the desired place; but even when you have got that, it is too often loose and wild-looking, instead of smooth and close.

Most Jacobins of the present day have much too long beaks, more like Fig. 55 than Fig. 54. This, too, arises from the necessity of keeping up the grand points of hood, mane, and chain, the really short-faced birds being so often wanting in sufficient length of feather. And until we have enough of small or medium-sized short-faced birds we must not discard those with faulty beaks, but do our best by matching one to the other, to get what is required in both points. This is not so hard as might be expected, since it will be soon found that a short-beaked, down-faced bird does not really *require* such length of hood to make it look well as a long and straight-beaked bird. The one class of bird we would never breed is such as, besides faulty beak, has the hood rough and standing up, as in Fig. 55, unless for an unusually fine mane, which could not be got in any other way. To get all the points—and especially to get good mane without sacrificing the others—the breeder will, however, find tax all his skill; and whenever he does attain it, he will fully agree with us in placing the Jacobin at the head of all Toy pigeons. In fact, in our first edition we could not say we had ever seen quite so good mane as in our illustrations; but since then, so great has been the improvement, that we have seen as good mane with even better hood and chain. There are of late years so many clever breeders cultivating the Jack, and they have among them already improved it so much, even within our own recollection, that we fully expect ere long to see all that can possibly be wished for.

As we have said before, and whatever may be said by people who know nothing of the matter, there is *no* means of so "preparing a bird for exhibition" as to make a really bad Jacobin into a good one. There are sometimes to be found a few odd feathers which, growing awkwardly, prevent a really good hood from lying down as it should, and these can be readily removed. But

in saying "a few" we *mean* it, for although—as already explained—many and many a bird has been extensively trimmed all round the back of the head, any judge, with his senses about him, by simply drawing the head and neck through his thumb and finger as described, would—or at least ought to—instantly detect it, and is to blame if he does not. Similarly, a feather or two which may grow unkindly will sometimes greatly interfere, not so much with the whole development as with the smoothness of the chain; but here, too, only a little, and that on a really good bird, can be done. Some have said it is possible by a judicious use of hot iron after damping the feather, to "iron down" a bad hood, &c. It is often found that a really good hood, mane, or chain will have some little awkward place that *will* stand up ragged, and in such cases we can well believe a little ironing might bring it into place; but we are sure no hood not already really good can thus be made so. In fact, we may say once for all, that no one who intelligently understands what is wanted to make a good Jacobin as described by us, will ever be deceived by such artifices, or think of employing them beyond smoothing over or hiding such small blemishes as it must be held venial, if not innocent, thus to remove.

JUDGING JACOBINS.—Our general notions as to the judging of this pigeon will have been already gathered, and it is only needful to add the scale of points. In judging White Jacks against the coloured varieties, the white should lose all points for colour and markings, unless in cases where the prize was given for the best Jacobin irrespective of colour and markings; because neither the colour nor the markings are the *real* properties of the Jacobin, though they give the birds a more *finished* look, and, being of greater difficulty to produce, *should* be of more value.

Beak: shortness, 2; thickness, 2	4
Down-face	1
Head-size, 1; roundness, 2	3
Hood: size or length, 4; shape and close-fitting (without trimming), 4	8
Mane: shape and depth	4
Chain: closeness, length, and regularity	4
Rose: size, clearness, and regularity	2
Head-marking: high-cut	2
Correct number and evenness of flights	4
Dark thighs and vent	2
Colour of body	3
Colour of eye	2
Length of flights and tail	2
Size (smallness)	2
Carriage: upright and strutting	4
	47

CHAPTER XVI.

THE EXHIBITION ANTWERP.

FROM the composite bird developed by the fanciers of Belgium for flying purposes solely, is beyond doubt descended the Antwerp of the show-pen. In the original many races have mingled, and hence the characteristics of some of the very best performers differ widely; but one prevailing type, distinguished by a capacious skull and massive beak, has been most commonly found, and this has been developed and fixed by breeding till the type has become as invariable as any other. Such is the "Antwerp" proper, as distinguished from the mere "Homing Pigeon." By careful selection the shortish beak has become still shorter and more massive, and the skull still broader, till we have the highest type of show-bird, known as the "Short-faced Antwerp," which has of late years become a great favourite. Instead of describing the pigeon more minutely, however, we will at once proceed to the notes with which we have been kindly favoured by Mr. J. W. Ludlow, one of the oldest cultivators of this variety.

"As a show variety these birds are comparatively a new kind, for although as a breed the Antwerp has long been known and valued as a trusty messenger, it is not more than about twenty years since they were first acknowledged as worthy occupants of the exhibition pen; but since they have been deemed of value as show stock it is marvellous to what an extent the fancy for them has grown, and also remarkable the immense improvement which has taken place in the breed of late years. It is only a few years ago, when Antwerp fanciers were few and far between, and those who did discover meritorious properties in them were often derided for want of taste and discrimination in their selection; but now, to what a prodigious extent has the liking for them reached! No show, whether large or small, is complete without a well-filled Antwerp class; few fanciers are content unless they have a trial with them; until, at the present time, the number of Antwerps has become legion, and their admirers quite incalculable, and yet the fancy for them is still growing with remarkable rapidity; the passionate inclination for them seems both acute and contagious, and promises fair to extend to all sections of fanciers ere its zenith is attained.

"Belgium and France have for a number of years been the chief centres of the culture of flying pigeons. In those countries the fancy has run exceedingly high for Antwerps, though, as we shall see, for a different purpose have they been esteemed; indeed, to the present day, there seems no diminution in the zeal and admiration even of those who had them first and have kept them so long; the propagation of the breed still goes on, the same enthusiasm prevails in their trial-feats of flying; for it is by reason of their *flying qualities*, almost solely and exclusively, that they are prized in other countries than Great Britain, for as show stock I believe they are ignored. Yes, the *homing faculty* is the primary consideration in those parts. As 'couriers,' or aerial messengers, the Antwerp is the *ad extremum* of the pigeon fancy. The proof of their qualifications is drawn from the ordinary practising trials of young birds, or the grand periodical flying events of older and more perfected fliers. These periodical trials, or matches, engross the attention of large numbers of all classes of society. In Belgium, and France more especially, is the pleasure of this pastime

participated in by that extensive class of ardent fanciers who keep and breed them, and are ever ready to invest their capital upon these well-practised, tested, and proved, trusty aerial voyagers, the majority of which are subjected to a daily course of hard labour upon the wing as soon as they are enabled to use those members for journeying in the realms of unbounded space.

"In order to give some idea of the importance attached to pigeons as fliers both in France and Belgium, I need only remind readers of the late Franco-German War, the investment of Metz, and the Siege of Paris. These events alone will recall to mind the invaluable services rendered by these birds when no other service (except the very uncertain balloon post) could be brought into requisition, and this fact has materially encouraged and given wonderful impetus to the fancy and culture of these birds in this country. In these notes I propose merely to briefly allude (and that almost of necessity) to the typical fliers of foreign notoriety, because they will probably be treated of at length in another chapter devoted specially to their consideration; but as the Short and Long-faced Antwerps are by direct descent somewhat allied, one cannot well refer to one sort without touching upon some of the properties and characteristics of the other section, for there appears to me very little doubt that the Short-faced show kind have been produced by a careful selection and mating of direct issue of such as have displayed in the greatest degree the desired indicative features of a flier, and which we now see concentrated, beautified, and stamped as permanent upon the Short-faced stock. A considerable number of years may have been spent in fixing the combined special properties which may (at the onset) have developed themselves, by chance or design we cannot possibly determine; nor does it matter which course, so long as we do know that such special features were generally sought and bred for, and that, by a universally concentrated run of ideas in the minds and selection of fanciers, the typical Short-faced Antwerp was in prospect discovered, and in his rough state we received him; and, by a similar unison of thought in the minds of British fanciers, the breed has, in our hands, been vastly improved and perfected to its present state.

"The 'Antwerp,' whether for show or flying properties, derives its name from the city of Antwerp, in Belgium, at which place a passionate desire for courier pigeons was at one time more particularly concentrated. Brussels being now the capital, the sport has in consequence become in a great measure transferred thither. As I have briefly shown, Belgium was the original birthplace of the Antwerp, still it does not follow that the pigeons of either Belgium or France are *all* of good quality, for in truth there are hosts of 'duffers' in every sense of the term, the *majority* even being of very inferior and common appearance, simply because they are selected and bred for their homing powers solely; but most of them possess a good sound vigorous constitution, and strong capabilities on the wing as aerial travellers; therefore, in such well-crossed studs where physical power, endurance, and the consequent development of the homing faculty is the chief desideratum, there is afforded in these a splendid groundwork upon which any carefully and judiciously selected birds possessing certain desirable peculiarities of form or feather may be built up and established, provided, of course, the line of procedure is wise, and that there is also a unity of effort amongst fanciers in the same direction.

"The Belgian and French varieties of ordinary flying pigeons are of various kinds. First, there is the native, half-wild sort, which take up their abode in the turreted buildings, and forage at large for their own living; then there is the big, strong, bold, and lively *Owl*, which is an admirable flier, and which possesses the double advantage of being a strong and enduring flier, whilst, during its journeys, it traverses out of gun-range; and, further, there is the coarse, rough-skulled, ordinary British Carrier, or rough, wide, barrel-headed Dragoon, which is a low but very swift flier, and, in its uncrossed state, is a fair and speedy traveller; but when crossed with the afore-named kinds,

which possess, as they do, other properties of flying, yet of a different order, the happy combination of desired flying qualifications is perfected. It is supposed by many fanciers that the Barb, also, has been infused into the Antwerp and become part of its composition—in some cases it *may* have been—but it is a mistake to suppose that the Antwerp has been improved by any such injudicious cross. There is a strong resemblance in the formation of head between the two, and that it has been so crossed by a *few* fanciers who conceived the idea I am fully aware; but certain disappointment is the result, and the cross is betrayed at once, and its evil consequences apparent in every generation. If the reader compares minutely the points of each sort, they will be found to differ very considerably. Young Antwerps will often show up a reddish cere and a white eye, and this, no doubt, has led to the idea of a Barb cross, when in reality there is not the slightest affinity between the two; and when we consider that there are at least eight or ten varieties wherein there is a tendency to a red lash, we may infer that it is not at all remarkable that there should be an occasional red-lashed Antwerp amongst our young stock. Antwerps, also, occasionally throw a Black; but these, although being black-feathered, bear no more resemblance to a Barb than any other colour, and rarely, if ever, show a red eyelash. I generally keep a Black in my stud simply because they cross well with Blues, and tend to preserve the uniformity of colour upon back and thigh. The commonly-known, yet extraordinary, 'Voyageur,' then, is the produce of the complete admixture of the different sub-varieties of the three kinds named; and, as may be well imagined from the fact of systematically crossing the long-beaked birds with the short-billed ones, the medium character (as in the typical bird) becomes stamped and fixed as a style. Well, then, it is from numerous large studs of such medium-faced big-headed Antwerps, such as may be found in Belgium and France, that the Short-faced show-bird (the subject of these notes) has been propagated and so improved of late years, until the distinctive features of the *ideal* have now become permanently impressed in the *real* object to as certain a degree as in most of our British pigeons.

"My chief object in digressing so far from the main subject is to show the origin and capabilities of the *parent stock* from which the more handsome show-bird has been produced. Nor is the especially-keen instinctive homing faculty of the original entirely lost or eradicated from the more perfectly formed and handsome offspring. Certainly not; though it must be admitted that from the fact of continually breeding to one ideal of form from certain selected birds which reveal one type of merit, at least some, and in most of the best birds, much of the vigour, pluck, and knowledge, or instinct, of the race must be—in fact *is*—lost in the produce of the pretty and more attractive offshoot. I have on several occasions subjected some of my Short-faced prize (Exhibition) birds to moderate trials, and although but short distances, I have found them, as a rule, return remarkably well; but as the Short-faced birds have reached so high a value for show purposes, one does not care to run the same risk as with ordinary birds, and for this reason I never cared to trust my show-birds to a greater distance than twenty to twenty-five miles from home. That they *will* fly and *can sustain* a good journey I am sure, provided that they are subjected to the same regular ordeal of practice which is imposed upon their Long-faced and more common allies; but if confined within limited space, or even when permitted to enjoy a quiet, undisturbed, lazy freedom upon the house-tops, amongst the chimney-pots, the faculty becomes dull and dormant, and the specimens thereby rendered useless as homers.

"I remember sending one of my best birds off by rail to be tossed a distance of twenty-one miles from home; this I did for a mere risky trial-experiment; and although the wind was blowing a gale at the time, and against him, and notwithstanding the fact that he had not been previously *taken* any distance from home, he returned in about two and a half hours. I simply mention this

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BLUE-CHEQUERED RED-CHEQUERED

SHORT-FACED OR SHOW ANTWERPS

RED-CHEQUERED BLUE-CHEQUERED

LONG-FACED OR FLYING ANTWERPS

to show that this display of talent was at least favourable, and which, with other cases I could cite, tends to show what they *could* do if put to the ordinary tests. I imagine a systematic pigeon-trainer laughing derisively at this 'great event;' nevertheless, it served my purpose by the proof it furnished, viz., that, whilst the records of victories won in the exhibition pen told well of my stock, I have also the satisfaction of knowing that they are not a race of idiots made perfect in form and feather at the entire sacrifice of their physical, and mental, or instinctive, condition.

"Some years ago, in my search after good-looking Antwerps, I discovered a wonderfully-developed Short-faced cock bird amongst a lot of ordinary fliers in the pen of a man who was a successful long distance match-flier, and this bird I afterwards heard was known to be a 'very fast and sure bird as a hundred mile flier,' and the moment I spied his massive features I exclaimed (inwardly), 'He's mine!' for being smitten with him I at once set about negotiations for his transfer to my loft; but, alas! whilst I obtained a fair promise that after the next nest of young he *should* be mine, I subsequently found out that two other of my Antwerp friends had made the same discovery, and had in their turn obtained also a '*fair* promise' of full possession; indeed, one of these worthy Antwerp growers had put a mortgage on the bird, therefore on hearing of this I did not further press my claim on that *naughty*, *wicked*, *common* pigeon-flier, who, alas! alas!! in his love for gain, did not hesitate to tamper with the keen affections of no less than three ardent lovers of the noble and attractive Antwerp. The bird was a very good one as a show-bird, and independent of that quality, he had successfully competed with all comers as a flier. Further, a few years ago, I had in my possession a remarkably fine hen bird, in colour what is known as Silver Dun. This bird was a show-bird, though a little coarse, but as a flier she was a wonder, being the winner of ten matches from Paris to Brussels, and had upon her leg a ring or ferrule, upon which was recorded the number of her victories. So that it will be seen the Short-faced Show Antwerps may be successfully trained as ordinary fliers, and that amongst the number are some *extra*ordinary performers.

"I will now describe the characteristics of the Show Antwerp in perfect birds. Before doing so I will say that there are four recognised kinds: first, '*Silver Dun*,' or '*Mealy*;' second, *Red Chequers;* third, *Blue Chequers;* fourth, *Blues;* and although I always object to show a bias or preference for one kind more than another, I think they should be placed in the order of merit I have arranged them: then follow four other sorts, which are offshoots of the afore-named—*Silvers*, *Silver Chequers*, *Creamies*, and *Blacks*. The colour-properties of each individual sort I shall describe further on. I will now consider their general formation and points of merit, which applies to the whole lot.

"First, then, the Antwerp should be of good size, as boldness and vigour are desirable features. The smaller birds either too oft reveal their Owly origin, or else indicate a delicate and used-up constitution. The head should be large and massive; the skull wide, and free from an angular appearance when viewed at any point; but the head should be of a big, elongated, or oval shape, composed of a clear but gradual curve from base of skull to tip of beak, across from eye to eye, without gaps or hollows whatsoever, but should run in one clear, continuous sweep, in which curve should be included *wart and beak*, in an even, unbroken line. The beak wart should be large, and well raised up, and inclining forwards, no matter how large, so that it be not uneven, ragged, or lop-sided, but a fair division from its centre, and kept well within the prescribed curve of head and beak. The lower mandible, too, should be amply furnished with an even-shaped, warty substance, running along the mouth-line down to lower jaw, to match the warty nostrils, and thus form an acute, wedge-shaped frontispiece, when either seen at front or profile view. The beak must be short, thick, and close-fitting, and of the bullfinch character, hard and strong, both mandibles

Mottle so much the better, and such marking is by no means very rare—such a bird should not be mated to a Yellow, but, if possible, to a Whole-feathered Red. Failing that, we would choose a Red Agate Whole-feather—that is, not showing any white on the surface—if possible; or if this too is unavailable, showing as little white as possible. The reason of this matching is that the white feather is by far the strongest; and if the male bird has enough of it, it will be found that this alone is quite sufficient to impart enough, if not too much of it, to most of the progeny; all that is wanted in a Mottle being the rose of small white feathers on each shoulder, and the few feathers across the back, called the handkerchief-mark, which give it its name.

The next great point to attend to is to reject every bird which has a white patch on the front of the head. This is termed a blaze on the face; and we can say without hesitation that in breeding for Mottles of any colour (our experience has been chiefly in Blacks, but we have seen enough fully to satisfy us the rule is general) one of the hardest things is to get them entirely free from this foul mark. Such a blaze, if of any size, cannot even be removed by trimming; and even when slight, though it can be removed so as to look respectable to careless inspection, the plucking of even such few feathers in so conspicuous a place can easily be detected. We are not going too far in saying that, at present, when prizes are given to Mottles, the signs of such trimming can be detected in the great majority of cases; and the scarcity of feather in front of the head is generally attributed to the birds having "moulted late in the season," whereas it would be nearer the truth to say they had moulted so remarkably "late" as the day before the show. Some cut the feathers off at the root, so as to save trouble all the season, but the moulting season brings back the foul feathers. In the case of Blacks, some exhibitors, who seem to think it wrong to pluck away the offending blaze, prefer to *blacken* the foul patch. For this purpose one man prefers a little oil mixed with black varnish; another, grease burnt over a candle; another, Indian ink; and others, lamp-black mixed with oil, while some use caustic; but this latter does not become a good black, and grease has to be used as well to make it black. A very clean white handkerchief judiciously employed will detect most of these frauds, and they can only be attempted with the Black Mottle; for even were Reds and Yellows plentiful enough to exercise the ingenuity of these clever people, nothing, so far as we know—and we think we should have heard of it—has yet been discovered which will successfully imitate the colour of red and yellow pigeons. Honest people need no such provocatives to careful breeding; but we state these things so that even those fanciers who by no means stick at trifles may see the absolute necessity of avoiding this grave fault, which is so surely hereditary as to give infinite trouble to get rid of, if birds are once bred from which possess it. We would far prefer a bird perfectly free from white on the front of the head, even if it present very little indication of the marking desired on the body, since this latter can be improved and bred up to what is desired with far more ease than the blaze can be got rid of.

In supposing a Red Agate Mottle cock for the match here spoken of, we need hardly say that if a real Red Mottle itself can be had it will be all the better; and, in either case, the nearer the bird is to the desired marking on the shoulder the less trouble will there be in breeding what is sought. If a cock and hen, such as we have described, can be obtained and matched, there is a very fair prospect of obtaining something not a long way off the mark the very first season. Certainty of course there can be none; indeed, uncertain as is the breeding of Almonds, the breeding for Mottles is if possible still more so, and we advise no one to commence such a task unless he has patience to persevere through the many vexations and disappointments which he will certainly meet with. There is one thing in his favour: Red and Red Agate hens, especially if of a good size, are usually good breeders. But now to return to the progeny of such a match as we have

described. Should there be a Red or Red Agate and a Mottle (or something near one) in the nest—perhaps a cock—though it be faulty in marking, being either too light or too dark on the shoulders, yet, if it be free from a blaze on the face, it will be a most valuable stock bird, but if it show the blaze must be discarded, unless the fancier has no others to breed from, and no means to purchase better. If one of the young Red or Red Agate hens be whole-feathered, and also free from a blaze, then we would breed her with a cock resembling the father already described, or if that fails, to the parent bird himself; and she being, as it were, already half-bred to his mottled marking, will be still more likely to reproduce it. If there be no young birds of such colours, we would continue to breed the original pair till the desired colours, or something near them, were produced, when they should be cross-matched to each parent as above.

Some fanciers consider this method of breeding parents and offspring far too close breeding, but such is not our experience. It often happens that a young bird is better than the parent, and shows some fine point which the father or mother was not possessed of. In such a case the bird is *far* more likely to impart this point to his progeny when bred to his mother, or the hen to her father, than if matched to a fresh hen, which would probably cause a reversion to the more imperfect ancestor, and thus cause the loss of a point which may not appear again in the same strain for years, if at all. In breeding for marking or feather alone this principle especially holds good, and hence it is that, when something near the mark is obtained, we would breed it back to the parent at once. Before this can be done many birds may be produced of almost any colour—say Kites, or especially and more frequently, Almonds, since all the birds we have mentioned are Almond-bred. There is, in fact, almost the certainty of occasionally getting an Almond—which as often as not is a good one; but such will not of course greatly displease the breeder, since it is quite as valuable in its way. But such birds—in which we include Kites, Splashes, or *light* Agates, as well as Almonds—are of course not suitable for the Mottle-breeding, and must either be bred separately or sold for Almond-breeding.

But another match may be tried with the Red Agate Mottle cock, if there cannot be found for him the Red, Red Agate, or Dark-red Mottle, which we have described as the preferable and proper match. This is a Black Mottle hen; or, as there are so very few of these free from the blaze on the face, a *Black* hen, but if possible Mottle-bred. We would almost as willingly have such a Black, if a proper colour, showing the green tinge on her plumage. Such a bird will be a good match for the possible production of both Black and Red Mottles, being less likely to show the blaze, while the body-colour would be grand, since *good* Black and Red, when bred together, usually produce the best colours of any; though this is not the case when either colour is bad, which often throws nasty Chequered Duns or Grizzles. With regard to the progeny of the Red Agate Mottle cock, and the Black or Black Mottle hen, we would follow the same plan as we have advised for the progeny of the two Reds, breeding any particularly likely bird back to its parent; but for breeding Reds we would always prefer for breeding with the Black or Black Mottle hen a cock bred from two Reds, in order to give as little chance as possible of breeding back to Almond feather, which might otherwise result from the mixture of feather. The only exception would be a pure Red Mottle, or a deep, clear Red Whole-feather, which, however bred, may be pretty safely bred to a well-marked Black Mottle hen as free from blaze on the face as can be got. We say as free as can be got, since there is hardly a bird entirely free. We doubt if there be indeed even one, and are quite sure that if any one were to breed all at once a few really well-marked Mottles, few would believe them to be honestly so. Some may hence ask what is the use of even attempting to produce a bird for which we can get no credit even if we succeed. Well, we suppose credit and belief would soon come, if honestly earned, and the triumph would be

great; for any one who should breed a few even so good as to be capable of being *trimmed* so as to look perfect, without showing the trimming so as to be detected, would do a great deal more than we have seen except in a stray case or two, for we have only seen as yet three pairs of Black Mottles, and not one pair of Reds or Yellows, which could even be *trimmed* into well-marked Mottled Tumblers. The nearest we ever saw to a perfect Mottle was bred by old Miles Hall, of Spitalfields. This bird, however, was coarse in beak and wattle, and though free from the foul marking on the face, it had to be weeded a deal on each shoulder and breast before it appeared with the regular marking. It was bred from a Mottle cock and Black hen.

The best method of breeding for Yellow Mottles is similar to that we have described for producing Reds. Birds are always to be selected as free as possible from foul marking on the face, and the male bird as near the desired marking and colour as can possibly be procured; and let the yellow ground be as deep in colour as possible, for if of a soft or mealy tinge it will be of little use. No doubt some will wonder we do not advocate the mating together of the Red and Yellow Agate Mottles; but our reason is that, both being Almond-bred, the mixing at this stage of the two colours is far more likely to produce Almonds. Later on such would not be the case; but the first thing is to produce a pure and true strain of Reds and Yellows which breed Reds and Yellows, and till that is done crossing them is of little use. There should, in our opinion, be at least two seasons' breeding of each colour separately, before they are crossed, in order to get rid of at least some of the tendency to throw Almond feather. Were this done, then we believe the crossing of a true-bred Black or Black Mottle with the Red Agate or Mottle would almost completely obliterate the Almond feather, and that the offspring of such, mated to the true-bred Yellow or Yellow Agates, would create a true breed of Mottled pigeons, and be the best means of getting a strain free from the blaze-mark on the face. We have seen so much progress made in even one cross towards the desired end as fully to satisfy us of the success of such a system, and do not think it would take more than three seasons to establish a tolerably true strain of really Whole-feathered Red and Yellow Mottles. When once a sound and true ground-colour is secured the *greatest* difficulty is mastered; as there will be far less difficulty, by crossing with Agate Mottles, to get the marking desired, without getting the progeny splashed all over, as is the case when crossed with the Agate too soon.

If means allow, it will be well to keep some birds breeding together for Whole-feathered Reds and Yellows, as well as crossing the Agates and Agate Whole-feathers to get Mottles. Then, if from the one strain a bird was produced near the desired marking, a cross from the Whole-feathered strain may save considerable time. We would, in fact, in such a case, cross both ways, when the breeder will soon see if he is making progress; and even if the produce be not the desired thing, he is almost sure to get a bird or two which are just what he wants for crossing back to one or other of the parents.

When strains are got true in ground-colour, or, as it may be called, thoroughly away from the Almond feather, we should advise crossing Red and Yellow, putting a good sound-coloured Red (not Red *Agate*, but true Red) cock to a Yellow Agate Mottle hen. We would then select the best-coloured yellow progeny, and if a hen, re-cross with the father, and if any of the cocks were either Mottles, Red, or Yellow, crossing one of these with the mother. If the progeny were several, and there were likely birds left, we would also pair a brother and sister; and from these crosses something good is nearly sure to result. By thus continually crossing the best-coloured Yellow with a Red, the yellow produced will be kept of a fine deep shade.

We cannot recommend pairing two Yellow Agate Mottles together with a view of producing Mottles, as we have often known done. Not only is the match too light in colour, but, both being

Almond-bred, the produce is most uncertain. The first thing is to get even a ground-colour which breeds fairly true without going back to Almond, and then to cross the Yellow with Red. A Yellow Agate Mottle cock with a true-bred, sound Red hen, for instance, would then be another very promising cross to produce Yellow Mottles, and also to produce what are so very rare—good Yellow cocks, provided the Mottle cock be not too gay in marking. Such a result cannot, however, be in the least expected unless the hen be a true and solid Red not merely a Red Agate Whole-feather; but in this way, in two or three seasons, Yellow cocks might easily be bred; and when they are obtained the work is almost done, since Red hens can always be had. It is indeed curious that there are about ten Red or Red Agate hens to every cock; and the same rule holds good as regards Yellow Agates, but not as to true Yellows, which are almost unknown in either sex. Indeed, the only good Yellows we have ever seen were two (we speak of Short-faced birds): one of these was a hen bred by Mr. Esquilant, of London, but how we never knew; and the other was a cock we bred ourselves in the manner here given, thus:—We mated a deep Whole-feathered Yellow Agate cock to a good-coloured Red hen, from which resulted three Yellows and two Reds, all hens excepting one Yellow cock. All five were grand colours, but the two Yellow hens died; the cock was so good as to win many prizes against *all* colours, both in our own possession and that of Mr. Taylor, of Huddersfield, who ultimately purchased him. This was the only time we ever attempted to breed Yellows, and our success was much greater than we expected; indeed, had we kept the birds for breeding, they were sufficient to breed a fine collection; but the head and beak of the Agate cock were so good as to induce the offer of a high price, and so our experiment terminated. That was, however, a proof to us that good Yellow Tumblers *could* be bred; and though many trials might be made without quite such a sudden success, we are quite certain success *would* follow upon a little perseverance and judgment.

When a strain was once formed, only good colours should ever be bred together; and at no time would we breed two Yellows unless both were of a deep colour, as there is no colour so soon loses its richness as this. If one bird *must* be a little faulty, let the sound-coloured one be the cock.

The shape and carriage of the Mottle should be the same as in the Almond, as, indeed, should it be in *all* Short-faced Tumblers. Indeed, we believe at one time the Mottle was superior to the Almond in this quality. This will, however, give the fancier very little difficulty, because all the birds which we have mentioned as materials for Mottle-breeding are, as a rule, extra good in carriage. Inspection of any large class almost will show how superior many of the Agates are in these points, which we have seen in the last chapter to be very easily kept up by a little care. It is also to be remembered that, even should the fancier's efforts so far fail that he cannot produce Mottles to satisfy him, he will almost certainly succeed, if he perseveres, in breeding good Yellow Whole-feathers; and as this pigeon is as scarce even as the other, and as valuable, he has at least one certain reward before him, even if he fails in the other. It is true none of the matches we have suggested are *certain* to produce what we have given as their object, or in fact anything. A large element of chance enters into the whole breeding of all Almond-bred birds; and not until one or two generations of breeding have removed the Almond taint can any certainty be attained. It is true also that meantime many disappointments must be encountered; but in the end success as regards Yellow and Red Whole-feathered birds at least is certain, and even this will be something which, at the date we write, will enable any one to say he has produced something as yet almost unknown in the pigeon fancy. There are, of course, lots of what are *termed* Yellows, but not of the true colours. In Reds there are a few of the proper colour, and these few, if well used, would produce the true Yellows.

We next come to what has always been our own especial favourite amongst all varieties of Tumblers—viz., the Black Mottle. We are quite in the dark as to the origin of this pigeon, or as to how long it has been exhibited; but the first who conceived the idea of it, and bred for it, must have had a fine eye and mind for pigeon beauty; for in our opinion *no* variety of Tumbler pigeon is so beautiful and attractive to the eye of both fancier and non-fancier. It takes an educated eye to see any beauty in an Almond, and we know many who can never see any unless it be of the true colour and well spangled, few of which are to be seen; but *all* can see the great beauty of a Black Mottle. True it is, as we have said, that a perfect bird, or such as we would accept for an ideal, has *never* yet come before our eyes; but even those which have fairly approached the standard marking are so exceedingly pretty as in *this* respect to far surpass the Almond. When we add to this that the Black Mottle, like all the other true Mottles, is harder to breed true to marking than the Almond, and, above all, that it never loses its standard character if once possessed, but moults year by year the same, preserving all its beauties, we have said enough to justify our preference for this as the *highest*-class bird of all the Short-faced Tumblers.

And here it may be well to describe what a perfectly-marked Mottled Tumbler should be. It will be already understood that the body-colour must be sound and alike all over; in the case of the Black Mottle a glossy raven black, free from any tinge of brown or bronze, the latter being apt to be derived from a Kite cross, unless judiciously matched afterwards. The freedom from blaze on the face, or *any* white about the head, we have already mentioned. Next comes the marking on the shoulder, termed by north country fanciers the rose-pinion, as they also term the marking on the shoulder of a Pouter. The term is not a bad one; but the usual marking on a Pouter's shoulder would not be enough to constitute good marking on a Mottle, which should consist of a good-sized, nearly circular, or at least compactly-shaped patch covered by *detached* white markings, each white mark being a single feather. The white feathers must not run into each other, but be distinct and separate on the black ground, to make a perfect shoulder. Next comes the marking on the back, technically termed the "handkerchief-back." This consists of a line of white marking or spangles, which, when perfect, resembles the letter V, the open part at the shoulders, and the point or apex towards the tail. This marking appears as if on the back, but belongs in reality, as will be seen, to the wing-coverts. Some have more of it than others, and some have none; while some fanciers have even asserted that there *should* be none, and that the birds look better without it. But we cannot agree to this, as the beauty of the truly-marked Mottle can be seen either from a side view or from a back or top view; whereas a bird destitute of the handkerchief-back presents an attractive side view alone. Some birds have far too much white on the back, coming down towards the rump; this certainly looks bad, especially if the bird be of good carriage, which makes it even more conspicuous; but if the V-mark be well defined, and well up towards the shoulders, it adds greatly to the beauty of the bird. It should not be an unbroken line, but each spangle be separate, forming a *dotted* line, as on the pinion. Whenever a bird is seen combining these perfections—a head free from any white, a nicely *mottled* and not "patched" shoulder, an evenly-spangled V-mark on the back, and a glossy black ground—there is what we consider the rarest and most valuable of all the high-class Tumbler pigeons, and what we have *never* yet seen without some assistance from trimming; whereas, rare as they undoubtedly are, we have certainly seen several Almonds which, as times go, we must call fairly perfect. We believe, however, that *perfect* Mottles can be bred; for, much as the old fanciers have done, there are, we might say, fifty now to one in the old times, which proportionately multiplies the chances of success.

One of the commonest faults is a bad colour, it being rare to see a true raven black through the quills of the tail and flights, which are apt to show rather a brown tinge. This is often caused by breeders crossing a Kite hen with a Mottled cock, which is done for three objects. The first is that Kite hens are generally much more plentiful and cheap than really good Mottles; next, they are generally free from that troublesome fault of the white blaze on the face; and, thirdly, they are almost always much better in head, eye, and beak properties, and hence are used to obtain a better class of head. As a rule, the only indications in the progeny of the Kite cross are on the top of the head and in the quills of the flights and tail, which instead of glossy black are of a brown or bronzy colour. If the Kite hen be of the proper colour, showing little of the bronze (and these dull Kites are generally used, being more plentiful than the good bronzy Kites so useful in Almond breeding), it is astonishing how little the cross really shows; and the signs of it on the head at least are very often disguised by dressing up the head with oil and lampblack, caustic, ink, or other means, which lasts for some days, after which the natural colour reappears. It is however when, not knowing of the cross, such a bird is bred again to a Kite hen, that the evil is found, as the Kite blood now preponderating, the colour becomes very bad, producing mere Kite Mottles, or Splashes, or Grizzles, in many cases. The Kite cross, therefore, only answers, and should only be used, when employed with a purely-bred Mottle.

The greatest difficulty, as we have already hinted, in breeding Black Mottles, even more than Reds or Yellows, is to get rid of the foul marking on the forehead; and we will endeavour to state clearly how we would advise any one to proceed. It is little use in this particular case making any inquiry about the good or bad qualities of a strain, since *any* birds are scarce, and no one will admit that his are not good, while if they are, there will be plenty of other folk to depreciate them, simply because better than their own. In this case we would go by appearances, and take such birds as we describe wherever or from whomsoever they were to be got. First of all we would purchase the very best Black Mottle cock we could afford or could procure, especially as free as possible from blaze on the forehead, but quite free no one must expect. If also quite free from Kite colour on the forehead, so much the better; but even if it should show the mark of the Kite there, provided it were well marked as regards mottling, we would not discard it if no better offered. Such a bird we would breed in the first place to a *raven black* hen, not being particular as to how she was bred, provided only she was good in colour, and fine in the beak and beak-wattle. If good in head and carriage so much the better. We would breed two or three nests from this pair; and if out of these there were no birds to give us a little satisfaction, we would dismatch the pair, and put the same cock to another deep black hen, or if we could not get such, to a Mottle hen decidedly dark as regarded marking, and of course free from any Kite colour on the head; because, as we have said, to breed two birds with any Kite taint together is ruin to the Black. We do not, in fact, recommend a bird so bred at all, but merely state how such stock may be utilised, and their faults bred out again, because such are much more easily to be had, and at a cheaper rate, while by careful breeding for two seasons, commencing as we have said with a real Black, pure Mottles may be established from them.

If among the progeny of this first pair there was a young cock tolerably well mottled, and free or nearly free from blaze, we would match him to a Black Mottle hen of the true colour; or if such could not be procured, or was not within the breeder's means, then to another Black hen, but this time making sure she was bred from Mottles. But the correct match is decidedly a Mottle, because the young cock, being already half-bred Black, if matched to Black again would be likely to produce chiefly Blacks. Then, as regards the rest of the progeny, which perhaps might not be quite free from Kite marking, we would select the best of them, and breed with other Black

Mottles, as we have already stated; or, if means did not allow of that, we would match one of the best young cocks with the parent Black hen; but taking care that the young cock had plenty of the Mottle feather on the shoulders, so as to keep up the markings in the progeny. Similarly, we would match the original cock, for the second season, with one of the young hens, choosing, of course, one as free as possible from Kite colour on the head. This will provide three pairs of birds for the second season; and in this way we would proceed, carefully weeding out as much as possible the Kite marking, as well as the blaze, until we got what we desired.

Some may wonder we should enter into the mode of breeding from materials confessedly imperfect, and even not pure-bred. The simple fact is that no perfect Mottle has ever yet been seen, nor has it been proved that the Mottle is a distinct breed from the Almond. We have known a Black Mottle and Almond, mated, produce beautifully-feathered Almonds; and, on the other hand, we ourselves allowed an old Almond to match, according to his own inclination, with a young Black Mottle hen, and reared from that pair three Mottles, as near the desired markings as we ever knew bred in one season, all three being alive at the date this is written, and so free from Kite colour that it cannot be detected without taking the birds in the hand. Hence, it appears highly probable that such Mottle strains as exist first occurred in breeding Almonds, and were bred together for the beauty of the markings, which would soon improve the colour and obliterate the Almond feather; and we see no reason to discard birds in commencing a strain because they show a trace of the Kite: the more especially as we have often noticed that these Kite-bred birds often have the *marking* more accurate than those of the pure ground-colour. The Kite cross also imparts better head and beak and carriage properties than can usually be seen in our present pure Blacks and Black Mottles, with the sole disadvantage of the colour on the head. Again, let us suppose one breeder breeds from two Mottles true in their ground-colour, and produces from them birds a raven black, but irregular in marking, and with the white blaze (almost irrepressible by this mode of breeding); while another, breeding from a Kite hen, gets progeny pretty good in all points, but showing more or less Kite in the head; which progeny will soonest produce birds free from all faults? We answer, that the Kite produce will easily, with judgment, breed in two seasons young birds free from Kite; but we should be well pleased to breed the blaze out from the other strain in four or five. We have already hinted also, that the present strains of Mottles—if such can be said to exist—are mostly plain in head and beak properties, in which Kites are apt to be peculiarly good.

When it is not desired to cross with Kites, blaze on the face is best got rid of by crossing with pure Blacks; or if a pair of these, suitable in other respects, could not be found, we would employ Mottles too dark or short of marking, black or too dark birds being those most free from this troublesome fault. If the produce showed little or none of the fault, we would keep the birds breeding together; and then selecting the best, breed brother and sister of the produce if we could not get unrelated matches for them to please us. If the first produce did not satisfy us, we would select the darkest of them and breed to the parents, as so often advised; and in this way the blaze may with care be bred out of the strain.

Most of the best Mottles we know have been bred partly from Kites in the way we have described. Of course, if there were better materials at command, we would not advise such a course; but as the matter stands, the Kite offers assistance which can be got from no other quarter. When a strain is formed, and good birds can be had, of course the breeding should be different. We would then select a cock possessing all the properties as far as possible, but valuing them as follows:—First, a raven black colour, so that when the tail or flights are opened there is seen a polish or gloss on the quills, and at least fair marking on the shoulders, with as few as possible

white ticks on breast, belly, and neck, and *no* white on forehead. Secondly, good shape and carriage. Third, fineness of beak and wattles. Fourth, a good eye. Such a cock we would mate to another Mottle hen of similar quality, but would not keep them together if the first and second nest proved both too "gay" or plentiful in white marking. In that case we would dismatch at once, and mate the cock with another hen possessing less white mottling, still carefully avoiding a blaze face; and if still too light we would try again with a very much too dark or even black, but Mottle-bred hen. Even from the best of stock there will come—at first at least—more or less of Dun Mottles, and even Grizzles and other colours. Dun Mottles are mostly hens, but when they occur in either sex they are by no means to be discarded, as they are most valuable for breeding Blacks of an extra rich colour, precisely as in the case of Barbs or Carriers. We mention this because some fanciers are very sorry to get even a good Dun, while we know such to be most valuable stock birds, when mated to a good Black Mottle.

Another cross we should strongly recommend, when the strains are thoroughly to be relied upon, would be between the Black Mottle and a good coloured Red or Red Mottle; but on no account should such an experiment be tried unless the colours of both were really good, as otherwise the progeny will be very various, and almost useless for re-crossing. And we need hardly add, that until both strains are fixed so as to breed fairly true to themselves, any such experiment would be worse than useless.

Finally, we may perhaps urge upon the committees of exhibitions the propriety of giving more encouragement to the Mottle pigeon. The want of this, in our opinion, has been the chief cause of its—we were going to say—extinction; and we believe that a class would, in a very short time, produce birds to fill it fairly, and that the fancy would be eagerly taken up by many on account of the superior hardiness and permanent "standard" character of the birds as compared with the Almond.

Mottled Tumblers should, in our opinion, be judged as follows:--

POINTS IN JUDGING MOTTLES.

Accurate markings	9
Colour of body	3
Shape and carriage	5
Fineness of beak and wattle	4
Size and shape of head	4
Colour and fulness of eye	2
Smallness of body	2
Shortness of legs	1
	30

CHAPTER XI.

BALDHEADS AND BEARDS. EXHIBITING SHORT-FACES.

We come next to another class of Short-faced Tumblers, which have been very greatly neglected, for no apparent reason, as there are few fanciers but greatly admire them. Were it not for the support during many years of Messrs. Esquilant, Woodhouse, South, Fielding, and Hale, we hardly know what would have become of them. As regards Beards we might add the name of Mr. Esden; but we hardly know any other who has really continued, year after year, to breed these birds, and every fancier must desire to have the due record of those who, with little reward, have thus from pure love preserved and handed down any variety of pigeon combining such points of beauty.

Our coloured plates will of themselves, together with the mere names of the varieties—expressive as these latter are—convey a very clear idea of what these pigeons should be, and we will, therefore, at once proceed in detail to describe what is needed in a good bird, taking the Baldhead first. The most valuable property, and the most difficult to get in a Bald, is being *clean cut* as it is called; that is, that the white on the head from which it is named should be divided from the body-colour by a sharp clean line. But, further, this line should pass just below the eye to but little under the beak; and when the bird is thus correctly marked it is said to be *high cut:* while, if the white extends lower, or at least very perceptibly lower than this, the bird is described as *low cut*, and is so far not such a good Bald. It is very seldom that birds are seen quite so high cut or clean cut as represented in our plates, unless the owners have assisted nature a little by removing a few feathers on the border line, which is often done so skilfully as to make the bird appear as if clipped all round to a pattern; indeed, malicious folks might think that from this practice the term "clean cut" was derived, especially as the more knowing exhibitors, instead of pulling the feathers out—a process which needs repeating as they re-grow—cut them off close to the skin, which lasts till next moult. This practice is so common that really no one can be secure without a *very* careful examination—and not always even then—that a bird he has purchased will present the same appearance after moult as when he purchased it.

The next property in a Bald is to be *clean-thighed*. This means that just below the breast and above the thighs the colour of the body should cease at a sharp tranverse line running right across. The more accurate and sharp this line dividing the colour on the breast—be it black, blue, red, yellow, or silver—from the white, the prettier and more valued is the bird; and from this line the white must extend back to the vent, including, of course, all the thigh, from whence the term which describes this property is taken. The white is supposed to be pure, and unmixed with coloured feathers; but here, too, we must confess that art too often is called in to assist nature, and that far more clean-thighed birds appear in the show-pen than were ever bred. There are really and naturally very few good Short-faced Baldheads which have not some foul marks on the breast or thighs in their natural state; so very few, indeed, that we may say neither fanciers nor any good judges expect to see them *perfectly* free, though, if more widely bred, there is no reason to doubt such would be the case. We say this, because there are plenty of the pleasant-faced Balds which



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith

SHORT-FACED BALD-HEADS

BLUE. BLACK.

RED. YELLOW.

are all that could be desired in colour and marking; but it is the good head, beak, and carriage of the true Short-face that are so seldom, if ever, seen with perfection in feather.

The next property is the number of white flight-feathers, which *should* be the full ten in each wing; but this, too, is rarely seen in good Short-faced birds. The reader of reports of pigeon-shows, if uninitiated, may be mystified by seeing that someone, for instance, "showed a nice bird eight and nine," or perhaps "nine and nine." This means that the Bald has so many white flights in each wing, and such a number is very good indeed, the usual average being six, seven, or eight on each side, and very frequently more on one side than the other. Nine flights is, in fact, quite sufficient entirely to hide the tenth as well as the inner flights; but, of course, the breeder should aim at the full standard number, and short of it no bird can be called *perfect*. This is a property no "dodging" can imitate, as, if the coloured flight be pulled out, the deficiency is easily discovered by counting. So also if, as sometimes happens, one of the *inner* flights is *white* (which should not be), and is plucked as being a foul feather, the gap is evident directly the wing is opened out. As regards these two faults, however, a bird with one or two of the inner flights foul and all the outer flights correct is far to be preferred to one with a "short" number of outer flights, however perfect in the inner; since one fault is only seen when the feathers are spread, while the outer flights show at once if more than the tenth, or at most ninth, quill, be faulty. It is also to be noticed that a very "short-flighted" bird (the term in Balds does not mean short in length of feather, but short or small in the *number* of white flights), having too much colour, is almost always foul-thighed, and very often disfigured by a stained beak beside; whereas, a bird with one or two white feathers in the inner flights is very seldom not clean-thighed, or nearly so, and we think we may say has *never* a stained beak. They have, however, another drawback: having too much white in their blood they are generally too "low cut." So that to get all three properties, and produce a bird high cut, clean-thighed, and "ten a side," together with the general properties of the Short-faced Tumbler, is a very difficult task, and quite worthy of the most skilled pigeon-fancier.

The tail-feathers of the Baldhead should be pure white. This is not so difficult to acquire as the preceding properties.

We have, however—though not often—seen all these properties, and even good colour of body as well, and still the bird not perfect on account of bad eyes. These should be pearl. Some fanciers, if they had all *but* this, would for it completely discard a bird, counting it of little or no value if bull-eyed or broken-eyed; but in this we cannot coincide. It is undoubtedly a great fault, and one which should prevent a bird winning against good birds; but to pass over a bird for it which is fine in all other Bald properties, and give the prize to one which is faulty in flights, or foul-thighed, or coarse in beak, or very low or raggedly cut, is what we never will agree to, and contrary to the general principle of judging which we carry through every page of this work. Either of these other faults is three times more conspicuous, and ten times more difficult to breed out of a strain, than bull or broken eyes, though we do grant that a bad eye is more conspicuous in a Bald, owing to the colour of the head, than in any other variety of Tumbler. Still, it is less so than the others, and should have its fair weight allowed it and no more.

The colours of Baldheads we have already mentioned; but Blues are the most numerous, owing doubtless to the fact that they are of more vigorous constitution. It is therefore natural that in general Blues should be found most perfect in points, as is the case; but it is a singular thing that the hens in Blue Balds, and also in Beards, are scarcely ever found as sound and true in colour as the cocks. So generally true is this, that we do not think we have seen over three pairs of each variety, fairly good in quality, which were a good match in body-colour. This fault can however be remedied by crossing with the Silver; mating a Silver cock with a Blue hen, which

will tend to produce good-coloured Blue hens. If, however, the produce was not to our satisfaction, we would select one of the young hens—Blue or Silver—and breed to the father; when any Blues produced would be almost sure to be of good colour. In this way the Blue can be improved, but there is a risk as to the colour of the bars, which are apt to be Kite or Mealy-coloured; still, we would risk this to get the colour on the body, since a Blue-chequer cock mated to one of these Silver-bred faulty-barred hens will generally improve the colour of the bars, and the result is often a bird good all over. Another mode is to breed a Blue cock to a Silver hen, the darker the bars on the hen the better, as it is in the Silver bird's bars the danger lies. In this cross the cock should be as dark a Blue as possible, as if light in colour the progeny may very likely be Silver, and few fanciers breed for these if they can get Blues, unless for variety's sake. They are also useful, as we have seen, to keep up the purity of the Blues, and likewise to get clean thighs and a high number in flights; in fact, any shortness of flights or foulness of thigh in Blues is always best remedied by crossing with Silver. In brief, the Silver Baldhead stands to the Blue in much the same relation as the Mealy Pouter to the standard Blue-pied.

Next is the Black, which is and always was the rarest colour, and most difficult to breed fully up to the properties; all partially black pigeons, from the depth of colour in the blood, being particularly liable to foul feather. Not only so, but the strong contrast makes every trifling fault or foul mark so striking, that a single foul feather in a Black is seen at once. We have seen few of this colour we could term good, and regret it, as, from the striking contrast, it is to our fancy the prettiest colour of any; but, in spite of the vast increase of pigeon-fanciers during late years, we are sorry to see that the race who seemed to find pleasure in vanquishing the greatest difficulties by skill and patience seems almost extinct, most breeders being satisfied with keeping up varieties which have already been all but perfected to their hands. We are sure good birds would be valued, and have not the slightest hesitation in saying that we would cheerfully give a larger sum for a pair of really good Short-faced Black Balds than for the best pair of Almonds we ever knew of; and by "good" we mean no more than we have often seen, and even possessed, in the Blues.

We can add little as to breeding Blacks, there being so few birds of this colour. We can only say that, if we could procure a cock of good colour and well cut, but not good in Short-faced properties, we should be inclined to cross him with a dark-coloured Kite hen, for the purpose of improving these points, and on the chance of getting even one or two resembling the Bald in markings; and if we could in this way get a hen anything near the mark, we would mate her with the father, in order to improve the Baldhead properties. If this failed, we would cross the Black cock with a light-coloured Silver hen, by which there would no doubt be bred lots of bad colours; but if one hen came Black, or even better, perhaps, Dun, we would in either case match her with the father. This plan, followed up with judgment, would, in our opinion, produce really good Blacks. If even this match could not be got (and it is not easy always to find a Bald hen good enough in head and beak properties), we would try breeding the Bald cock to a wholly Black hen, no matter if Mottle-bred,* adopting afterwards the same plan of matching next season the old Bald cock to the most promising of the young hens. We hardly need say that, in this case, the matching also of a young cock to the mother would be useless, since, the young bird having only half Bald blood and the old one none, no good could result, except by some extraordinary chance. If, however, there were more than one young hen at all promising, we would by all means, if possible, get another Bald cock to breed also with her.

* While very unwilling to suggest anything not according to Mr. Fulton's great experience, we should be inclined to prefer a Black Mottle herself, if we could get one; because, in our opinion, the tendency to *blaze on the face*, if not accompanied by too much white on the body, would facilitate the breeding back to Baldhead properties.—ED.

Of course if, besides a fair Black Bald cock, we could procure a really good-coloured Red or Yellow Bald hen, we would prefer this cross to either we have mentioned ; and indeed in that case would have very little fear of producing some good Blacks, and getting really brilliant colour. The Blacks from such a cross we would, if possible, breed to other Blacks, so as to improve that colour before crossing again with Red or Yellow. As to the Red offspring, if we had both sexes, we would breed the best together for Reds ; and if only one sex, we would match a bird with a Yellow if we could get one. If there is no Black cock to cross with Red or Yellow hens, and we could manage the reverse, we would certainly mate a Black hen with a Red or sound Yellow cock until there came a Black cock in the produce, when we would cross this bird with his mother, so as to keep the strain of Blacks. Reds and Yellows we would of course cross together, choosing the cock of the colour we desired the progeny to be, and, of course, as soon as our stock would allow of it, guarding most carefully against any deterioration of the colour by only breeding from the deepest and soundest-coloured birds.

As we have already observed, the high cut birds are peculiarly apt to be foul-thighed and short or foul in flights, whereas the low cut birds are very often unusually good in those very qualities. The low cut birds are also, on the average, better than the high cut in head and beak properties ; hence birds low cut are often the best cross for high cut birds possessing the faults referred to. Some have crossed with the Almond for the sake of getting better head and carriage properties, and we have known good *Yellows* produced in this way, but of course many birds come thus which are quite away from the mark, being what are known as Almond-splashed or Mottled Baldheads. The proper cross is a Yellow Bald cock with an Almond hen of really good yellow ground ; but we should far prefer a Whole-feathered Yellow Agate hen ; or, if one could be got, a good true Whole-feathered Yellow hen would be best of all. The first Yellow Bald hen which came should be bred back to the father, unless the old pair—as might be—were producing such good specimens that it was a pity to separate them. Many breeders fail here ; for in all high-class Pigeon-breeding it may be taken as a safe and wise axiom, that when *any* pair are breeding really grand birds, *it is best to let well alone*, and get all you can from a match you have proved to hit so well. In that case we would try to get other Yellow or Red Balds to cross with the offspring.

Such are all the hints we can give for producing or improving the Baldhead pigeon ; and as it is a variety at present far behind, we hope these remarks may be the means of inducing some to take up such a beautiful bird. We are quite sure that if this is the case, and any one produces really good specimens, there will be no difficulty in disposing of them at very remunerative prices ; as those which even now exist find many eager admirers, amongst which are plenty of those who are willing to pay for the birds they fancy, but are too much engaged to breed for themselves.

We come next to another much-neglected pigeon. If we could believe all we hear from old fanciers, there used to be many really good specimens of the Beard, in all colours ; but this has certainly not been the case so far as we can remember, and as to Reds and Yellows particularly, we do not think we ever saw a good pair—that is, good both in Beard points and as to the general properties of Short-faced birds.

The marking or "beard" which gives the variety its name has been the subject of many disputes, as to what is the really perfect type. The majority of fanciers consider the marking we have represented in our coloured plate the proper thing, and which consists in an *unbroken* crescent-shaped patch of white at the throat, below the beak. But a few of the oldest fanciers—and we must in justice add some of the best ones, and whose opinion well deserves to be respected—insist that this white patch should not be unbroken, but show a small streak of the body-colour down

the median line of the throat, thus *dividing* the white into two portions, right and left of this mark or streak. They further affirm that this streak of colour upon the white is what was called and meant by the "beard," and that birds showing the patch all white used to be called by Beard fanciers "swallow-throated." Be this as it may, our opinion is, and we have found few to deny, that the birds with the white or swallow-throats are most attractive and look best, while, on the other hand, we must admit that the style these old fanciers prefer is far more difficult to get true to marking. The difficulty of it, in fact, is really stupendous, and we have scarcely ever seen such a bird which, in its natural state, was even *nearly* true to this marking, most of those said to be so being really what are known as "pepper-faced" birds; which means that the colour showing over the white, instead of being a sharp and clean streak, is distributed in specks mixed with white, or "peppered" over a patch, and often much on one side; while in other cases it is so little as to be scarcely discernible. Some again are so heavily marked that hardly any of the white can be seen at all, and but for the white flights and tail, and the coloured body, the birds could not even be recognised as Beards. Such as these last are termed by fanciers "dark-faced" birds.

Next come the flight feathers, which should be white, as in the Baldhead. The really Short-faced birds, however, very rarely have the full number, being more inclined even than Balds to be "short" in flights, and also more seldom alike on both sides. The dark-faced birds more especially, as might be supposed, are liable to this, and it is common for them to have about five on one side and perhaps six or seven on the other, sometimes even less; whereas, birds having a well-marked white face are nearly always better in flights; indeed, such as have too much white on the face are mostly all that can be desired in flights. The number of flights, however, is another point upon which fanciers differ, some few contending that a Beard should only have seven each side, while others insist that no bird is correct unless it has eight and eight. The last, of course, comes nearest to our views, but we cannot consider a Beard *perfect* in this property unless it shows the full number of ten and ten, the same as a Bald. The only difficulty is to *get* this number, which is no sufficient reason against trying to get it, since specimens with the full number have been bred, and therefore can be bred again. Moreover, we cannot admit an altogether different standard for the two birds, since it is beyond question that they are at least very closely related, and it is well known by fanciers of experience and standing that good Baldheads and Beards bred together often produce birds of even better quality than if matched separately; in fact, the best Beards we have ever seen were thus bred. We would, however, be well satisfied with nine and nine, since this number would entirely hide the tenth in a young bird; and even eight and eight is very good; but when it comes to laying down a standard for a *perfect* bird, there is no reason whatever for saying ten a side, except the great difficulty of getting it, which to a true fancier is a strong reason the other way.

The next property is the marking on the legs; and here the Beard differs from the Baldhead; for while the latter is or should be clean-thighed, the Beard has, or is supposed to have, the "stockings" only white, as seen in our coloured plate—that is, the lower portion of the thigh white, but all the rest, and the whole under part of the body, the same colour as the upper.

The next property is the tail, which should be white; in this point corresponding with the Baldhead.

The eye should be pearly white, and the skull as high in the front as possible, like that of an Almond, though such (in an honest bird) are seldom seen. The beak and beak-wattle of course fine. The colour of the beak of a Beard depends upon that of its body; the beak of Reds, Yellows, and Silvers being flesh-coloured, while Blacks and Blues have the upper mandibles black, or at least dark, though the under mandibles remain a flesh-colour, unless the birds are dark-faced,



Vincent Brooks, Day & Son, Lith.

BLUE & BLACK BEARDS.

denotes, but they are by no means a numerous breed, even in the place of their nativity. The majority, however (in their pure and uncrossed state), are to be found in parts of Turkey, Greece, and far away into the interior of Asia Minor, at which places they are held in the highest esteem, as 'top fliers' or 'leaders' of large flights, which are generally a mixed or miscellaneous composition of non-tumbling birds, *above* which they delight to soar for hours together.



Fig. 45.—Oriental Rollers.

"The illustration represents a Black and an Almond-feathered bird; the former kind, which are perhaps the most numerous, are of a deep, glossy black, beautifully resplendent with iridescent hues, more especially when under the influence of a bright light. This brilliant colouring is not confined to neck and breast, but extends, in matured specimens, throughout the entire body, similar, but in a less degree, to a good Archangel. It is somewhat singular to relate, that all the Blacks have white, or, rather, pale flesh-coloured, beaks, with a simple tip of black upon the point of the upper mandible. The Almond-feathered ones are not so rich or variegated as our 'Almond' proper, but rather more closely resemble an 'Almond Splash;' the actual almond ground tint being altogether absent in some, and more or less apparent in others, but rarely so

rich or conspicuous; still they are pretty regularly interspersed with black and white, with the buff tint more clearly traceable upon the neck and breast, and along the shafts of flights and tail. However, as accuracy of markings or colour is not one of the chief characteristics of this breed, I shall pass it over as unimportant. There are, in fact, all colours, and white included. 'Duns' also are to be found, and I have heard of some 'wonderful' performers clad in this last-named dingy tint; but Oriental Rollers are not judged by any 'colour or marking.' Indeed, the best proof of their quality is when seen at a distance. Truly the old saying may be applied to them, 'Distance lends enchantment to the view.' Their miraculous acrobatic feats, evolutions, or gymnastic revolutions in the clouds alone are enough to win the estimation of those who admire good Roller pigeons.

"It is now many years ago since I heard of these wonderful performers, and for some few years I confess I longed for some of them; for as my experience in pigeonology commenced with the 'Common Tumbler' (as our British fliers are termed), and having kept and witnessed some startling performers amongst such, I naturally felt most desirous of possessing such as were said would 'eclipse' all I had yet seen. At length my hopes in this respect were realised; for by the kindness of an esteemed friend and fancier, three pairs were sent over here as a present to a fellow-fancier, who thoroughly appreciates a good performer; but unfortunately he did not, or could not, give them a fair trial; therefore, after a further lapse of time, I obtained them; but from previous long inaction they had become partially disabled as fliers, therefore could not be persuaded to 'get up,' so as to show me their mode of 'coming down;' thus I lost the desirable sight, and unfortunately lost the birds too; for not being used to chimneys at home, they were, in fact, abroad with them here. One cock bird fell a prey to starvation in a neighbour's warm chimney, and the others were lost, or died without my being able to satisfactorily realise their flying capabilities. However, the same kind friend sent *me* a pair of well-tried Blacks, and to these birds I soon gave unlimited freedom, and after the usual preliminaries of caution, I by degrees put them to the test, and most assuredly did I find them answer to the full the extraordinary rolling properties which I had wished to behold, and which I was correctly informed I might expect; and I can affirm, after ocular proof, that they more than realised my expectations. They are indeed justly termed 'Rollers,' for they unfold themselves, as it were, with such accuracy and rapidity, that one would at times suppose them to have outdone themselves, and descending either giddy or a lifeless prey to their extraordinary habit.

"On reference to the accompanying representation, it will be seen that they are in appearance also somewhat novel, and dissimilar to our English breed. The beak is not, as in most Tumblers, of a dove or 'spindle' character, but straight, and moderately thick and strong. Nor does the head possess the high crown or projecting forehead so common amongst our native Tumblers; but it is rather long, yet nicely in keeping with the peculiar elongated hollow back and narrow form of the bird; the neck is rather short, the legs also short, and the eye of a 'pearl' colour. I may say that *great length* and *hollowness* from neck to tip of tail is a most desirable feature, and such is (apart from a trial) one of the best signs of quality. The entire length, as I have said, should be long, still the back itself is actually short. The birds possess an elasticity of form which is quite uncommon, and whilst trotting about in search of food, &c., or after taking a refreshing draught, they will raise their tails, and thus hollow their backs to a strange degree. Another remarkable feature in them is that the little pointed oil-gland, immediately above the tail (common to poultry and most kinds of pigeons), is *not to be found* in any pure birds of this breed, which is quite destitute of this common characteristic.

"The tail also is peculiar, and quite uncommon. It is long, and composed of from fourteen to

twenty-two feathers, sixteen being about the average number in these birds; these are arranged equally on either side, one above another, and the two top ones, diverging a little outwards, show a slight division in the tail, but there is not the slightest affinity or resemblance to a 'fan' tail, as some might suppose by the excessive number of feathers, but it is a distinct peculiarity of this breed (twelve being the normal number of tail-quills in most pigeons). The greater the number of quills in 'Oriental Rollers' the more the specimens are valued. A further singular feature noticeable in the tails of these birds is, that occasionally two feathers may be found growing from one quill, separating at its pithy junction as a twin feather, each rather narrower than ordinarily, but of the usual length, and not outgrown, or causing a disordered formation of the tail.

"The foregoing simple description of the breed, together with the accompanying cut, will perhaps convey an idea of these comparatively unknown yet very interesting pigeons; therefore I will now just give a brief description of their exploits upon the wing. One pair of Oriental Rollers only are usually kept amongst a number of other breeds, but the flock should be regularly flown. No matter what kind, so that they are chosen from birds that *will fly;* those that fly compactly and steadily are, perhaps, the best, but few fanciers care to keep a large number of birds in order solely to witness the exploits of one pair of birds; the flocks are consequently often of a varied composition. But this matters little, for whatever the sorts may be, they are not associates, for Oriental Rollers do not care so much about the close companionship of other pigeons, even of the same loft or pen, and *never* mix with them or any others when flying. On liberating the entire flock, the common habit of pigeons that are regularly flown is to gradually commence their upward journey in a circular manner, until the highest altitude is attained; but not so the subject of these notes. They will probably first find the highest point of their own or a neighbouring habitation, and for a few moments perch thereon, and from this place they bolt in a straight line, just in a similar manner as would a good Homer, with his destination in view, and for a time those unaccustomed to their ways would be inclined to say, 'Good-bye! Farewell, Orientals!' 'All is lost now!' &c. &c. But it is not so. Those who know them best know full well 'their little game,' and contentedly await the interval. Sometimes a little town is passed over, but usually about from five to fifteen minutes elapse between the bolt and their reappearance mountains high, ah! and yet mounting, at which time they appear more in the fashion of 'Rollers,' but still avoiding the flock entirely until the highest point is reached; then, recognising their own loft companions by assuming an exalted position directly above them, they follow over them wherever they go; and now, at this stupendous height, the fun begins. Not that there have not been a few paroxysms already, but it is simplicity itself in comparison to what complete revolutions are passed through when the maximum height is attained. They then fly gently and easily, not in circles, but hither and thither, with a slight jerking appearance, and now and again whizzing over and over with great velocity, until they descend to the common flock beneath, then up again they mount, after each of these remarkable feats the pair of them seeming to be trying to outvie each other, for they really seem each time to regain their position as it were to make further efforts to do something on a still more extended scale; and this is the way these birds can comfortably pass two or three hours in the realms of space. Like some of our British 'top sawyers,' so it is with the Orientals; the best bit occurs at or shortly before the drop-scene. When tired of the upper regions, and, hungry, they are 'homeward bound,' they then, with extended wings—like a hawk over a mouse—appear to gauge the distance between them and home, and then down, down they come like a falling ring, with a series of rolls, more elaborate, if possible, than before, until at length *terra firma* is regained.

"Such are a few facts concerning these birds; but I should mention that they possess the

homing faculty to more than an ordinary degree, and when once thoroughly settled in comfortable quarters they are not easily to be lost, and their owners may defiantly snap their little fingers at decoys, traps, or nets, for Mr. Oriental, though a funny looking bird, 'is not such a fool as he looks.'"

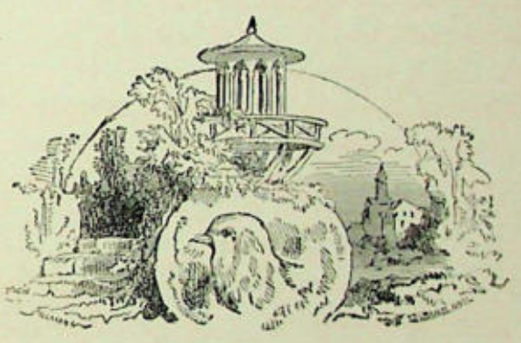
The great point in training Flying Tumblers has been hinted at by Mr. Ludlow, and only a few additional words seem desirable. We have known many purchases made of "Birmingham Rollers," and great disappointment expressed at the after performances of the birds or their progeny, simply from carelessness in their management. The best Flying Tumblers in the world, if left to fly at will, will rapidly degenerate. Each flier has his own little details of management, which after all matter very little; the *essential* point is, that in beginning to train, the birds are only let out occasionally, say every three or four days; and when *hungry*, be it morning or evening. The reasons for both precautions are—(1) The previous confinement causes them to fly actively at once upon being liberated; and (2) their appetite leads to a quick return as soon as they have had exercise enough. They must be fed *immediately* on return to keep up this habit: plentifully while only occasionally flown, but lightly when, being trained, and let out in the morning, they are going to be let out again in the evening; their full meal being in this case reserved till after the last fly. If of good stock, and first tossed when there are no birds about to tempt them to "pitch," they soon get into the *habit* of bursting off the moment they are liberated; and this habit must be very carefully preserved, weeding out instantly, as soon as discovered, any unusually lazy bird, which would otherwise be a check upon the rest, and may lead them to descend with it. No other system is needed beyond this in training Tumblers.

Flying Tumblers are not very often shown, and differ so much in many particulars that they hardly admit of being judged by points. Purity and richness of colour, and regularity of markings, with a good development of the necessary Tumbler points Mr. Ludlow has described, are chiefly taken into account in judging.

Mr. Tegetmeier gives in his book a description, from two Indian correspondents, of a most remarkable variety, called in India the *Lotan* or *Lowtan*, the peculiarities of which seem to make this the most appropriate place for mentioning it, though none, so far as we are aware, have ever reached this country. They appear generally, if not always, white; and one of the correspondents referred to describes the head as "very long and flat in profile," and with the feathers of the neck turned up to form a crest. But the chief peculiarity of these birds is that they never tumble naturally, but have to be taken in the hand, with the neck between two fingers near the head; they are then slightly shaken horizontally, and placed on the ground, when they tumble, or rather roll over backwards, giving the idea of being in a fit. Another sub-variety appears to tumble or roll upon being lightly tapped on the head with the point of the finger. Both of Mr. Tegetmeier's correspondents were informed by the natives that if these pigeons were not taken up they would continue to roll until they died, and it is possible this may be the case; but one of them tried the experiment, and before long the bird stopped, apparently from exhaustion. They are usually taken up in the hand, and the head gently breathed upon, when they seem to recover and feed as usual.

We cannot say we have any wish that these singular birds should ever be cultivated in England. Their performance, with its entirely involuntary character and total exhaustion after, must be rather a painful exhibition than otherwise; but the phenomena is interesting, as throwing possibly some light upon the nature of the tumbling propensity. Mr. Tegetmeier draws a comparison,

which we think is just, between it and the tremulous "motion" in the neck of the Fantail; and the sequence of an *involuntary* performance by the poor Indian birds upon what is obviously a slight concussion or rather irritation of the brain, is too striking a parallel to the involuntary performances of "Mad Tumblers" to require more than pointing out. We need hardly remark, however, that it by no means follows *all* tumbling is involuntary, as we have often seen very foolishly argued. The line between voluntary and involuntary is never very definite, as shown for instance in the case of a fit of hysterics, which in hundreds of known cases is entered upon in a perfectly voluntary manner, but afterwards becomes beyond the control of the foolish patient. So, again, many individuals have sensibilities, not shared by the average of mankind, which yield them the most exquisite pleasure, but which, only a little more exaggerated, occasion others the most exquisite pain: and thus also we see no reason to doubt that the wonderful aerial performances of the Tumbling pigeon, while the propensity which causes them may be so exaggerated as to be a source of misery, yet in ordinary may yield the bird all the real pleasure which it so evidently appears to do.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE DRAGOON.

In treating of this pigeon we approach a subject which has perhaps given rise to more marked difference of opinion than any other treated of in this work. Other breeds, as we have seen, are no doubt to be found which are to nearly as great an extent unsettled in some points; but the difference in the present case is, that whilst in others many have been unable to fix upon any known type, or to remain consistently supporting it, there grew up respecting the Dragoon pigeon two very distinct schools or standards, which at one time were so widely apart that there seemed no hope of reconciliation; and though, as we shall see, the difference is not now so great as it was, there are still people who differ much as to the proper standard of a perfect Dragoon.

The very name has been much disputed over. It is generally pronounced *Dragon* in pigeon circles; and hence many have argued that it should be spelt accordingly. We have not done so because, in the first place, both the word and its sound, so spelt, are barbarous and devoid of meaning; secondly, the old books conclusively show that such was not the original spelling; and thirdly, because the kindred names of Carrier and Horseman, given by the old fanciers to birds more or less allied—and the Horseman very closely so—show beyond doubt the idea which lay at the root of all three names alike, viz., that of a *mounted messenger*. Considering, therefore, that a new and ignorant pronunciation should not be allowed to alter a word of known form and etymological history, but rather the correct form if possible be retained to correct the pronunciation, we retain the old spelling as not only the genuine one, but far more elegant; and even further, ask our readers to assist, if possible, in restoring also in sound the true name of *Dragoon*.

We have just hinted that not a great while ago opinion was much more unsettled in regard to Dragoons even than it is now; and we may add that very great advance has been made in the pigeon itself of late years, especially as regards truth and excellence of colour. As a simple illustration of both these points, we may relate an incident within our own experience only a very little while ago. At one of the chief exhibitions of the year we met, along with many other breeders, a well-known Dragoon fancier, who has then and since complained as much as almost any one of the awards of judges, and combated most actively the opinions of many fanciers; and on this occasion also he drew attention to what he called the "shameful" awards in the class for Blues, saying that none of the winners *were* Dragoons. We thereupon asked to be shown his idea of a Dragoon, and were shown a bird accordingly, with the exclamation, "That's the bird should have won!" and when we asked why, he added, "Because it is the only Blue Dragoon in the class," asking also what *we* thought of it? Being on the top tier, and our personal stature being decidedly of the "short" order, we could only see its head; but from *that alone* we at once replied, "Surely you don't want a Blue Dragoon to have a white rump, do you?" He admitted he did not, when we asked for the bird to be handed down, and it had the well-known blemish, sure enough. Then he affirmed he had made a mistake, and picked the wrong bird, and another was selected; but this too had not only the same fault, but was mealy on the thighs. Finally, a third

bird was selected, and this, strange to say, proved more full of faults than either, being skewer-beaked, a "made" face, broken-eyed, narrow in shoulders, hog-backed, light on the rump, almost Kite-barred, and the body-colour so light as to be almost silver, and in size no larger than an Archangel. Now, here was a case of a professed fancier finding fault with the award of a really good judge, and making *admittedly* (for the faults were not denied as soon as we pointed them out) three great mistakes in selecting a bird to suit even his own ideas. What made this case the more striking was, that only *one* bird (the winner) in the whole class deserved to be called a good Blue Dragoon, the other prize birds even being far behind in colour, while the winner alone was the same shade of blue throughout, the right colour in beak and eye, and nearly as perfect in points, according to the standard we shall lay down, as any bird we have seen since. Since that occasion we have ceased to feel surprise that the awards in Dragoons at pigeon shows very seldom give *general* satisfaction; and while we also know that many mistaken awards really are made in these classes, we have so constantly found that those who have the worst birds are most dissatisfied and make the loudest noise, that we care nothing comparatively for fault-finding even in reports, unless the fault-finder gives at the same time some signs of having intelligent and consistent reasons for his criticism.

No one has had greater success lately in breeding and showing Dragoons than Mr. Frank Graham of Birkenhead; and as his views of what a Dragoon should be are nearly the same as our own, it will be convenient in the first place to give his description, as putting the main points into a brief compass. In going more minutely into the bird afterwards, our own remarks will then take somewhat the form of a comment upon his text. We need only premise that such divided opinion as still exists has settled down into what may be briefly described as a stouter bird both in face, wattle, and build, known as the London style; and a smaller, thinner, slighter bird, thinner in face and wattle, which used to be known as the Birmingham model. Mr. Graham's and our own remarks, then, describe the prevailing or "London" style of Dragoon:—

"A Dragoon should be nearly as large as a Carrier, and should possess perfect symmetry. The beak should be stout, measuring one and five-eights of an inch from centre of eye to the end, blunt at the point, and should fit close, the lower mandible being as heavy as the top; in fact, resembling the much-coveted 'box-beak' of a Carrier in everything but length. The beak-wattle should be tilted, that is, peaked up behind, and gradually sloping down in front to within half an inch of the point of beak. The formation of the wattle should differ entirely from the Carrier's; it should be all one piece, not divided in three or of a cauliflower appearance, but smooth; and at two to three years old the wattle should not at the highest point be above the level of the top of the skull. A Dragoon should be a Dragoon as long as it lives, and not become a Carrier when getting aged; but at the same time it should have a moderate amount of wattle. The colour of the wattle should be light and powdery-looking. The eye-wattle I prefer as small as possible, and circular while under twelve months' old, though it almost always becomes pinched behind after the age of eighteen months—not larger than a fourpenny piece—of fine texture, not fleshy, and the eye should be large and bold, and of a watchful appearance, giving you the idea that it is ready at a second's notice to be off. In fact such is the case: if any of my Dragoons are caged, for comparison or anything else, and the door is left open for a second, they make a bolt for it; and yet at other times they never beat themselves uselessly against the wires, but stand ever on the watch, clearly showing the intelligence and determination they possess over any other breed of pigeons. In describing the beak-wattle I forgot to mention that a Dragoon should be entirely devoid of wattle on the lower mandible.

"The skull should be flat, and should be raised above the eyes, sloping down to base of the beak; a straight head—that is when the skull is level with the beak—should be avoided. In looking down the skull from the beak it should gradually widen to the back. This is a great point in a Dragoon, as if it is all one width it stamps its Carrier relationship; the back portion of the skull should measure nearly twice as much as the front. The neck should be three-fourths the length of a Carrier's, with the gullet full, and coming down to good broad shoulders; the breast should be full, with the butts of the wings projecting in front, which should give you the idea of great muscular power. They should not be carried close to the body, but stand well out. The flights should be carried above, and should come within half an inch of, the end of the tail. The legs should be set well back toward the vent, with good stout thighs, well feathered; and from the hock to sole of foot should measure an inch and a quarter. The entire feathering should have the appearance of fitting like a skin. The back of the bird should be slightly hollow. The foregoing is a general description of a Dragoon, and answers for all colours. More particulars of each colour will be found in the following classification. Good carriage in a Dragoon must be insisted on.

"Yellow Dragoons I shall commence with, as I consider these should head the prize list, being more difficult to breed to perfection. Colour should be the first thing to obtain, and then set to work to breed out any imperfection you may have introduced to get the desired colour. Of course, if possible, start with perfect yellow, but this is not always to be done; and in my case, when I first started many years ago, money would not get me what I wanted. I purchased the best I could, and made it my task to improve them. My first attempt was with a Scandaroon cock, very deep in colour, and I was startled at the results. Some of the young were black, some black with bars, and one strawberry-coloured bird, which I kept and crossed with a Yellow. The result was splendid coloured Yellows, very hard in feather, with very little cere round the eye; but what spoilt all was the horrible down-face of the Scandaroon, which appeared more or less in all this generation. It took me three years to breed this out; and I should not advise another such a cross, as there is better material to work upon now than then; but it shows what can be done. However, I am happy to say I succeeded, as not a bird in my possession now possesses that defect. This, however, is only one of my attempts to get colour: I also obtained birds of a foreign variety, which, although they had very little the appearance of a Dragoon, still they had colour, for which I have worked so hard. These I crossed with my light-coloured Yellows, and first obtained the desired colour, and then again crossed with some large-bodied Reds which I had, the result being perfect Yellow Dragoons, with an occasional Red; birds of good substance, and, what is of still greater importance, hard feathered. Yellow Dragoon fanciers should always be on the look-out for deep-coloured birds of a distinct strain, as to breed Yellows without a cross for more than three generations means light thighs and rump, and a slaty tail. I have found from experience that the cock bird influences the progeny in colour more than the hen bird, and that, therefore, in pairing up Yellows care should be taken that the cock is of the desired colour, or darker, and that the hen is big and of sound constitution, as to breed from a small or weedy hen is loss of time. By following out this plan you are certain to breed good hens; and it has been the exception and not the rule lately to find a good hen at any show. Yellows should have red or orange eyes, light-coloured wattles, and a flesh-coloured beak, and the feathering should be of one uniform deep-coloured rich tint.

"Reds are only to be strengthened in colour by introduction of Blacks; and this should be done very sparingly, as you are apt to get the dull shade of red, instead of a rich glossy blood red. Once in three or four generations should suffice. Another pitfall to be avoided is the crossing of Reds *bred from Yellows*, or a cross with Yellows, with Reds; this will most certainly spoil the



Vincent Brooks, Day & Son, Lith.

YOUNG & OLD BLUE & SILVER DUN DRAGOONS.
(LONDON FANCY)

very best strain of Reds. Yellows cannot improve Reds, but Reds are very useful in improving Yellows. They should have light-coloured wattles and flesh-coloured beaks. Both Reds and Yellows are free breeders and of good constitution.

"Blues seem to carry off the palm in respect to number of admirers; simply, I think, because they are more easily bred, and because they breed truer to markings than the other varieties; and as long as this is the case I have found it is sufficient to please a great many so-called Dragoon fanciers. Although the Blue classes are very large, it is surprising how few really Blue Dragoons are shown. Some are a shade lighter on the rump, some on the thighs or breast; and but few possess the same shade throughout back, belly, thighs, and rump, which is so essential in a Blue Dragoon. The beak-wattle should be light in colour, and powdery; the eye-wattle should be of a darker shade, and the inside, next the pupil, should be black; the pupil should be bright red or orange. The bars, if jet-black and well defined, do not, at least in my opinion, matter whether broad or narrow. The neck of this variety should be darker and more lustrous than the other portions of the body, with the beak black and ebony-like. You cannot cross any other colour with Blues with the effect of improving the Blues. Blacks are, I know, being used to keep up the size, but I think this is a great mistake, as there are plenty of large Blues to cross with without going to Blacks, which, if once introduced, spoil your whole strain. A two-year-old hen to a young cock will breed better birds than two young ones mated together. I would also remark that early-hatched birds, say those in March to May, are always much longer and better in feather than those hatched later; and on no account would I advise breeding after July, as the young birds are never so good or strong after that; besides, it gives the old birds a so much better chance to get through the moult. I have been surprised to find at various shows a great many Blues with the beak-wattle more on one side than the other. I cannot say the reason of this, whether it is from injury, or whether caused by the in-and-in breeding which I know some breeders to have followed, but certainly it is so, and it completely spoils the handsome appearance of the most perfect bird in other respects.

"Silvers should have dark bars—the darker the better—black if possible. The body should be white and silver-like, not of that creamy colour which follows the brown bar; the flights, tail, and neck a shade darker. The breast should be free from the copper tinge which is seen on so many specimens. The eye should be orange. I strongly object to a pearl or light-coloured eye. The beak should be flesh-coloured, and free from any dark stain. In breeding Silvers, I have invariably found that a young Blue cock paired to an old Silver hen will produce nearly all cocks. This is a great point, as all Silver breeders complain of the greater proportion of hens which they breed. One fancier, who in one season had bred eighteen Silver hens without a single cock, on my recommendation tried the above, and the following season bred three-fourths cocks. Every second generation Silvers should be crossed with Blues, or you lose the beautiful silver body, and the bar becomes lighter in colour. To select Blues for crossing do not choose those with light rumps and light-coloured beaks. This I know is the popular idea, and which nearly all the Silver breeders have been shipwrecked on, but it is wrong. Most of those birds have already descended, on one side or another, from Silvers, and it is more than probable from brown-barred Silvers; so to be certain, get the cross yourself. Choose therefore the best coloured young Blue Dragoon with jet-black bars you can get, and mate him to a Silver hen not less than three years old; the Blues produced from this cross pair again to Silvers, taking care that they are of a different strain and of different ages. You will then have a lot of Silvers which will breed for two generations without any further need of the Blue cross. To go on breeding the Silvers together after that would end in those nondescripts called Brown Bars. It is the same with almost any of the colours when

bred without a cross; they become faded and washed out, as if lacking energy. There have been very few successful breeders of Silvers; not more, I think, than three or four; and I think the cause of the failure has been the want of knowledge and patience. The foregoing plan is what I adopted, and by which I obtained my present strain of Silvers, some of which have lately found their way into nearly every Dragoon loft in the country, and two of which were claimed at the Crystal Palace Show at the enormous price (for Dragoons) of £15 each; the one an old cock (seven years old), still in prime condition and great vigour; the other a one-year-old bird, but of quite a distinct strain.

"Whites should have dark eyes, with both beak and eye-wattle as light in colour and powdery as possible. I greatly dislike a wattle of a red tinge, whether in a white or any other colour. Whites have been greatly neglected lately, and stand no chance in a general class; and as the shows where there are classes for Whites alone are very few, the number of admirers are very small; although, I am sure, nothing could be prettier than a well-matched pair of clean White Dragoons. They breed true to colour, and with ordinary care are easily kept clean. I hope more Dragoon fanciers will go in for this pretty variety. They also show off the other colours in a loft to better advantage.

"Grizzles lately are looking up a little, and quite time too, as they are a most interesting variety, which makes one scratch his head and puzzle his brain studying how to produce a perfect specimen. In breeding, commence, if possible, with Grizzles. A Grizzle should be blue and white on every feather; not splashed, but well mixed, as if both colours were dusted out of a pepper box. I prefer the blue to predominate. They should have black beaks, with bars on the wings as black and as distinct as possible. Should your Grizzles be too light in colour, you must cross with Blues; and if the result be Blues, cross them with birds of a distinct strain, but bred the same way; you will then obtain *some* Grizzles of the true colour. I have been trying very hard the last two years to improve this variety, and have met with fair success by following the above crosses. Perhaps there may be other breeders who adopt another plan, and with better success than I have with mine; but I have been unable to hear of anyone, although I have tried to get information far and near on the breeding of this variety, but without success; in fact, there seems to be very little known as to how to breed them.

"Although the Dragoon is not ranked among the high class varieties, still they should, I think, come very near them. I have heard fanciers of other varieties say, 'Oh! any place will do for the Dragoons, as they are hardy.' Any place will *not* do for them: they require quite as much attention to be successful with as any of the other varieties. In fitting up a loft for Dragoons it is not necessary that all the nest-boxes be on the floor. I have tried many plans, but the best nests are those described on page 15 of this work, Fig. 2. I should have a row on the floor, and five rows above, and, in fact, it is as well to have as many nests as possible; if the partitions in the nests are movable so much the better, as they then make capital pairing cages. The nest-pans should be half filled with sawdust, and the floor of the loft well sanded, and, as it is most essential that Dragoons be hard-feathered, this should be done often, and as soon as the young birds are a week old the pan should be changed for a clean one. In the front of my loft are sliding windows, which I close at night, and during the cold or wet weather. On the outside (the cote is in the garden) is a wire aviary, which extends *over* the roof, thus allowing the birds exercise as well as fresh air. The ground is covered with small gravel, which is raked over every morning, and renewed every spring. In the centre is the bath, a stone four feet by two feet, which gradually deepens to the middle; this I think much preferable to a tin or other vessel all one depth, and being outside does not wet the floor of the loft, and it only needs brushing out to be quite clean;

by strewing the gravel with common salt occasionally it answers all the purposes of a salt cat. For food use the very best, it is by far the cheapest, and get it *old:* tares, grey peas, tick beans, buck-wheat; and during the breeding season I add small quantities of wheat, barley, rice, groats, millet, and canary seed, or any other small seed, as I find those in the nest thrive better, and when out of the nest they learn to pick up much sooner when the seeds are small, and I am a great advocate for a variety of food. For water, I have a small cistern lined with lead, three feet by nine inches, with wire bars all round, just wide enough to admit the head of the bird to drink, thus preventing the birds bathing or soiling the water. The water runs in at one end and out at the other. By this means they get a continuous supply of fresh water. This arrangement is in the inside of my loft. I have been induced to enter into these particulars, not for the benefit of old fanciers, but for new beginners, and for the information of those who have so often asked, 'How is it Graham's birds are in such condition?' This question has not been asked only once, but scores of times; in fact, I or my man never visit a show but we are asked it. The best answer I can give is to call attention to the above rules; and although the strain has something to do with it, it must be borne in mind that any place or any treatment will *not* do for the 'Game-cock' of the pigeon fancy."

Such is a description by a well-known breeder of the modern "London" Dragoon—we say modern, because no doubt it is in some slight degree modified from what has been shown by some London fanciers in past years. It will be most convenient to give next the description of a modern "Birmingham" Dragoon with which we have been kindly furnished by Mr. J. W. Ludlow, who has often written upon this subject, and has been one of the steadiest advocates of the slighter model.

"As there still remains considerable differences of opinion as to what constitutes a proper Dragoon at his best and perfect state, it has been thought necessary to consider fully, and in all its bearings, both sides of the question. At the present time (as nearly every fancier of the day must know) we have *two standards* of this breed; and as the Dragoon subject is not a matter that can be determined by one or a few individual fanciers, the authors of this work, I think, have acted wisely in permitting space in these pages for the expression of the views of each side on this interesting subject.

"I need scarcely say that I am not an admirer of the 'London style,' nor am I likely to be persuaded of its merits so long as I am enabled to look upon such as are to me of incomparable beauty. Both styles are of one family, and each sort are allied to *Carriers;* but the Birmingham style is the farthest removed therefrom, the London type being the coarse, rough, weedy outcasts of the Carrier loft, being too light and sprightly, or in some cases too young for show Carriers, and yet too heavy and clumsy to be worthily ranked with the neat, light, tight, and more symmetrical Dragoon proper, such as represents the 'Birmingham' fancy.

"Now, in deference to the opinions of my fellow-fanciers, I would not like to say one word too much against their views or their choice. The subject after all is simply a *matter of choice*, but I am of opinion that all fanciers who will calmly give fair consideration to this subject will give an overwhelming verdict in favour of the Birmingham style. The London Dragoon, doubtless, is a big, bold bird; the greatest fault, perhaps, is that there is *too much* of him. He is coarse and overgrown, in fact is merely the rough groundwork from which a superior and more refined stock may be propagated. Yet such birds, even to the coarsest of them, have been chosen as victors at shows almost innumerable, though happily not by judges so numerous, but merely by a small selection of gentlemen, some of whom have been as uncompromising in their judgment as they are chimerical in their notions upon this subject. Thus, by the conscientious convictions of purely

Utopian fancies, this beautiful variety have been drifted about 'at sea' for a long time, the big bulky specimens standing the storm, I must admit, remarkably well. But after a storm we expect a calm. That calm has come, and upon quiet reflection it will be seen the tide of evidence goes strongly against the awards in the Dragoon classes. For the past five years they have indeed been chosen as the 'fashion of the day,' and a good long day too they have had, considering their actual merits; but such fitful fancies are now doomed to oblivion, so far as such rough stock being typical of the *élite* of that body of elegant birds, the excellence of which on common ground all must be agreed.

"I have no doubt that the admirers of the heavy style of bird will use in lieu of argument the fact of their favourites being selected as the victors at so many exhibitions, such being the only reasonable ground of opposition; but in reality such is not material to the issue, for, as I have said, there are but few good authorities (on this breed) who have been chosen to adjudicate upon their merits; and hence the ruling 'powers that be' having once pronounced favourably upon the coarse type, must necessarily have either renounced their former opinions, been subjected to charges of inconsistency, or else follow up and indorse at every show the objects of their first choice, whether right or wrong. This is one of the chief reasons which have operated in favour of the heavy birds, and been the primary cause of their recognition as show Dragoons; but such a selection has proved a great mistake, caused much dissatisfaction and astonishment in all quarters, and also called forth much attention with a view to its rectification and settlement; but in reply to the almost imploring questions and lamentations of unsuccessful exhibitors their echo only is heard, and *no* words of encouragement, consolation, or advice from those who, by their peculiar notions, have inflicted the injury and injustice which is felt amongst Dragoon breeders, not a word of argument from those adjudicators in whom confidence has been placed, but merely a bare practical system of pronouncing over and over again the same opinion upon the same specimens. Now, I do not complain of such fanciers for having shown their preference, nor do I question the integrity of our chosen judges, but after a long course of experience as a Dragoon fancier myself, I do question and marvel at their strange tastes and want of discrimination in the selection of Dragoons, and I do also complain that from the mere fact of there being say half a dozen admirers and exhibitors of the heavy coarse style of bird, and say three or four of our most popular judges who, although their decisions do accord with their honest convictions, are ready to tack on the diploma of merit wheresoever they may meet such birds, it should be taken for granted that their opinions are absolute or incontestable, more especially as I know they are not the sentiments of the bulk of our British fanciers, and will not bear a theoretical investigation, any more than their birds will bear comparison with the smaller and more handsome kind, which I admit have unfortunately been put aside for the time, and their position monopolised by the coarsest of the species. For the power is in the hands of the judges, although they are few in number. We may have a thousand exhibitors and double that number of breeders, but so long as fanciers are silent the evil continues. Endeavours have been made to ascertain *why* these inferior Carriers should be chosen as Dragoons. Questions have been asked, discussion courted, arguments solicited, still our judges enter not into the fray, but as masters of the post they simply remain silent spectators of this confusion of styles which they have been the main instruments of making more confounding. Surely, if there are any reasonable grounds why the bulky section of Dragoons should be chosen as the better kind, we ought to have some reason for such choice, and some of which should emanate from those whose tastes and discriminating powers are supposed to be superior to our own.

"These preliminary remarks are necessary to the fair understanding of the Dragoon problem.



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith

DRAGOONS.

BLUE

SILVER, BROWN BAR) SILVER BLACK BAR)

(BIRMINGHAM FANCY)

I would rather not have expressed them, but if not generally known they should be, in order to show the reason why the coarse imperfect kind have monopolised the place and carried off prizes over the true and perfect variety, and why they have been tolerated so long.

"I will now enumerate the points of excellence of a perfect Dragoon of the 'Birmingham' type. First, then, the bird should be of medium size—not large, nor yet actually small, but the 'happy medium.' Either extreme is dangerous, for if largeness be regarded as a point of merit the more bulky and ponderous specimens must have the preference; whereas, most of the larger birds will be found of an ungraceful, unwieldly, clumsy character, and a rough and coarse appearance all over, in accord with their bulky frames, and quite out of keeping with the chief features of the breed. Moreover, largeness is a conspicuous feature of the Carrier, and in proportion with his massive head and beak, but quite out of order with all the points of a Dragoon. Again, the Dragoon, although chiefly esteemed now as a show bird, was once specially valued as the fastest and surest English flier, and still (even in his more perfect figure) retains the flying and homing faculty to a large extent. His entire configuration shows this; his points were chosen as indicative of his aerial capabilities, and to some extent this must be our guide at the present day. Of course, as a show bird, we must judge by appearances almost entirely, but remembering at the same time that we are judging not merely a pretty toy, but looking for points which are indicative of intelligence, boldness, and endurance in combination, with a neat and symmetrical configuration; not with the 'fineness' of the Carrier (which is understood to mean *largeness*), but 'fineness' in its literal sense—refined and elegant. Further, as the Dragoon is a flier, the larger the bird the less capable is he of flying, especially the nearer he approaches the shape and bigness of the Carrier; for (as most fanciers know) such ponderous birds are often puzzled to fly from the front to the rear of their own domicile, much less perform any feats of flying. Largeness, then, being one of the attributes of the Carrier, the line of distinction between them and the Dragoons should be clearly discernible, so as to be conspicuous and unmistakable; but let it be understood, on the other hand, that smallness must not be fixed as a feature of excellence; for in that idea there is again danger ahead, and amongst the train of evils arising from it would be that breeders would have recourse to close-breeding, or winter-breeding, in order to keep them small, and thus raise mere pigmy Carriers, or puny offspring of a weak and degenerated character, and by such means lose that vigour, smartness, and boldness which all good Dragoons should possess. The *medium* size, then, is far preferable—a neat, compact, and elegant form, within which is more often embodied a vigorous constitution—since largeness does not always constitute strength or vigour, nor is smallness always indicative of physical weakness; but in the middle size we are, all through creation, more likely to obtain quality and vigour in perfect combination.

"The Dragoon should be of a neat, plump body, compact form, erect carriage, graceful movements, and of a wild and nervous temperament. Although in *pose* the bird should be erect, it is not that uprightness of body, straightness and outstretched appearance of the Carrier, but presenting an outline composed of more graceful curves; erect in body, yet apparently ever ready for a hasty departure.

"The *beak* should be long, strong, close-fitting, and straight; the distance from the centre of eye to tip of beak should measure, say 1⅝ inches; the mouth-line, or division of beak, running in an exact straight line (if it were continued) through the centre of eye. The lower mandible should be of good thickness, and not—as is often the case—hollowed out; nor should there be any spiky or spindle character observable, but a nice, thick, evenly-shaped beak. The warty substance thereon should not be of the too common, large, rough, irregular 'cauliflower,' or 'walnut' character, but small, and of an elongated shape, well packed upon the upper beak, and with a fair

and equal division line distinctly apparent down its centre. This beak-wart must not overhang the sides, nor be lop-sided, rough, or irregular. Of course certain allowances must be made for the sex, the cock birds having an extra supply of wart in accordance with their general masculine appearance; still the centre division of wart, in continuation of frontal bone, should be clear and apparent. Certain wrinklings do always appear upon the male, and with age upon both genders; still the original formation is preserved—the wrinkles, or puckers, should all converge to the same point upon the top and fore part of beak. The rough, lumpy, coarse, cauliflower excrescence is a grand feature of a Carrier, and an inherent quality in them, but is a positive disfigurement and blemish upon a Dragoon. Such a superfluity is both an eyesore to their appearance, and an impediment to their vision, and is not at all in conformity or unison with the graceful contour of the breed.

"The skull should appear narrow; the top of head is not actually flat, but rather low and elongated, which gives somewhat of that appearance; the occiput, or hind part of skull, should be prominent, as it adds to the apparent length and straightness of the head, without really increasing it; moreover, it is a phrenological or cranial development indicative of a large brain, and, as a consequence, a greater probability of possessing the homing faculty, and which all flying pigeons more or less should possess.

"The eye itself should be large and prominent, and in Blues of a deep rich orange colour, with an outer circle of deep and bright blood-red colour; the fleshy lash around the eye should be small, circular, and of a pale powdery white colour.

"The neck should be long and slender. The upper part, being very narrow, adds greatly to the refinement of shape. There should be no loose or flabby skin upon or hanging from the lower jaw, but the neck graduating nicely at its upper part into a clear curve, no matter what the position of the bird may be. The entire neck is more acutely tapered and rounder than that of the Carrier, and does not fall so straight, nor in such parallel lines, but descends more acutely from narrow throat to broad breast. The upper part of back and shoulders should be broad, as denoting the greatest strength where the actual motive power is most needed; the shoulders standing well out from the body, which is rather tapering. The flights and tail rather short; the former of a sharp pointed character, carried well up, and the tail also well raised from the ground. The under parts, from hocks to vent, should be as tight up and as spare as possible, both of flesh and feather. The legs should be long, and are generally at a good angle from thigh to fore part, showing an easy and elastic *pose*, the thigh being prominent, and the feet of good size.

"There are now nine recognised varieties of Dragoons, viz., Blues, Silvers (brown bars), Silvers (black bars), Red, Yellow, Grizzle, Chequer, White, and Black. These last named have of late been admitted into the category, and I am at a loss to know what our friends of the 'London fancy' are going to do with them. I rather imagine that they will have either to ignore them altogether, or else chisel out and sand-paper down their model to our limits; in the misty distance I cannot discern another remedy; for, what with the universally admitted big Carrier, and their big Dragoon, I fear they will get their standard in a big muddle, for the fancy at large can never suffer colour alone to constitute a breed, and therefore Black Dragoons cannot be reasonably shut out of the list simply because they are black. How, then, will these two sorts of big black-warted, long-faced pigeons bear comparison? That remains to be seen. So I proceed with our midland standard, which, so far as I am individually concerned, will remain permanent and unalterable.

"*Blues* should be of a good sound colour throughout their plumage, back, belly, breast, and thigh—all of a nice uniform colour—without showing any traces of the feather markings thereon; but the entire body, composed as it is of smaller feathers than most pigeons, should look hard, feel tight

and firm, and appear as though clad in a close, well-fitting skin. The neck is of course resplendent with iridescent, vivid colours, and the beak and nails should be black. The bars should be jet-black, and decidedly narrow, as it not only greatly improves their appearance, but is in perfect accord with their hardness and tightness of feather. For, in all pigeons with broad bars, there will be found a corresponding increase in the *size of feather*, and, therefore, a consequent looseness of plumage, which is diametrically in opposition to the covering of a good Dragoon. I do not approve of the white-rumped kind: such is unquestionably a blemish; and, in my numerous arguments and writings on this subject, I am not aware that I ever upheld such as a desirable type, or considered them so perfect in colour as those of a good sound uniform hue. Although it may be supposed that I did prefer them, such was not the fact; but I still contend that the points of *form* constitute the cardinal features of the race. We should judge them as Dragoons *first*, then make close scrutiny into their colour-properties, and not entirely reject first-class white-rumped Dragoons, simply on account of that undesirable badge, and award the prizes to mere Blue pigeons, with but little or no affinity or resemblance to Dragoons in make or shape whatever, as I have known frequently done. Since that time, however, the sound, true-blue Dragoon has been produced in large numbers, so that now we can afford, in nearly every case, to ignore the white and light-backed birds. Therefore, I would say, as I always have said, look well to colour, and in this particular make choice of the brightest and purest uniform coloured ones throughout their feathering, not necessarily to give preference to smoky-tinted ones, nor white-backed ones, but, as has been very judiciously remarked with regard to other breeds in this work, give preference to specimens that present a good general appearance in all points, rather than regard one or more extraordinary features as conclusive of their superiority.

"*Silvers* (brown barred) are of a very pale, delicate, whity-brown tint, with narrow bars of a dark brown colour, and a band of the same tint near to the extremity of the tail. The flights, too, are of a similar dark tone, deepening more and more towards their outer tips. The neck is beautifully enlivened by a rich coppery-bronze colour; there should be as little green tinge intermixed as possible, the pure coppery lustre alone being preferable. The eye should be 'red pearl,' *i.e.*, the iris of a pearly-white caste, dotted around with specks of brilliant red, but no trace of yellow must be apparent therein. Beak and nails flesh-coloured.

"*Silvers* (black barred) are of a very pale, delicate, creamy-grey tint, the bars being of a very deep, *almost* black tone; in fact the more closely they resemble positive black the more should they be esteemed. The head, rump, and tail are invariably of a darker colour, with a bluish tinge conspicuous on those parts; upon the neck, too, there is a distinct green cast of colour caused by the play of light thereon. The eyes should be 'red pearl.' The beak and nails as brown barred kind, fleshy-coloured, with a streak of brown along the centre ridge of top mandible.

"*Reds* should be of a deep rich chestnut colour, and should be entirely free from variation in shade on back, breast, thighs, and under parts, which unfortunately are sadly too often of a dark dirty-looking shade. The eye should be of an 'orange-red' colour, bright and full. The beak and nails light flesh tint, with a streak of brown upon the upper surface.

"*Yellows* should be of a deep, clear, rich uniform tone from head to tail; in fact upon every feather, purity, depth, and richness of colour being most desirable; light, mealy, mossy-feathered ones betray an injudicious cross with Whites, as also does the dingy back, tail, and thigh reveal the introduction of an unwise dark cross. The neck should be enlivened with a bright, glossy, rich yellow of a little deeper tone, and as free as possible from any other colour, as such, however small, distinctly discloses an impure taint, whether near or remote. The eyes should be orange-red. Beak and nails flesh-coloured.

"*Grizzles* are the produce of a systematic crossing of Blues and Whites, in which the perfect admixture or combination of the feathering of each is clearly apparent. They are a sort of pepper-and-salt grizzly colour; the head and upper part of neck more especially being grey or 'powdered;' the flights and tail being dark externally; the quills and under-feathering *white;* the chief shafts of quills being streaked with dark colour; the beak and nails are generally dark, if streaked such is perfectly admissible. The chief desideratum is to obtain the perfect amalgamation of colour throughout, and thus produce a complete grey or grizzled aspect throughout its entire body. Some fanciers prefer those with the darker head and neck, but I rather incline to those with a more profuse sprinkling of white upon the head and neck. This kind is gaining popularity. They are, by reason of numerous crosses, of a strong and hardy constitution; indeed, I have known a first-class *show* bird of this sort that was the winner of a 100 miles fly against all competitors. This kind at present do not breed many true to type, a variety of oddly-marked birds frequently appearing, amongst which are a good number of white-winged Blues having a distinct Pouter-like *crescent* of white upon the crop, also a number of almost white birds with dark beaks, flights, and tails. The sort, however, are steadily improving since being raised to the dignity of show stock. The eye of these birds is a deep brilliant orange-red.

"*Chequers*, as their name signifies, are a dappled combination of black and blue upon the back and sides. This chequering or dappling must be regular, clear, and distinct, a sort of radiation of markings from the bars up to the top of shoulder, finishing off at its juncture with the hackle. Upon the breast, too, are faint traces of similar markings, but to a much less degree. Down the back even to the rump should have the chequering well defined, though the majority at present are minus this finishing touch. Head, neck, tail, thighs, and flights are as ordinary blue pigeons. Beak and nails black. Eye orange-red. This kind may be either kept to itself or crossed with Blues; other crosses should only be resorted to under special circumstances, which within limited space cannot be defined. They may be produced of a lighter shade by crossing with *Silvers*, or deepened in tone by the occasional introduction of *Blacks*, so as to meet exceptional cases. Care should always be observed in this sub-variety, as in all Dragoons, to match, for breeding purposes, birds with perfect properties at least between them, if perfect individual specimens cannot be obtained; but to rigidly avoid mating two birds, *both* of which may be deficient of any one or more of the essential points, but to put together either birds of a reliable good pedigree, or if an unknown but good-looking one is at hand, to take care that he possesses desirable points to a marked degree, the image of which you would like to stamp in your stock.

"*White*, as a matter of course, should be pure and spotless; eyes, dark hazel; beak and nails, flesh-coloured. Very frequently may be seen good-looking birds of fine style and shape, but with a very, very faint trace of colour in the neck. Such birds cannot be regarded as any other than Whites, still not even the faintest shadow of colour should be traceable in *proper* Whites, and those possessing any colour have some time or other most assuredly been tainted by the cross of a coloured specimen. The neck is bright and silvery, but it is, if possible, of a more pure and attractive brilliant whiteness than the other parts.

"*Blacks* should be deep and glossy throughout, and free from the too common blue black, upon which faint bars are frequently discernible; eyes, deep fiery red, beak and nails black. In other respects these (like all the sub-varieties) should possess the same properties of formation herein described, and to be identically of the same general configuration, colour only being the distinguishing mark.

Very little, if anything, need be said as to the housing and accommodation of these birds, as these points, in former chapters, have been well considered and provided for; but I would just say

that the Dragoon is a very pugnacious pigeon, and his long and strong beak is a very formidable weapon when used in combat. Irreparable injury may speedily be inflicted by him upon any smaller and more delicate kinds, and even amongst themselves; therefore ample space should always be provided, and the several compartments, or allotted spaces for each pair, should be either well separated, placed asunder, or else conspicuous marks made upon them whereby each pair of birds may easily distinguish their own quarters. The Dragoon is well suited to enjoy freedom, and if their owners live in the country, or in the suburbs of our towns, where the atmosphere is comparatively clear and the habitation somewhat detached, or entirely isolated, there is no reason why they should not have entire liberty, and be brought up, when wanted, *hard as a board*, and in perfect condition. My habit has always been to indulge my stock of Dragoons with perfect freedom for at least a few of the brightest hours of the day, and although I have but few at the present time, I have for many years kept a large stock, and been an ardent admirer of them.

"If these birds are bred and kept chiefly for exhibition purposes, rather than a pure gratification of the tastes of their owners, extra care should be taken to keep them always in the height of plume. *Condition* must be kept up, without which hopes are futile, for no matter how perfect they may be upon a summary of points, if, from ill-health or other cause they are not in tip-top condition, they cannot show off their good qualities to advantage. Remember, too, that a *good match* is half a win; an ill-assorted pair is at once an eyesore, and therefore passed by. In setting out one's plans as an exhibitor many of the pleasures of the breeder must be sacrificed, for, as is known, you cannot do *both* with any degree of success. As a regular exhibitor, you must remove your birds from eggs or young to suit the shows—in fact, toss over every consideration. This I could never do. I look with pleasure upon our winter exhibitions as they come round; I enjoy the friendly spirit of rivalry which is aroused by them, and occasionally I join the contest; but, as a rule, I prefer my birds at home; and it is through the breeding season (in a well-stocked, well-ordered stud of birds) that one acquires a thorough knowledge of the habits and peculiarities of pigeons, which no amount of study of them at exhibitions can possibly convey.

"In breeding these birds no fixed rules can safely be recorded, for under special circumstances an entire change is frequently necessary. For breeding Blues, Blues should be mated with Blues, as a rule; but under this system even, if long continued, or close breeding be resorted to, there is a natural tendency to become lighter in colour, until they approach a washed-out blue or silver tint. In such cases a cross with a neat-made Black will, if not at once, ultimately restore the deeper tone, and also insure uniformity of colour on back and thigh and richness of hackle. *Silvers* are produced from Blues; the lighter toned Blues more especially will frequently throw Silvers, and by these Silvers being selected and mated to their like from time to time the colour has been vastly improved and established. I have no doubt, however, that the majority of good Silvers now in existence are rather close-bred birds. Singular to state, of the Silver variety, from seventy to eighty per cent. are hen birds, and this, with other things, is proof of their consanguineous extraction; for it is a fact that (in pigeons) the closer the affinity to each other the greater is the preponderance of hen birds. Silvers should be kept to Silvers, but may occasionally be crossed with the faintest of Blues, and that but seldom, or the majority of the issue will revert to the original colour; the more so because with Silvers there is a natural tendency to breed to the parent stock, the chief objects of the cross being to intensify the 'bar' and maintain the stamina of the race.

"Reds and Yellows should only be crossed with Blacks. These may be mixed together in a judicious manner, taking care not to infuse too much of the Black cross, or its effect will be soon apparent in either small ticks of black throughout the body, or by a dingy back, belly, and thigh; but the rule should be, Yellows to Reds, and Reds to Blacks, in cases where a deeper and richer

tone of colour is needed; otherwise, the colours may be matched together for breeding as for showing, provided that form properties are such as required. The admixture of colours should be *gradually* made. Black to yellow is too powerful at once, for, although useful, and actually needed, it should be transmitted *through the Reds*, and by this method the colours are not developed in distinct patches, nor yet in dingy smears, but absorbed, as it were, into the body, and bursting forth in the entire web of feather, evenly, and with richer and more uniform effect.

"Dragoons are prolific birds, and very fair nurses too. They raise their own young as well as any foster-parents could do; therefore such aid is not needed. It is remarkable to watch the daily increase in the size of their nestlings, and the still more rapid growth of their *beaks*. It is not well to speculate too much upon the qualities of 'squabs,' for they are 'as variable as the shade.' There are, however, one or two parts upon which first attention should be fixed as indicative of what their merits or demerits may probably be when fully fledged, viz., the *straightness* of head and beak, and the colour of the feathers upon the rump and thigh as they burst forth from their bonds. More than this we cannot determine by any positive calculation, though there are other minor points which lead us to hope and expect that we may each day see developing new good qualities, which time only can clearly reveal.

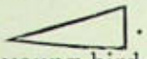
"Beware of malformation, such as wry breasts, crooked beak, twisted toes, or straddling gait, as such blemishes generally arise from a physically used-up constitution; also shun the weakly, sickly issue of an ill-assorted pair, or the produce of too young, too old, or delicate parents, or of winter-raised young. Such birds in a loft are both unpleasing to the sight, and comparatively useless either as stock or exhibition birds."

As Mr. Ludlow seems to admit that the "London" style of Dragoon has at all events chiefly *won* of late, we are quite willing to admit that the *very* rough and unshapely-wattled birds we have seen occasionally shown years ago would not and ought not to win now: but we must also add that we have little fault to find with the plates he has given as his "Birmingham" ideal, and that these are also by no means what was represented as the Birmingham Dragoon of years ago. Without further arguing this point, however, and as he especially grounds his opinions upon the necessity of distinguishing the Dragoon from the Carrier, we will proceed now to give our own detailed description of what we consider the Dragoon should be, in which we hope to make clear that while, as all admit, there is perhaps about one-third of Carrier blood in its original composition, it is really distinct from both Carrier and Horseman, and that any intelligent fancier can readily, by characteristic signs, distinguish the three.

It is necessary first to remark that the Dragoon, like all wattled pigeons, has two periods in its life at which it can properly be shown, viz., under one year and over two years of age, whence we have amongst our representations shown a young bird. Like the Carrier, the Dragoon looks very different at these different periods, and this is one reason of the differences of opinion, some forming their "eye" on the young bird and some on the old. But a more common reason we believe to be, that like all other wattled pigeons, a pair of even *good* birds will produce a lot of weeds in proportion to a few good ones. Now, in birds *heavily* wattled, the difference between good and bad is so conspicuous as not to lead to many mistakes after a little knowledge has been acquired: but the Dragoon being less marked in its head points, the amateur is less able to detect the faults which a keen judge readily sees, and thinking that the young birds from his good pair are good necessarily, and the Dragoon being a free breeder and good rearer, and giving him a large progeny, he is very apt to get his eye *falsely* educated by the majority or most "skinnum" quality class of his birds. For we must say we believe that the Dragoon is about as hard to breed really

good as a Carrier. Few have bred half a dozen specimens fairly approaching what is desired, and it is hard work even to produce *one* bird in a season, which a good judge can find no glaring fault in upon a close inspection. Such birds being thus rare, while many people do not regard the Dragoon as at all a high-class pigeon, and therefore ground their notions more upon the *average* of what they see than in other cases they would do, is in our opinion the chief reason why so many favour the thin-faced, spindle-beaked birds, which can be bred by the dozen with little difficulty except as regards colour. But such a thin beak is in our opinion one of the very worst faults a Dragoon can have. In the first place it is supposed to be a bold, strong, and powerful bird, and though not now generally bred for flying, other varieties having superseded it, we still expect to see traces of its old flying faculties. Now, when a young bird has a spindle-beak, it is almost sure to be also narrow in the flight and tail feathers, and weak in the quills, showing loss of vigour, and accordingly we generally find it is also a weak and small-bodied bird, with little substance in the bone of the leg. Similarly, such a bird very seldom carries the butts of its wings projecting at the shoulders, but tucked close in to the body; and finally, when we add that the most spindle-beaked birds are mostly those bred late in the season, it will be seen we have good reasons for our dislike of this fault, for connecting it with weakness of constitution to some extent, and for placing nearly as much value on a good heavy beak in a Dragoon as in a Carrier, the good beak being an indication both of other good properties and of a strong constitution.

In proceeding to consider the Dragoon in detail we shall take as our standard bird the Blue, as of all others usually found the most perfect in points, as being in all probability the origin of all the Dragoons, and as formerly used for flying purposes. The size we would prefer as what may be described as "one size less" than a Carrier. The beak should be rather short, thick, and as close-fitting as possible, especially when young, but with age it is apt to shrivel a little, as in all wattled pigeons. It should appear blunt at the point, and the lower mandible just a trifle less in substance than the upper. As to absolute length we care little, as if a bird be so symmetrical as to deceive the eye and "look" well, we would never condemn it for mere measurement; besides, an extra large specimen must measure rather over an average, and a small one under. Still we may say that in our opinion a medium-sized bird should not measure over one inch and five-eighths from the centre of the eye to the point of the beak; and while the mere bald rule-measure should not be laid too much stress upon, we would certainly say that a bird either measuring or *looking* long in the face like a Carrier shows a recent cross, or at least too much of that breed, and should not be allowed to compete as a Dragoon. No bird ought to measure over this unless a very large one, and a hen will usually be about one-sixteenth less than the measurement we have given for cocks. Of course a very large bird *ought* to be longer, or it would appear actually short in face. The *colour* of the beak is very important in a Blue Dragoon, as it carries with it more or less of the whole colour of the bird. We never yet saw one with a light or horn-coloured beak, but it was accompanied by a too light or soft colour of feather, approaching the Silver, and nearly always by a light rump and thighs as well. On the other hand, if the beak be the proper colour—black—on both mandibles, the body colour will be almost sure to be of the proper deep, sound shade, and it is rare to find such a bird with light rump or thighs. Generally speaking it will also be found that if the beak be light the colour of the eye is faulty too; and, on the whole, according to the standard we are laying down, we may say we *never* saw a Blue Dragoon with light beak that was good enough in other colour points for the show pen, and all the few birds—not exceeding perhaps twenty out of the thousands we have seen—which we have seen or had of the rare but only *correct* deep blue, had black beaks. Moreover, this is a second point which marks the bird off from the Carrier, and therefore to be insisted upon.

The next important point is the beak-wattle, which should appear on the upper mandible alone, lower or jew-wattle being a fault, and again to be urged as distinctive from the allied breed. The shape of the wattle should also totally differ; for while that of the Carrier bulges out, both in the centre portion and in various "cauliflower" excrescences, and is desired to tilt or arch forward away from the skull, that of the Dragoon is as true a "peg" shape as possible. This term has been sneered at as indefinite, but has been well understood by fanciers from time immemorial; however, to avoid any ambiguity, we may describe it as large at the back, and tapering as straightly and evenly as possible to almost a point in front; the back not being tilted, but as perpendicular as possible, the ideal line resembling a triangle, thus  . The actual shape is of course not so accurate as this, though not so far from it in a young bird; but like the Carrier, few remain perfectly shaped after the first season, when the wattle begins to grow somewhat wrinkled. It is apt then to become irregular and faulty as in all wattled pigeons, and perfect wattles on old birds are proportionately rare and valuable. When fully developed the wattle appears as in the annexed figure (Fig. 46), which is drawn of the natural size, and shows in profile what we consider a perfect Dragoon head. In young birds the wattle varies little in shape, and is smooth and even; and

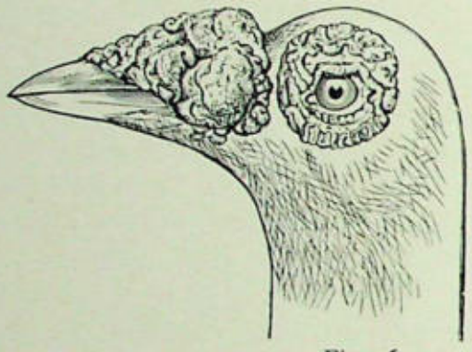


Fig. 46.

hence some say the wattle never should alter from the young shape. But we can only say that the sole shape of wattle and beak that will remain thus unaltered is the thin and "skinnum" type. Lots of these often occur as the produce of even good birds; *they* can be bred by hundreds, and will remain the same type till the end of their lives; but the very fact that it is so, and that the other type demands so much judgment and care to produce, is in our opinion a conclusive proof as to which is really the high-class or fancy pigeon. We may add that the wattles both in the figure above and in the coloured plates are not ideals, but such as we have seen many of in actual Dragoons.

In early-bred birds the wattle will begin to "break" before the age of twelve months, and at about fifteen months, as in the Carrier, the style of wattle can be pretty nearly guessed. Before it thus "breaks," it is clearly divided into two apparent portions, by a line down the centre; and as it grows and wrinkles it should still preserve this character, and ultimately reach such a growth that the highest part at the back should be on a level with the top of the skull. It reaches maturity at three to four years old, and should then measure about two and a half inches round at the biggest part, and not more, unless in a bird very large altogether. The length should be rather short, say three-quarters of an inch from front to back at three years, and rather less when younger; and the length of beak in front should not exceed three-eighths of an inch, so as not to show that property so much desired in a Carrier, viz., length of beak before the wattle.

The skull, after the age of eighteen months, should be flat, and wide at the back, gradually

tapering towards the beak, giving a wedge shape when looked at from the top. This is clearly shown in Fig. 47, drawn natural size from the same old bird as Fig. 46, and which also shows the very same, and what we consider a perfect beak-wattle viewed from the top. But this wedge-shape is only seen at about the age stated and later; when young the skull always appears rounder, or what is known as barrel-shaped. This has been another cause of error, as fanciers seeing fine young birds known to be good, have imagined that the old ones would be the same shape of skull, and hence have preferred those which really were so, not knowing that such were in reality the worst of all; whereas the very young birds on which they founded this idea, if seen by them when mature, would be found as we represent.

While we have said there should be no jew-wattle, we must add there are sometimes slight signs of it in large fine birds, at the base of the lower mandible. Good birds are so rare, we would never discard one only for this fault, which was possessed by the best Blue Dragoon we ever saw. We may add here that it is difficult to "improve" the wattle of a Dragoon much, by cutting, as is so often done with Carriers. There is so much less stuff to work upon, that without taking off a

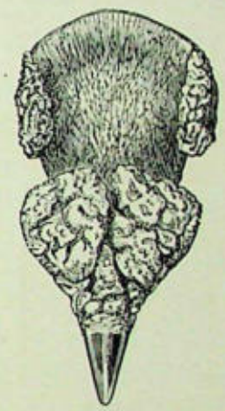


Fig. 47.

great deal more than most wattles can afford, the places cut appear so unnaturally smooth and free from the proper wrinkles or roughness, that any experienced judge can detect it. A very little is possible without detection; but such cutting as some Carriers are subjected to is simply impossible in a Dragoon.

The eye-wattle, or "lash," as some call it, should be in a young bird smooth and fine. Here again is a source of mistake; people being told that some young Dragoon is a "grand bird all over," by a known good judge, try to carry the type "in their eye" as it is called, and think that no bird is good unless it is the same, forgetting that the pattern they are thinking of was shown them as a grand *young bird*, and not a mature one. In short, no one can ever properly understand a Dragoon who does not understand and remember that all wattled pigeons are *quite different in nearly all head points* at young and mature age. The fact is recognised in Barbs and Carriers; it is often *not* recognised in Dragoons, and hence the mischief and the unjust suspicion, when the judges have simply been considering young and old birds. At about the age of fifteen months the back part of the wattle begins to lose the circular shape and become what is known as "pinched," showing more of the cere at top, bottom, and particularly front, than at the back; it also becomes more and more wrinkled and hard-looking. If the beak be of the proper black, the inner edge of the eye-wattle is dark or nearly black also, adding much to the smartness of the bird. The real dark eye is also generally accompanied by a darker blue and a good sound-

coloured rump. In fact, the dark or "gipsy" eye-wattle is one of the most important points in a blue Dragoon. It shows the bird is really *Dragoon-bred;* and such a one rarely becomes too heavy in eye-wattle, as the light-wattled birds often do, and is also less likely to become overgrown even in beak-wattle.

The size of the eye-wattle should never be larger than a sixpence in cocks, and rather less in hens. It really looks less on the living bird, the large bold eye occupying so much of the centre as to diminish the apparent magnitude.

The neck appears in a young bird about two-thirds the length of that of a Carrier, but when older it scarcely appears more than half. The shape is also quite different, the Carrier being as thin as possible down to the very shoulders, while the neck of the Dragoon is rapidly and gradually tapered from being broad at the shoulders to the throat. And this brings us to the gullet. Several very good fanciers prefer a large gullet, and others not. It is a point often found with good-beaked birds of mature age, and was bred for by old fanciers, who considered this as another point in which the bird should differ from the Carrier. When so bred, it is a true point of a true bird: but for our part, as it tends to prevent a bird being straight-faced, and spoils the beauty of the best Carrier otherwise that ever lived, we cannot see how it improves a Dragoon; and this is the only point on which we are inclined to disagree with the old fanciers. As, however, they certainly did breed for it, we will not here pronounce either way, but simply state our own preference for a nice clean run under the throat. True, the gullet should be what a Carrier fancier would term full, or at least rather full, as comparison of the respective heads will show; still, it should in our opinion *not* be so full as to spoil a nice clean curve from beak to breast, much less show any loose skin.

In regard to the carriage of the wings, the butts should stand sharply out at the shoulders, projecting as much as possible; and in this property only does the Dragoon resemble the Carrier pigeon, and should be as alike as possible, the projecting shoulders being highly necessary to give the appearance of wide chest and graceful carriage which is desired. As to length of flights, however, this is usually less, only reaching to within about an inch and a half of the end of the tail, as stated by Mr. Graham, whereas the flights of the Carrier reach within half an inch. In some very early-bred birds the flights will be rather longer, and in many good birds this difference is not seen owing to the tail being shorter. In birds with good beaks, if the flights be opened there will be found to be great strength in the quills; but if thin-beaked not: so that, as before observed, the beak alone is a good test of the strength of the bird. The length of tail and flight feathers greatly depends on the time of year the bird is bred, the parents, and the place where it is kept; as cleanliness and a good flight will increase the length of feather. But it is always shorter than in Carriers, and no Dragoon such as we describe will ever be found of such length, or at least such *apparent* length of flight and tail as the Carrier. There is another difference: the flights of the Carrier, when of the proper length, are often seen crossed over the tail at the ends of the two longest flight feathers, whereas the flights of the Dragoon lie so close to each side of the tail as almost to make the whole look as if carved out of one solid piece, especially when in high condition.

The legs ought to appear thick compared with the size of the bird, and should be set well back so as to allow a good upright carriage of body. It is only when birds are well put together in this way that the back can present the slightly hollow appearance between the shoulders which gives so much smartness to a pigeon, one whose legs are too far forward almost always being clumsy and hog-backed. The length of leg from foot to hock should be rather long, we prefer not less than one and a half inches, but the thigh should be short, or rather *appear* short, being thus

again different to the Carrier, which is wanted to show as much thigh as possible. The birds some people call the "true type" will often show even more length of thigh than a Carrier; and we will go so far as to say we would not make a leading point of this, and condemn an otherwise good bird for a long thigh; but still it *should* be short, in order to keep up the distinction.

Of the plumage, so close and hard, we need say nothing beyond Mr. Graham's description, except that to look its best a bird must be both healthy, clean, and in good condition.

The bars of a Blue Dragoon we prefer narrow, as looking more stylish. When broad they appear more as if running into each other, are more irregular at the edges and in shape, and not so neat altogether. Still we would never discard a good bird for the width or shape of the bars, provided they were black; often, however, we see signs of a brown shade, showing a cross with the Silvers, which those who desire really good Blues should keep from using as much as possible.

In order to meet still further the statements of those who say that the type of Dragoon we have now laid down cannot be distinguished from the Carrier, and to help the young fancier to keep distinctly in his mind the proper and distinguishing points of both breeds, we will put them in brief, in parallel columns. It will be seen that they only agree in at most three points—projecting wings, hollow shoulders, and carriage, and in neither of these do the "Birmingham" fanciers at all differ, they being in fact not points peculiar to any pigeon, but belonging to general symmetry alone.

CARRIER.	DRAGOON.
Face as long as possible, not less than one inch and seven-eighths from centre of the eye.	Face not exceeding one inch and five-eighths, unless a very large bird.
Beak-wattle—1. On both mandibles. 2. Four and a quarter inches round, and as much more as possible. 3. Tilted, and largest at centre parts.	Beak-wattle—1. On upper mandible only. 2. Not exceeding two inches and a half round. 3. Not tilted, but a true, straight peg-shape, largest at extreme back.
Beak—White or flesh-colour. Long in front of wattle.	Beak—Black. Short in front of wattle.
Eye-wattle—Very large, not less than one inch and one-eighth in diameter, even or circular, and soft-looking.	Eye-wattle—Small, wrinkled, pinched behind, hard-looking; dark in colour, called "gipsy-eyed."
Skull—Narrow, and same width from front to back.	Skull—Broad; very broad behind, and tapering to the front.
Gullet—Small, and clean cut.	Gullet—Opinion varies, but at least rather full.
Neck—Long as possible. As nearly same thickness as possible from throat to shoulders.	Neck—Moderate length, and tapering or widening gradually from throat to shoulders.
Breast full and wide, wing-butts projecting.	Breast—Similar to the Carrier.
Flights—Nearly as long as tail, and often crossed above it.	Flights—One inch and a half shorter than tail, and never crossed; the shorter it appears the better.
Thighs and legs both as long as possible, the thighs especially.	Thighs short. Length of leg good, say one inch and a half.
Back—Slightly hollow.	Back—Similiar to Carrier.
Whole bird—Slender, and as long as possible in feather.	Whole bird—Compact, and rather short in feather.
Carriage—Upright and stretching.	Carriage—Upright and tall.

On the other hand, taking the so-called "Birmingham" model, we think it will appear that in every single point, except that of size (easily bred either way, and we simply prefer the larger bird as the stronger one, and for no other reason), and rather less beak-wattle (which being *infinitely* easier to breed of the proper shape, makes the bird so far more opposite to our idea of a "high-class pigeon"), it approaches nearer the Carrier than the standard we have laid down. The long, thin beak; the narrow skull, of same width from front to back; the eye-wattle, larger, thinner, circular, and fleshy; the pale beak, which, though we must admit not recommended by Mr. Ludlow, we have far more often seen than dark beaks upon "Birmingham" Dragoons; the long, thin neck; the long, slender shape of body; the long thighs; all these are points in which the so-called "pure" Dragoon type resembles the Carrier and not the Dragoon.

They are points of *bad* Carriers, simply "bred down" or dwarfed, and, in fact, bad Carriers in miniature; and any who wish this type can easily breed it in the following manner: Get a Blue Dragoon hen of a *clear* blue, even if of a silvery cast; and match it to a fourth-rate or very late-bred Blue Carrier cock with a white rump. By this cross you are almost sure to get good colour, good black bars, a nice long skewer beak, narrow skull, and circular eye-wattle; and also another property Blue Carriers are seldom deficient in, a good length of feather, and long legs and thighs. Any who desire them can easily obtain them in this way. But as our own ideas of the Dragoon were derived years ago from those very districts which, in our opinion, *made* the bird and then handed it down to the present generation, viz.:—London, Manchester, Newcastle, and the districts round them; we cannot depart from the traditions which we *know* have been thus handed down from father to son. We have not, it is true, sought to force our ideas upon others, and hence we have requested Mr. Ludlow, one of the steadiest and most able advocates of the so-called "Birmingham" Dragoon, both to state his ideas of the bird, and to represent that ideal as with the "London" fancy; but passing by the fact that his ideas, as now described, are not in all respects the same as formerly advocated and pourtrayed by him, there are considerable differences in even the three birds he has put before us; and as he has freely criticised our views, it is not unimportant to point them out. The brown-barred Silver, then, shows a fine pointed beak, though somewhat thicker than what Mr. Ludlow has formerly upheld. The Blue, however, shows quite a different class of beak, being a great deal larger and thicker than the Silver, and in fact having the appearance of a "made" Carrier's beak, and looking nearly, if not quite as long, for the size of the bird, *as* a Carrier's. Thirdly, we come to the dark-barred Silver, which differs both in length, shape, and thickness of beak, and which we would, in fact, willingly accept as *our* ideal of a *young* Dragoon's head in all but eye-wattle, and is, indeed, in all but that one point even more to our taste than the young Blue Mr. Ludlow has drawn as *our* ideal of a young "London" bird. Seeing, then, these three types, differing even from each other, we cannot wonder they differ from us; but we must add that we have never yet seen a specimen of the so-called "Birmingham" Dragoon, which resembled either Mr. Ludlow's Blue or black-barred Silver, and for many years now we have attended the Birmingham Show and various meetings of the Birmingham Dragoon fanciers. This, however, is perhaps scarcely a fair objection, since no doubt the birds are given as ideals to be aimed at. Taking them in that sense, the eye-wattle we may pass, though we doubt if a Dragoon was ever seen as represented in the shape of that part; but coming to our friend's main contention, that a Dragoon should never at any time show more beak-wattle than is seen in these representations, we say positively that such is possible if they stick to the fine beak of the brown-barred Silver; but that they will find it *impossible* to breed birds with such *beaks* as represented on the dark-barred Silver, or Blue, which will not show, when mature, much more *wattle*. Such never *has* been seen yet, and we believe never will be; for as soon as you get a well-formed, thick beak on a Dragoon, so soon do you, willing or unwilling, get with it a beak-wattle of fair dimensions; while a thin spindle-beak, on the contrary, is an equally sure guarantee of little wattle on the beak and generally too much round the eye. Our own plates, on the other hand, are not, as is the case with many pigeons shown in this work, mere ideals; we have seen and know now birds fully equal to them in the possession of various fanciers, and they are not in any sense artificial standards, except so far as the reproductive process of printing them may have failed in some cases to convey the exact shade of colour in any of our pigeons. But we do *not* consider a bird showing more beak-wattle than we have represented (the plate of the Yellow Dragoon showing the outside development we would allow) eligible to

compete as a show Dragoon. We do *not* advocate a bird with a lot of either eye or beak-wattle; and we consider and maintain that it is as difficult to obtain a perfectly-shaped wattle on a Dragoon as on a Carrier. There are, indeed, very few birds comparatively which we can regard as perfect, or nearly so. The first pair of really good Blues we ever saw were shown by Mr. Jones Percival at Birmingham, and so good were they as to make all the others insignificant. These passed into

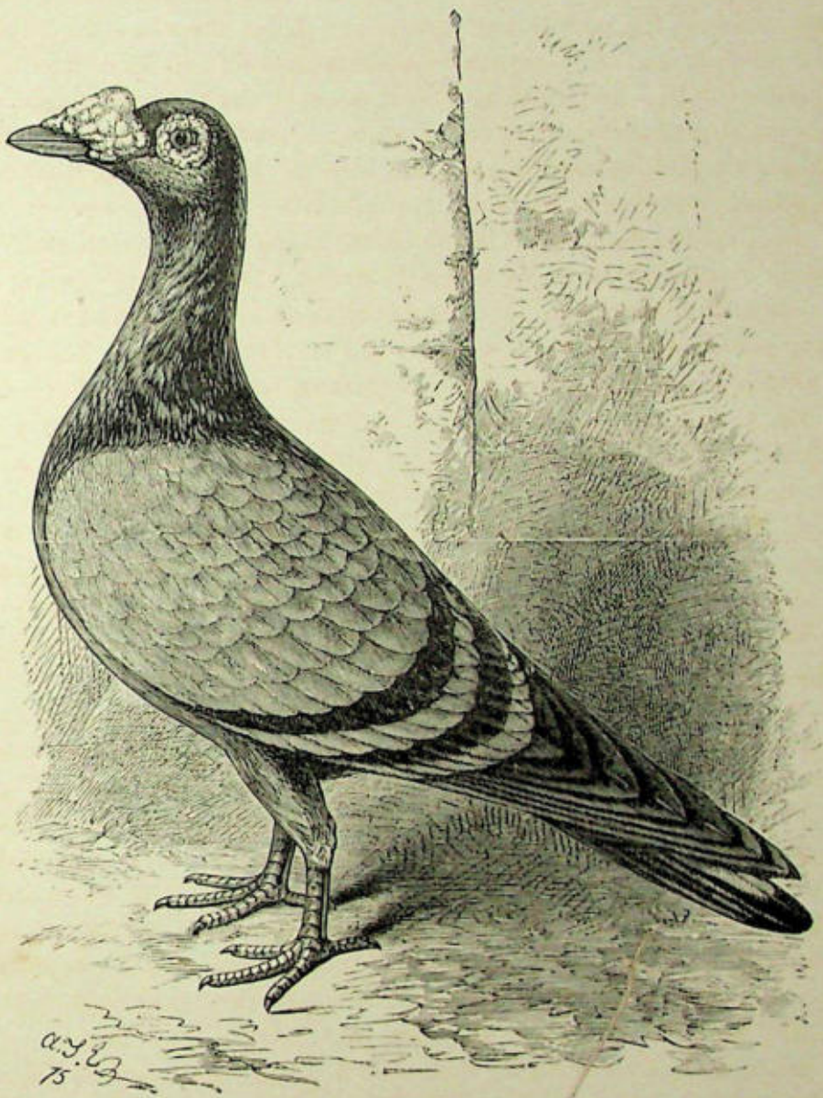


Fig. 48. - Blue Dragoon—Cup at Crystal Palace, 1874.

the possession of Mr. F. Crossley, and gained more honours in competition than any pair of birds, so far as we know, ever shown. The following season came a pair from Mr. South, which took first honours at the same great show as Mr. Percival's had done the preceding year; and so good were they that, as they never were shown together in our presence, we never could make up our minds which were the best. We do remember, however, that they were so marvellously well matched as to give rise to a strong suspicion that both were cocks, but this was proved wrong by the birds breeding; and singularly enough they then *produced* more really fine specimens than we ever knew bred by one pair of Dragoons. Both these pairs were the true type, as here described,

and we must confess we have never since seen their equals as pairs, as it is extremely difficult to obtain hens good enough, really, to match the cocks. But some very grand single birds have been shown; and some of our readers may like to see a portrait of one which, shown by Mr. F. Graham, won the cup at the Crystal Palace in 1874, and was, in our opinion, the best bird of his year. Drawn many months after the sketches for our coloured plates, it will show that these are not "fancy" sketches, but that birds have been and are shown possessing all the points described.

We have next to consider the breeding of the Blue Dragoon. Most fanciers seem to prefer breeding the Blues and Silvers together when a cross is required, and this is the right course for breeding Blues of the silvery tinge of colour; but this colour and this cross are nearly always accompanied with the light rump and pale thighs, which accordingly disfigures nearly nine-tenths of the Blues seen at exhibitions. It is also too often accompanied by a light beak, a horny colour taking the place of the true black; and also by too light colour in the iris of the eye, which is orange instead of the proper deep red; and even the eye-wattle frequently shows the too light blood also, by being pale and fleshy, destitute of the dark inner lash. This cross and its results are, in our opinion, the reason why so many profess to regard an orange-coloured eyeball and pale eye-wattle as the proper colour. We do not, therefore, by any means approve of breeding Silvers to Blues as a rule, and we include in our exception both black-barred and brown-barred birds: the only case in which it is advisable being when the fancier has got his Blues of a sooty colour, which will from time to time happen, and in which case a Silver is the proper cross. But in general, to breed the much-coveted deep, sound Blue, the best match is a Blue to a Blue-chequer. This is a cross also within the means of most amateurs, being a colour little appreciated for showing, but the most valuable and certain cross for breeding both the sound feather free from lightness on the rump, black beak, black eyelash, and dark eye; but perhaps the most convincing argument we can use is to say that it is this match which has actually produced the very best Blues exhibited. It is a singular thing, too, that most of the fanciers we have known to use this cross have been men who used it simply because their means were small, and they could not *afford* to get a Blue to their liking, and thus "put up with" the Blue-chequer simply as being less in price; since few have known its great value, and many are so obstinate that they will not believe it, or go out of their old beaten track, even when told, for fear it should "spoil their strain;" but a little experience soon teaches quite differently. As specimens of this we may state that the Blue Dragoon, just now figured as having won at the Crystal Palace Show of 1874, and which was declared by all the judges to be—all in all—the most perfect specimen ever seen, together with another as good, if not still better, in all points except upright carriage, were both bred by such a poor man, by this identical cross of a Blue-chequer to a Blue. We are inclined to think some of the old fanciers bred this way, since they occasionally produced very sound-coloured Blues; but the case we have mentioned will be sufficient to show that we do not advise the cross from theory only, but from having seen its results in many cases.

Of course all Blue-chequers are not suitable, some having white rumps as well as some Blues; but a blue-rumped Chequer must be found for a blue-rumped Blue, if possible; but even if the Blue be pale on the rump, the dark-rumped Chequer will be the most likely cross to produce from it *some* blue-rumped birds, from which a strain may be started. It matters not if the Chequer be cock or hen, though, of course, as a rule, a young Blue cock to a Chequer hen will be most likely to produce Blue cocks, and *vice versa*. In all cases, however, the Chequers produced from the cross should be carefully preserved for re-crossing, as, until Chequers are more valued than at the time we write, it is not easy to procure Chequers of the right stamp, and these blue-bred Chequers are, of course, the very best, unless perhaps such as are bred from *pairs* of dark Blues, which are better

still. Even if any birds come from the cross with white rumps they will be most valuable for breeding Grizzles, if the amateur's fancy at all inclines that way; but if not, they must on no account be bred back to Blues; for it may be taken as a leading principle in breeding this colour, that if the white rump be once really introduced into the Blues it will be a long and wearisome task indeed to get rid of it again; whereas, if a few birds be once procured or produced of a good sound colour on the rump, there will be little trouble, with care, in preserving it.

It is worth noting, also, that Blue-chequers are comparatively rarely found with much of the Horseman type about them, whereas, the light-rumped birds, unless of the Skinnum type, are far more likely to be loose-textured and too coarse in the wattles. Sometimes, after crossing with the Chequer, a sooty blue is produced. *Then* is the time, and this alone is the colour, properly to cross with Silvers; but we would strongly urge that the cross in such a case be with the brown-barred variety, all our experience proving that this is far less likely than the dark-barred to produce light rumps, the dark-barred Silvers being too often the offspring of much too light-coloured Blues. Many will doubt this, and being guided by first appearances may consider the dark-barred Silver the proper bird. All we can say is let them try, and they will find that we speak from facts. But, as a rule, we would advise earnestly to keep from *all* Silvers until a sooty tinge in the Blues showed it was really necessary to use them. They come often enough, as with Mealy Pouters, without breeding for them, so that they can always be had when wanted.

This leads us to brown-barred Silvers. They are the offspring of Blues, as the Silver-mealy Pouter is; and when once produced there is little trouble in keeping them up, as they breed true to colour. Hence one or two pairs will readily produce what is wanted, or if not, all the crosses required can always be obtained without difficulty. Now and then they may breed a fair Blue, reverting to the colour whence they sprang, and these Blues may be used, but of course with caution.

As to dark-barred Silvers, we can add but little to the remarks of Mr. Graham. We call them dark-barred purposely, though they are often called black-barred by people who ought to know better; but a real black bar on a Silver was never yet seen, the colour at best being but a very dark and deep brown. Should such ever be bred, we feel certain the birds will be found to possess black beaks, and that the colour will be somewhat like that of a Powdered Blue Owl. Fanciers who breed these must not expect, as some seem to do, to get Blues of the proper colour and Silvers from the same stock. The colour for breeding Blues we have already described, but the Blues for breeding dark-barred Silvers are the lighter shades, with often light rumps and thighs, and not unfrequently even faulty-coloured beaks and eyes. Now and then a deeper-coloured Blue may breed a good Silver, but as a rule it is these light birds which breed the best Silvers and the darkest bars, whereas they are what the Blue breeder should shun as he would the Plague. We wished to lay special emphasis on this point; but for the rest can add nothing to the remarks of Mr. Graham.

In our comparative estimate of the Yellow Dragoon we must say we differ from Mr. Graham. not considering it equal to the Blue in rank for several reasons. First of all, the original Dragoon was a flying bird, and was till lately considered the best of the flying pigeons. Though not much employed in this way now, we believe that if carefully trained it would be little inferior to the Antwerp; but owing to the many crosses employed to get colour we could never hear of any Yellows that were the least use for flying purposes. Owing to the crosses employed, it is generally longer in flights and tail, and shows much less of upright and graceful carriage, and is also apt to show more beak-wattle than is desirable; and by all these defects it is by so much the less a true Dragoon. Moreover, it has less properties, since, if the beak be of good shape, the wattle and

eyelash well formed, and the colour good and uniform, little more is expected; whereas, the Blue or dark-barred Silver has many more even of colour properties, besides being rigorously scanned for every point of shape and carriage. Owing to these differences, which make the Yellow Dragoon in reality quite a different bird, in spite of the great difficulties in getting colour with fair perfection in other properties, we venture to assert that for every Blue or dark-barred Silver seen approaching perfection there are at least three Yellows which are nearly all that is expected. The Blue, in fact, alone is, in our opinion, at present entitled to be called *the* Dragoon as regards *all* the attractive properties of the breed; and hence, in spite of the special difficulties attending the Yellow, we cannot admit the latter to an equal place.

On the breeding of Reds, Yellows, and Whites we have nothing of our own to add to the clear directions and suggestions of Mr. Graham; but the following valuable paper on Reds and Yellows, by Mr. D. C. Betty, enters even more fully into the breeding of those two varieties, which this gentleman has long been known to make his special study. Hence both ourselves and our readers are much indebted to him for so fully placing his experience at the service of others.

"In writing of Dragoons, Red or Yellow, I would, at the onset, assign to them their definite and due place in pigeon classification by designating birds of these colours 'a variety of the Dragoon breed,' allowing to the Blue its claim to be the Dragoon typical in colour, and, to render it bare justice, in points also. For what characteristic qualities, then, is the Yellow Dragoon so popular among fanciers as to exhibit a striking example of the progress of pigeon culture? The reply would be, that it is a self-coloured bird, and difficult to breed, thus affording an additional incentive to its production. Its colour is of many shades: prismatic, delicate, and yet so brilliant as to be the most coveted feather in high-class pigeons.

"The Yellow Dragoon should be treated of as regards its colour, how it has been produced, and how it is to be sustained, and as to the standard of its points. It should undoubtedly possess the shape and proportions of its prototype, the Blue; the boxed beak with the gentle Dragoon proclivity, its point measuring to the centre of the eye one and five-eighths of an inch—the standard of the old Carrier. The skull should be somewhat rounded at its anterior, and flattened and widening out at its posterior portion, so exhibiting the happy medium between the chuckle-headed old Dragoon and the Carrier, its shape, as viewed in a line from the tip of the beak, being that of the letter V. The wattle regular and compact; the irides brilliantly red, the whole organ bespeaking courage, strength, and vivacity. The eye-wattle, though not perfectly round, should yet not be obtrusively pinched or imperfect in its circle, the texture not fleshy as in the Carrier, nor smooth as in the Spanish fowl, but puckered moderately and evenly, as not to intrude its substance and hide the orb of the eye, or detract from its expression, nor project over the plane of the skull—giving it the appearance of a furrow—a beautiful feature in the Carrier, but out of place in the Dragoon. The neck in length should be proportionate to the size of the bird, broad at its junction with the body; the back broad and flattened, even slightly hollowed; the shoulders not cuddled up and hidden among the breast feathers, but standing out in bold relief, like the limbs of an athlete, showing an attitude of never-tiring muscular and nervous energy; the sweep of the wing graceful, and the legs not long enough to give the body a stilted look. A bird bred to this standard would show good carriage as naturally as a racer does his paces.

"I have thus epitomised the most salient points in the Dragoon to insist more emphatically upon their presence without attenuation or exaggeration in the Yellow and Red varieties.

"The Blue Dragoon is noted to have been bred from a Carrier crossed with a Tumbler, the produce crossed again with the Carrier; and the colour is inherent in the breed. In the Yellow variety more complications ensue to produce colour; divers foreign varieties, the Scandaroon.



Vincent Brooks Day & Son, lith.

RED, WHITE, & YELLOW DRAGOONS.

(LONDON FANCY.)

Runt, the Yellow and Red Tumbler, the Black and Dun Carrier—*cum multis aliis*—have all possibly been pressed into the service to convert the Blue into a Yellow, and may be useful in the future to sustain its deeper tint. Now, until we can eliminate all traces of this admixture from the Standard Yellow Dragoon, as we would separate the gold from its ore, we shall at our shows continue to see specimens exhibited as Yellow Dragoons which more appropriately should have been penned in the 'Any Other Variety Class.'

"It has been truly stated that not one *perfect* Carrier has yet appeared in the flesh. Even of Blue Dragoons how many *really* perfect specimens exist? Of Yellows and Reds I have not seen half a dozen that could challenge criticism. Too prevalent is the hard-coloured eye, the skull, the unmistakable countenance and gait of the Runt, the beak of the Skinnum, the neck, the length of face, of feather, and of leg, and other properties of the Carrier. How many are really self-coloured birds, and display not the rudiments of the black bar on the wing covert feathers?

"Time will produce more perfect birds, for the culture of the Yellow Dragoon, though it has emerged from its infancy, is far from having attained to maturity. Some good colour has been attained, but from varied crosses, which intrude their incongruities under the Red and Yellow feather.

"I have succeeded in producing Yellows and Reds of average quality, from birds purchased at auctions, with others claimed at exhibitions, or kindly placed at my disposal by my friend Mr. South, and with others purchased from dealers; also by the aid of the foreign Runt and the Carrier. Starting on the assumption that the Dragoon is a composite bird, I dealt with him in detail. The first consideration was colour; and I was fortunate in securing some birds of a soft yellow tint, though small. These mated to stoutish Reds, imperfect in colour, produced Reds with dirty rumps, Mealy Yellows, &c., which in their turn, matched with Yellows, produced sound, light Yellows, and an occasional good Red. The long-faced Yellow Runt was now introduced; the first crop gave birds of a rich tint but most ugly. This drawback was mitigated by another cross with my original Yellows and others as good as I could purchase. Thus was formed the material of a strain, good in colour but with the faults of their forefathers apparent in them. I found the Runt was most effectually obliterated by a Carrier cross. The produce of the Scandaroon cross and my original strain of Red cocks were matched to two Dun hens; these bred Blacks and Duns, one of which, matched to a Red cock, reared a sound Yellow, giving me a good step towards a Yellow Carrier, at all events a bird valuable to control the Scandaroon element. From another Dun hen, matched to a Yellow cock, I bred a Yellow Mealy hen of great substance. She has been breeding with a Yellow cock, producing broken-feathered birds. With a Red cock I shall do better.

"I would observe that I have always tried to intermingle the Carrier blood with that of the Yellow, through the medium of the Reds. In all cases it is essential to have a deep sound Yellow as a basis, *i.e.*, Reds bred from Yellows, and having secured one dip of the stronger feather and bred it out again, to have done with such an admixture, breeding Yellow with Yellow for two or three generations.

"The Yellow feather is of great delicacy, and, like many things beautiful which art engrafts on nature, it is evanescent; so that you cannot perpetuate beyond three generations a sound Yellow tint, unless by the introduction of a distinct strain, the foreign Yellow, the Red, or the Black feather. Constant Yellow breeding produces the whitey-brown thigh, the light rump, and the suspicion of the black bar on the wing, characteristic of the Blue from which it sprang. Above all, it behoves the fancier to be ever on the alert to secure any good Yellows of a distinct strain. Thanks to the labours of our Yellow Dragoon breeders, there are arising various strains which may suffice to sustain colour in our stock by Dragoon crossing only.

"A problem connected with the Yellow Dragoon and its crosses remains to be solved. Shall we ever behold a Yellow Carrier? I am well aware that certain fanciers in the National Peristeronic Society are at work on the task of producing them. I trust their energy, perseverance, and skill will result in the attainment of the greatest triumphs in modern pigeon culture; that the Yellow Carrier will be witnessed in my time, and afford additional matter for a future and not distant edition of 'Fulton's Book of Pigeons.'"

We have little to say about Grizzles, also, beyond what Mr. Graham has said. The Grizzle is not a bird we particularly admire for the show pen, and there is, and always must be, so much variation in their exact colour as to make judging them at best a matter of opinion, some liking a dark grizzle, others a light, and others a medium tint. The best mode of starting to breed Grizzles, if no Grizzles can be had, is to mate a Chequer (either light or dark in the rump will do) to a White; and if the progeny comes too light to pass as a Grizzle, as it often will, to match it again to another Chequer, or to the parent Chequer if another could not be obtained. If the sex of the young bird did not allow of this, we would try the too light one with a *sooty* Blue, but this last we would only try when better could not be done. Grizzles have been known to come from a pair of Blues, and also now and then to produce a Blue, whence their connection naturally with Blues is manifest. It is singular that all properly-coloured Grizzles we ever saw had fine dark beaks and dark red eyes. The cocks are generally most perfect in colour and markings. Some advise crossing with Blacks, but we never knew this cross produce any good result, the Black being only adapted for crossing with the Reds.

And here we may add a word or two to Messrs. Betty and Graham's notes on this cross of Black with Red. It is a proper cross; but many fail in it simply because they do not get the right and proper Black. No one must expect to improve a Red by this cross, unless the colour be a pure and raven black; and if it can be found, a bird combining this with a light beak. Most of those we have seen trying the cross have used birds of poor colour, and in such cases little benefit arises, most of the Reds bred having dun rumps and tails, and spots of dun through the body feathers. The same mischief will sometimes come from the cross of red with yellow, and in this case, too, the reason is the same—not using a pure and clear red. If the red bird should have even a few white feathers—and it is singular that very beautiful red birds often have—we would far rather chance this than breed from a red free from white with a dun rump, tail, or flights. In fact, as is the case with Tumblers, the colour of the rump is the great point in Yellow and Red Dragoons, and if that be right there is little fear of faulty colour elsewhere, except that very beautiful Yellows with good rumps will sometimes show a tinge of dun on the edge of the short or inner flights. Any faults of this kind, or white feathers, usually increase with age, so that any faulty bird should, if possible, be crossed with an *old* bird of sound colour, the age being a guarantee of thorough soundness in tint.

One good pair of Whites will start a strain, as they breed true. The want of contrast, the fewer properties to breed for, and the comparative ease of maintaining a good type when once got, make this colour far less esteemed by most fanciers.

A few remarks must be added on breeding for wattle properties, which will be found nearly as difficult as in the Carrier. The fancier who desires to succeed in this point should let no chance pass him of securing any bird with a well-shaped wattle; for if not needed just then it soon will be, and it is better to pay for the bird's keep than be unable to find it when it *is* wanted. No one must expect that all the progeny will be like the most perfect parent; still it is generally the case that an extraordinarily good specimen of a Dragoon is bred from an extra good wattle mated with a fairish one, the fine young one being like one parent and not resembling the other.

Therefore, a finely-wattled bird is always likely to produce one or two like itself; and, of course, if a match as good can be found for it all the better; but this is difficult, and hence it is rare to get good cocks and hens from the same pair, though, if good birds of each sex can be mated, it sometimes occurs. But even if both are good, care must be taken not to match birds, both of which are *fully* developed in beak and eye-wattle, unless for some special purpose. If such be done the progeny will probably have more wattle than is desired, as the Dragoon, like other wattled pigeons, can readily be increased in the development of these points by careful breeding, and would then, though as purely bred as possible, be too much like a Horseman, and unfit for competition as a Dragoon. If one bird has as much—fully as much—as it should have, it should, therefore, be matched to one very slightly under the mark; and on the contrary, a spindle-beaked kind of bird, if bred at all, should be matched to one with too much wattle, but of fair shape. We do not like breeding from such birds as these last at all, but such a match is the only way of getting any good from them. But there are more trifling variations from the right standard without going so far as this; and, as we have already stated that whenever a cock measures more than two and a half inches round the wattle, or at most a quarter inch more, he should be no longer considered a good Dragoon, and a *little* less is to be preferred, still, a trifling excess may make a good match with a hen which, though not spindle-beaked, has less wattle than she ought.

Those who, after what we have said, still prefer the thin-faced "Birmingham" style, have no such difficulties to contend with. The proper blue or other colour will have to be attended to as by others; but as regards beak and wattle they will have *no* trouble. A single pair of thin-faced birds will breed as true as steel in this point, and give them all they want.

Some may wish to have good and stout beaks, but less wattle than we have shown, though not altogether the Skinnum type. Such should match birds well bred, but both under eighteen months old, and whose wattle is not, therefore, fully developed. This is the only way to preserve a stout beak with rather less wattle, and in this way the amount of wattle may be controlled; but there is no point so easily lost, and so hard to regain, as the stout beak, if thin and spindle-beaked birds be once allowed to contaminate the strain.

JUDGING DRAGOONS.—We hardly know at which age the Dragoon appears most attractive. When young it certainly has a grace and beauty of contour which to some extent it loses later on, while at mature age it shows certain properties that age alone can develop. We differ from no one who may prefer one period or the other; but as we have already pointed out, when the two meet *in one class*, judging them fairly together becomes almost impossible, and has led to much of the mistake as to there being "two styles," when it has been simply young birds in the one case, and old birds in the other. Still there is one important point to remember. Many Dragoons, when young, show all the qualities of beak and wattle that can be desired; but as age comes on, and the head "makes up" and the wattle "breaks," then comes too often disappointment and vexation. One side will come too much peaked, or too ragged, or some other glaring fault will appear—that is, in the type we advocate. The thin-faced birds can be bred by the dozen with no difficulty, and that is the very reason we cannot consider them a correct or high type of pigeon. But this being so, it can hardly be said that the finest young Dragoon does more than *promise* to be a good one; whereas a good old bird *must* have been good through all his successive stages; and for these reasons we consider that a really good *old* bird should *never* be beaten in competition by a young one. But with fine young birds in a class this course, too, fair as we consider it, must give so much dissatisfaction, that all who have studied the subject will admit there can be no really fair competition in Dragoons except in separate classes for young and mature birds. They

require it quite as much as Carriers; and their large numbers at all modern shows leave the authorities who neglect to provide such needful classification without any real excuse.

In giving our points for judging Dragoons, we shall take as our standard the Blue, as containing both the most properties, and showing almost universally the highest type of excellence.

POINTS IN JUDGING BLUE DRAGOONS.

Beak: shape, 1; colour, 1; length, 1	3
Beak-wattle: general shape, 3; evenness on both sides, 3	6
Skull: flatness, 1; true V-shape, 2	3
Eye-wattle: size, 1; pinching, 1; dark eyelash, 2; called "gipsy-eyed"	4
Colour of eye (dark red)	1
Fulness of gullet (slight)	1
Shape of neck	2
Breast: width and projection of wing-butts	1
Back: flatness between shoulders	1
Flights and tail, proper length of	2
Feather: closeness or tightness	1
Colour: uniformity down back and rump, 3; shoulders, 1; breast and thighs, 2	6
Wing-bars, colour and regularity in shape	2
Uprightness and carriage	3
Legs, shape and position of	2
	38

The Silver Dragoon will have the same scale, less the point for dark eyelash, which is wanting in this variety, and two other points for colour, since, if the sides of the Silver are correct this is enough, and four points are sufficient. The Blue-chequer requires the same scale as the Blue in all except the two points for bars. Hence, it counts a point more even than the Silver, which may offend some Silver fanciers. But a *good* Blue-chequer is as hard to breed as any other, and has, besides, a superior value for breeding Blues, and the time will come when it will be thought more of, as in the case of Antwerps.

Yellows and Reds should be judged by the Blue scale, less one point for dark eyelash, and two points for having no bars, leaving four colour-points for colour of body all over. Grizzles may be judged the same as Yellows, but the colour-points must be *fully* deducted if the Grizzle is not good. White Dragoons should have *no* points for colour (this point gives no difficulty; and, moreover, a bird either *is* white or it is not), and only two for beak, the same as Reds and Yellows. It will also count, of course, none for bars. All Reds and Yellows should have pale or flesh-coloured beaks.



Vincent Brooks Day & Son. Lith.

BLACK & DUN BARBS

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BARB.

THERE can be very little doubt that this pigeon did, as the name implies, come to us originally from the north of Africa, and was first known as the Barbary pigeon, under which name it is once or twice mentioned by Shakespeare. It has been generally spoken of, written of, and considered as one of the high-class "Toy" varieties of pigeons; but we could never understand this, and shall in this work at least give it what we consider its due place as one of the "high-class" birds, thus raising these to four varieties, viz., the Carrier, Pouter, Tumbler, and Barb. Our reasons for this scarcely need stating, but we may say briefly that in the first place the Barb has very nearly as many properties, and is as difficult to produce as the Carrier: and that, like this bird, it takes a long time to come to maturity; so that after being shown as a young bird, it is several years before it is developed enough to be shown again. The age of maturity may be stated as three years; and, though there are exceptions, any possessor of a Barb that can compete with mature birds before that age may be proud of his specimen. Owing to this cause, and the pigeon not being generally classed quite so high, it is perhaps not wonderful that there are comparatively few fanciers of this variety; and we have almost always noticed that such as there are—especially what we may call the "breeding" fanciers—have been breeders of many years' standing. The rest get tired and go off to some other variety, and hence we always look upon a Barb fancier as a true lover of the pigeon he keeps, since he cannot even be a good judge of the right class of young bird which will grow into a fine old one, until several years' experience, there being so many different styles of bird.

Here we may be found fault with by some, who contend that there can be but one correct style of bird; but to this we cannot agree in the present case. Some prefer the smallest and most diminutive bird they can get; others a medium size; and others, again, a fine large bird, condemning the others. Now, we cannot consent to class size as a property at all in this pigeon, as all three sizes may show in due proportion the proper points of head; and as nearly all the points of a Barb lie in the head, we shall always consider as a good model any bird which shows a fine head and skull in just proportion to its size. This we consider the essential point; as, for example, an extra large bird having only a comparatively small eye and beak-wattle, though well formed, if shown against a small specimen all that could possibly be desired would, if both heads were placed together, far surpass it in measurement, showing more width of skull and greater diameter of eye-wattle. Still, though some judges might thoughtlessly give it the preference on that account, it would be in point of excellence not to be compared with the smaller one. Hence size and proportion is always carefully to be considered, and if this be done we would admit any size in reason. We have heard many say the bird "cannot be too small," but we have generally found these decided opinions came from fanciers who thereby upheld a class of birds then in their possession; and in too many cases we have found their ideal changed to a startling degree after a sale.

Owing to the comparatively few who have bred and kept Barbs, however, it does happen that

there is less difference of opinion respecting this pigeon than any others we have yet treated upon, and we do not anticipate any serious exception being taken to what we shall lay down in this chapter. We might, indeed, almost count the past and present Barb fanciers on our fingers, and had it not been for such fanciers as Messrs. Hedley, Jones, Gell, Firth, Heaton, Montgomery, Frame, Whirland, Perrott, Dowling, Hawley, Horner, and at most one or two more, the "best" style of Barb obtainable would have been but a sorry one. We must not forget also to give due credit to the foreign fanciers, from whom we received this pigeon, upon whose birds the gentlemen named have worked; for although their skill has greatly improved the foreign bird, yet, even originally, the best of the foreign stocks were grand specimens; and when we consider that our foreign friends have not the stimulus of competitive shows, and heavy prizes and medals, which act so powerfully as a stimulus upon the British fancier, but that what they have done has been from pure love of their bird, and without the advantages of public comparison and inspection of other specimens which we enjoy, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that their enthusiasm and perseverance must be even greater than our own. Some of their choicest productions in the Toy varieties are really marvellous; and should the system of public exhibition ever really extend itself on the Continent, as we sincerely trust it may, we know not what we may not expect from these enthusiastic cultivators of the pigeon race. The Carrier, the Pouter, and the Tumbler, were, no doubt, brought to perfection in this country, and by British fanciers; but the Barb, though undoubtedly improved, came to us in the main as we now have it, and it is but fair to give due credit to those from whose hands we received so attractive a pigeon.

A great deal of the present stock, curiously enough, comes from one importation, which we have been at the pains to trace to many quarters. They were the best foreign Barbs we ever saw, and were the property of Mr. W. Smith of Halifax. By judicious matching he bred even better birds from them; and, indeed, though we have seen many better single specimens, the best collection of Barbs exhibited by one fancier we have ever seen in one pen was that shown by him at a meeting of the Philo-Peristeronic Society; and still further, we have no hesitation in stating that there is scarcely a single first-rate specimen we know of at the present day which does not trace its descent to some of that pen of birds. In fact, at that time fresh blood was sorely needed. Some of the best of the collection we speak of fell into the hands of the well-known fancier, Mr. Peter Eden, and going from him to various Irish and Scotch fanciers, were the means of these producing, especially in cocks, some of the finest specimens ever seen. A further large portion—perhaps the largest portion—of the same collection were acquired by Mr. Stevens of Barnstaple, and through him, when he gave up the fancy, by Mr. Hedley, who is and has been the most enthusiastic fancier of the Barb pigeon we ever met with; so much so that we believe he must have had through his hands more specimens than any one, not even excepting ourselves, and this is the only case in which we think our range of experience as regards number of birds can have been surpassed. But such was the quality of this strain of Barbs, that others again of them, coming into the possession of various Yorkshire and Lancashire fanciers, also produced similar results, with this curious difference, that while the Irish breeders who got possession of them bred the finest cocks, the Lancashire and Yorkshire breeders produced the best hens we have ever yet seen; and although the original collection was uncommonly good in quality, the progeny, as produced by various of the breeders we have mentioned, became still better, showing what can be done by judicious matching.

We are quite sure none of those who have done so much in improving and perfecting the Barb will question either our assertion that it is as difficult to breed to perfection in points as the Carrier, or Pouter, or Tumbler, or its title to rank as one of the high-class pigeons; while it has

this advantage over either of the three, that it is hardier and much easier to rear. Hoping, therefore, that many more may be induced to take up this fascinating pigeon, we will proceed at once to consider what a Barb should be. And first of all we will present a paper, written by one of the oldest and most steadfast fanciers of this variety we know, Mr. P. H. Jones, of Fulham. In only one point do our opinions differ from his, as we will explain in due course; but with nearly all the following remarks do we heartily agree, as will be seen from the more detailed exposition afterwards of our own views:—

"In treating of the Barb it is pretty well known to many, especially old fanciers, that I am writing of a variety for which I have had a strong predilection for the last twenty-three or twenty-four years, and I may say that I am still as much attached to them as ever, although from force of circumstances I may not have been able to do so much with them during the last year or two as I have done, and hope to do again.

"I look upon the Barb as one of the most valuable and interesting of all Toys; indeed am not sure that it ought not to rank with the high-class Carrier, Short-faced Tumbler, or Pouter, and have little hesitation in saying, as the result of my long experience, that it is as difficult to breed *and rear* a specimen of this variety approaching perfection as it is either of the above so-called high-class pigeons. It will be observed that I use the term *approaching perfection*, and as I consider advisedly. I *have* seen birds of some varieties which could scarcely be improved upon; but how seldom do we see a perfect Barb! I am free to confess that during the last three or four years I have seen a few notable instances of birds which were considerably in advance of the ordinary run of prize-winners twenty years ago, but they could almost be counted on the finger ends; and if the ambitious fancier is desirous of possessing any of these choice specimens let him ask the price, and I fancy the amount named will convince him that first-rate Barbs are not as plentiful as blackberries in autumn.

"Some twenty years ago a few good Barbs were imported by Messrs. J. Baily and Sons, and the Messrs. Baker, from the French Mediterranean Ports, which served very much to improve the strains already existing in this country; but from these importations only a few first-class birds could be selected, many of them, the hens especially, running long and thin in face and beak, although they had a fair development of eye, and some of the cocks were tolerably good in skull. Since that time several breeders have paid much attention to the breeding and improving this beautiful pigeon, so that on the whole I believe the type to be considerably in advance of what we used to see; but I still say that there is a wide and profitable field of improvement open to the young and ardent fancier who will take the Barb in hand and *stick to it;* and as an old fancier I would say to the youthful one, *there* is the grand secret of success; make up your mind what variety you think will please you best, take to it, *and stick to it.* And it must be borne in mind that although, as I have hinted above, exhibitors will not part with their best specimens unless at long prices, there are frequent opportunities of getting birds from good breeders, and of good strains, at moderate prices. Strain and pedigree are of the utmost importance in the Barb. Of course it is possible now and then to produce from inferior and obscure parents a bird showing some good properties, but which, if bred from again, only produces disappointment and vexation of spirit; therefore again I say go in for strain and pedigree if possible. By examining the prize lists of the principal exhibitions it is easily ascertainable who are the persistent winners in any given class, and to some or one of them apply, rather than pick up a chance bird here or there. These remarks would naturally apply to any variety of stock, but among pigeons I believe they apply with extra force to the Barb, the properties of head and beak especially requiring much

care in the selecting and matching birds for breeding, the beak showing a great tendency to run out long and thin, the eye to lose substance at the back, and skull to lose width.

"I will now proceed to give my ideas of the properties of the Barb, and, as a natural consequence, commence with the head, which should be broad, square, and massive; flat across the top of the skull; the beak short, thick, and inclining downwards, forming in profile a continuous curve from the front of the head or skull, not appearing as if artificially bent down, but with the bottom mandible thick and supporting the upper one. I have seen birds a few years ago which had this *dozen*-faced appearance in excess, but they looked too much as if they had been *framed* into shape, and did not long retain their position in the fancy, although they created a slight sensation when introduced. The beak, in addition to being short and thick, should also be *wide* at the gape; this almost necessarily insures the head being of good and equal thickness, and not falling away or getting narrow towards the lower part of the cheek or chop; the eye well placed in the centre of the side of the head, not sunken, but fairly prominent, and surrounded as evenly as possible with an ample wattle of soft, even texture, bright red in colour, standing well out from the skull in a fully developed bird. But, although it should be soft and fine in texture, it should still have sufficient substance to stand up in its upper circumference without the aid of artificial means, which have been sometimes resorted to, such as gumming and stitching. When a Barb arrives at such an age as to require these aids, his proper place is the breeding-loft, when his owner may do as he pleases, and not the show pen. I am aware that the full properties of a good bird are not wholly developed until he has attained a tolerable fulness of years; but I still maintain that when, from old age or want of condition, the upper portion of the eye begins to fall over like the ear of a lop-eared rabbit, he is not a pleasant object to look at. A little sponging with a zinc or alum lotion, as much for the comfort and cleanliness of the bird as anything else, I hold to be perfectly legitimate and allowable. Beyond this we should not go. Small ulcers, which often appear inside the bottom lid, may be carefully cut out with a pair of fine sharp scissors. The eye itself should be proportionately large and full, of a clear white or pearl colour, although many otherwise good birds are bred with red or gravel eyes; but this detracts very much from the appearance of the bird, the contrast between the white eye and red wattle being very pleasing. The beak-wattle should be neat and fine in texture, evenly shaped, with the central division clearly defined, and nearly white in colour, with a healthy, powdery appearance on its surface, not rough or seedy; in an aged bird a little jewing or wattle on the lower mandible appears, and is an improvement. There should be no appearance of gullet or dewlap under the beak, the head being neatly and cleanly set on to the neck, which should be somewhat fine and thin, especially in hens, at its insertion into the head; of a moderate length, certainly not short, and expanding with a bold graceful curve to the shoulders; this adds much to the carriage and general contour of the bird, while a short, thick neck, gives a coarse and heavy expression; the chest full and prominent, and the breast-bone well covered with muscle. The legs should be short, scarcely any thigh being shown below the wings; the lower limb, from the knee to the toes, of a bright carmine red; the neater and finer the scales the better. I do not like a long tail on a Barb, but the flights should be proportionately long, reaching quite to the tip of the tail, and carried snugly and compactly, not dragging or drooping, which I consider a fault, or sign of ill-health, or want of condition. On the whole, in appearance I should describe the Barb as a compact, hearty, gay, *debonnaire* sort of bird—dear to the heart of a fancier, and very taking and attractive to the eye of the general observer.

"With regard to colour I would *now* classify them thus:—1st, Black; 2nd, Yellow; 3rd, Red; 4th, Dun. In former days we saw good Whites, but now very rarely. I need hardly say that the brighter and purer these colours are the better. We now approach the important



Vincent Brooks Day & Son, lith.

RED & YELLOW BARBS.

and difficult question of breeding for colour. It is a somewhat generally received axiom among breeders of all descriptions of stock that to a certain extent, 'like breeds like,' and this, no doubt, is nearly true with regard to breeding for colour, always providing you are breeding from a strain *thoroughly established for colour*. For many years I had a strain of Red Barbs, the individuals of which almost invariably bred one or both young ones with one or two white feathers in the tail, and *always* on the same side of the tail; but they were good birds, and very valuable for crossing, as, when matched with Yellow, the white feathers very rarely re-appeared; but as long as I bred individuals of the same family together they still showed the white feather, *and I rather liked it*, for I always knew I had a good stock bird, and many prize-winners can be traced back to this strain. There are few good sound-coloured Reds to be found, many of them running ashy on the rump, or grizzled in flight and tail; and I must confess that I do not even now know how to eradicate this fault. I can improve Yellows with Reds, but do not know how to produce a perfect Red with any degree of certainty. For breeding Blacks I believe, as far as colour is concerned, no match is equal to two Blacks; but as Dun hens are sometimes found very full and soft in eye, it is advisable to use them with Blacks, and a soft Dun may be matched to Yellow with good results if the Yellow is on the cock side; still I would prefer breeding from two Yellows if both were sound in colour. Birds bred this way, however, are apt to run grizzly, and pale in flights and tail, so that I believe it necessary now and then to fortify Yellows by a cross of some other colour. I have had good birds bred from a Yellow cock and Black hen, and on one occasion, many years ago, I bred from a single pair of birds in one season every known colour of a Barb, viz., Black, Red, Yellow, White, and Dun. The cock was a Red of the strain I have previously referred to, the hen from a Yellow and Dun, but not a good-coloured bird in herself, and yet all the young were good and sound in colour. I once also bred a bird which was nearly blue, but did not admire it, and do not think it a desirable colour for a Barb. All the usual colours harmonise well with the red eye-wattle, which the Blue would not. I believe I once recorded my opinion that a *good* Barb cannot be of a bad colour, and, *for breeding purposes*, I still hold the same view, and if I knew the pedigree of a bird, ever so bad in colour, would not for a moment hesitate to breed from it if it possessed the properties I required. I never meant to convey the impression, as some one suggested in one of our periodicals a short time ago, that a badly-coloured bird was equal to a good coloured one, and it was a piece of absurdity in the writer to attempt to father such an idea on me. Whites, as I have stated before, are not so numerous or good as they were a few years back, and yet, for a country fancier, they are a charming variety; in towns, as with other white birds, they are not so suitable. I have seen a few Whites with pearl eyes, which I consider a great improvement. With regard to size I most decidedly advocate a somewhat small and neat bird, and give *my ideas* of what the relative proportions of a good bird should be, although, of course, it is impossible to lay down anything like a hard and fast line in this respect, but the following, I believe, to be pretty nearly right for a good specimen:—Weight, 13 ozs. to 1 lb.; length, beak to tip of tail, 12½ inches to 14 inches; inner edge of eye to tip of beak, ⅞ of an inch; width of skull, a full inch to 1¼ inch, measured between, not over the eye-wattles; diameter of eye-wattle, 1⅛ inch; length of limb, measured as Pouters, 4½ inches to 4¾ inches. These dimensions would apply to cocks, and would be a little modified for hens, more especially in width of skull. I have no doubt that a few birds might be found to exceed these dimensions in head properties, but I consider the above a fair standard.

Barbs are fairly good breeders and feeders, though sometimes a very good and promising young one will require a good deal of attention in the way of feeding by hand. The young Barb, when in the nest, gives a pretty sure indication of what sort of bird it will be at maturity. If the callow

nestling has a broad, thick skull, with an ugly, bull-dog-looking beak, although it may for a few months after assume a somewhat plain and common appearance, yet it is almost certain to develop into a bird of good properties. In conclusion I would say, that to the ardent and patient fancier no better variety exists on which to exercise his skill and judgment in matching and breeding, or which will better reward him in watching the gradual development of those much-coveted properties which gladden his heart, and compensate for many disappointments."

Such are the views of one of the best Barb fanciers we know. In giving our own, as before in this work, we will consider each point in detail.

One of the first and most important of all points in a Barb is the *beak*. Some judges think less of this point than they should; but however fine even in other head properties, we for our part refuse to consider any bird a really first-rate specimen without its beak is good, any more that we would a Carrier. In the mature bird it should not be more than about three-eighths of an inch in a fair average-sized specimen from the front of the beak-wattle to the tip, and if less the better; some of the small specimens of course will not exceed a quarter of an inch. But still, shortness is of less importance than *thickness* of beak. Both mandibles should appear equally stout, the lower looking as massive as the upper, and this is the difficult point. It is quite easy to get a fairly heavy upper mandible, but a thick and massive under mandible is comparatively rare. When thus short, thick, and the mandibles equal in thickness, it much resembles the beak of a bullfinch; and the head of the young bird shown further on represents, without the least exaggeration, a beak all that could possibly be desired, though on a small bird, which as a rule are more often seen with good beaks than large ones.

The colour of the beak should be pale or flesh-colour, as in the Carrier; and it unfortunately happens that in Black Barbs some of the best-shaped beaks are of the wrong colour. It is little or no fault for the upper mandible to have a dark stain on the top; but however good the beak may be, if both mandibles be black it always looks coarse, and such birds are also much longer in developing their wattle properties than birds of a softer texture (for it will be found on trial that the pale beaks *are* really softer than the dark ones). Still, we are no advocates for a fine bird being either disqualified or discarded from breeding because of a black beak; this would be to throw out some of the finest black specimens; it is simply to be avoided as much as possible, fairly allowed for in judging, and got rid of by judicious matching—say with a pale-beaked Dun, as we shall speak of further on.

There is one more property about the beak: the more it points downwards, or, in pigeon-language, the more the bird is "down-faced," the more valuable it is so far, and the shorter the beak appears. Still, though this be an attractive property in a Barb, it must not be laid too much stress upon, for the simple reason that, as in the case of Tumbler skulls, it admits of being to some extent produced artificially in a bird which naturally is deficient, and if done carefully, so as to defy detection in such birds as have massive beaks, though it can easily enough be detected if the beak be at all thin. The plan adopted is simply this:—At about the age of four days the beak is taken between finger and thumb (thumb under and finger on top), and gently but firmly bent or pressed downwards at the point by the finger. This is repeated every third day for about four times; and if thus frequently done, with comparative gentleness, and the beak be thick enough, no sign of the process will remain, and no pain seems to be suffered; in fact, there are but few fanciers who do not give to the beaks of their birds a little gentle "persuasion" of this kind. But we have known such a wrench given that the little sufferer has died, and even cases where the beak has broken off a day or two after the barbarity, upon which we need scarcely express our

opinion. Indeed, we must state that while such very gentle manipulation as simply *inclines*—if we may use the word—the beak to grow rather more downwards, appears neither to give pain nor to involve any other ill-effect, if it be attempted to go beyond this, though it may be impossible to detect what has been done, there is still a loss in other points. The beak looks shorter and more down-faced, but the beak-wattle is neither so large, so full, or so well-shaped as if nature had been allowed to take its course, and what would have been perhaps a fine cock, has more the appearance of a hen, and retains the feminine look to the end of his days. If still more overdone, besides the cruelty, there is often caused an opening or space between the mandibles, which probably produces canker, as described in earlier chapters. For these reasons we protest against *too* much stress being laid by judges upon "down-face," and none at all if confined to the beak alone, since such can only be the result of art. A good and natural "down-face" will show one unbroken sweep over the whole head to the point of the beak, and cannot be improved save by such very mild measures as above indicated.

Next we come to the *skull*. First, as all fanciers know, this is to be as broad as possible from eye to eye. But not only so, it should be of the *same* width both at front and back of the eye-wattles. This is a comparatively rare point. Many are the winning birds we have seen which do not possess it, the two eye-wattles tapering towards each other at the front, though a fair width, or even more than fair width behind; but in the *square* width, or parallelism of the eye-wattles, lies the chief and greatest beauty of the skull of the Barb. No matter how wide the skull is behind, if not at least *nearly* as wide in front, it will only look "mean" and coarse, the fault being seen not only when looked at from the front—perhaps the most attractive point of view of all for seeing this pigeon—but in any other position. This equal width in front to back is both the most valuable property, and the most difficult to breed correct. A bird possessing it, though only of a fair moderate width of skull, looks wide, and is far more valuable to breed from. It makes the eye-wattles seem as it were to rise above the skull equally on both sides; and adds greatly to the apparent shortness of face. Moreover, it is generally accompanied with another great beauty, in the shape of an apparently *indented notch or groove* on each side of the front of the head, between the eye and beak-wattles, as if a little hollow had been sharply cut or scolloped out with a penknife. This groove on each side of the forehead is another great beauty, making the head appear sharply "cut out," and showing off to greater advantage the *back* of the skull, which should show a sort of rise or projection, giving to the whole, when perfect—very rarely indeed is *all* perfect—a peculiarly neat, attractive, and "well-chiselled" appearance, which belongs to the *Barb alone* among all pigeons. These skull properties—some of which seem not generally understood—cannot be too highly valued, and not the less so because no art or manipulation can either produce or increase them, and they are accompanied by the best class of eye-wattles.

If such a skull be valuable, it will easily be understood. on the other hand, that the tapering or wedge-shaped skull is to be carefully avoided, not only for the native ugliness we have already mentioned, but because it leaves no room for the beautiful indentations just mentioned, even if the bird does possess them, which in such circumstances is very rarely the case. In fact, the eye and beak-wattles appear crowded together, completely covering the part where the groove or indent should be; and though to remove this some will cut off a portion of wattle, this still looks ugly, and moreover soon grows again.

Such a skull as last described, again, is very rarely accompanied by the next great point of a Barb—a well-formed *eye-wattle*. This should be large, circular, and evenly distributed round the eye; whereas, in those birds with taper skulls, the wattle is generally far too much developed on the front side, with much too little at the back and bottom, in fact, badly "pinched," which makes

the best bird in other points look coarse, common, and bad. Such a wattle at the age of three or four years looks hideous, especially in the eyes of a good judge, and though a portion is in such cases often carved away from the front or top of the wattle, to make the bird more presentable in appearance, little improvement results; the bird is bad at the best, and cannot be made a good one. But, as a rule, the correct, wide-*fronted*, "square" skull is generally attended with the next important property of good and even eye-wattle, something near equally large and equally thick all round the eye. Even of good eye-wattles, however, there are two classes. One may be called a soft or fleshy eye, which is preferred by many, and is generally pretty regular in build all round; besides which, it takes much less time to become fully developed than the other kind, which we may call, for convenience, the hard, wrinkled, or laced wattle. Still, though with these advantages in build and time, it has its faults, being very liable to show the same formation which is so *admired* in the Carrier (as adding to narrowness of skull), but is correspondingly *hated* in a Barb. This form consists in being *convex* in shape, or thicker towards the eye than at the edges. At a side view this does not matter; but from the front this makes the wattle look as if rolling over the skull, and thus to appear narrower than, perhaps, it really is. In fact, a really wide-skulled bird, or one which appears so, is rarely seen with such a wattle. We may, in fact, compare the two classes of wattle to one of the old-fashioned "dished" bone buttons. The soft wattle resembles the convex side, making the skull wider at the eyes than at the edges of the wattle; whereas, the other wattle resembles the dished or concave side, the eye being in the hollow centre, and the skull, as will be readily understood, appearing far wider. The thicker one of these last wattles is, the wider and more square does the skull appear; and when looked at from the front, the wattles seem to "stand out" well from the skull, adding yet more to the finely-chiselled appearance of the head we have already spoken of as *the* great point. The soft wattle again, being so thin at the edges, appears there nearly smooth, most of the wrinkling being towards the centre, whilst the other is regularly indented or wrinkled round the circumference. Certainly the last class of eye-wattle is what we most admire, and which shows up to most advantage the various head properties of a high-class Barb; and it is also less liable than the other to disease; the soft wattle, as in Carriers, being much more liable to catch cold, to become inflamed, and also to form spouts, which then require removal; and as the wattle of a Barb is so very much thicker than that of a Carrier, in order to give width to the head, such surgical operations, which should be performed in the same way, are in this pigeon attended by much more risk, and give much more trouble to bring to a satisfactory conclusion; in fact, it is no easy matter for even an experienced fancier to operate for "spouts" with complete success on a fleshy-eyed Barb.

The hard or wrinkled wattle therefore is, on the whole, to be preferred, though it takes one season more to develop, and, in fact, can rarely be shown genuinely with much hope of success under twelve months old, the soft-wattled young birds looking so much more fully-developed and attractive to the eye. Hence, a breeder who wishes to compete with young birds, even though he prefers the same style of wattle we do, should also keep some of the soft-eyed sort in order to produce his winning young birds. If he selects these with judgment, and especially if he can get small birds with thick beaks, he is almost sure to succeed, since all fanciers admire small Barbs, if only well-developed in head and wattle points in proportion to their size, which these soft-wattled ones generally are. A very large bird, indeed, even if really fine in head, looks coarse by the side of such, and on the whole a *rather* small bird is preferred by all who can get them good enough; and while, as we before said, we would discard no size, but judge by proportion, we would give the size of a common Flying Tumbler as the happy medium which all might seek

for with safety, and name that pigeon because it varies less in size than any other of the proper dimensions we know, and hence makes a good standard. If a bird be larger or smaller, no matter; but a *very* small bird scarcely ever shows a really good skull, and a very large one looks coarse, whereas this size seems what best shows really fine properties to advantage.

To resume, then. If the fancier can obtain for matching two rather small fleshy-eyed birds, with good beaks, they will be almost sure to produce some birds even better beaked than themselves, or, at least, which appear so the first season; and if fairly good in eye-wattle, the young will look, at say five or six months old, so much more developed than much larger birds of the other kind, as to be sure to win the day. The very smallness makes the bird *look* young and pretty, while the other bird will look both older and coarser in comparison, and has little chance unless judged by a very old and experienced breeder. Sometimes such an one will reverse the decision; and we cannot in truth blame either, since both are right from different points of view. The one bird as it stands looks far the best, and really is the most developed for its age; whereas, it is generally the other specimen, which cannot win as a young bird, which in the end, when it *is* maturely developed, makes the finest bird. Winning young Barbs comparatively seldom make winners in good company over three years old. Hence, we advise different studs of birds to breed winners the first season, and such as are intended to win when old birds; and this is, in fact, the rule adopted by our oldest breeders and exhibitors, and the explanation of many facts and apparently contradictory decisions which may have puzzled some of our readers. The Barb is almost the only pigeon of which it is true; and it arises from a *thick* eye-wattle, as well as a large one, being desired in this case; whereas, the most prized Carrier-wattle, though large, is thin in comparison.

Next we come to the beak-wattle, which varies in its way quite as much, though less conspicuously, than the eye-wattle. This chiefly depends on the size and formation of the beak itself. When this is massive and well shaped, it should and does resemble, as nearly as we can describe it, an oval-shaped bean, split nearly into two slices, and then laid like a saddle on the beak, one half on each side. The longer, smoother, and fuller it is, and the nearer it comes to the point of the beak, the better; and this length, fulness, and regularity can be traced in a very young bird. It helps the shortness of face, and, filling up the profile, gives a fine and high-bred look generally. Such a wattle is, however, scarcely ever seen but on a fine and massive beak. When thus found it remains with little variation until two years old, when it generally wrinkles a *little;* it is, however, but little, and, when properly full in the centre, little hinders the appearance of the skull. It should allow the front edges of the eye-wattle to be clearly seen, from a full front view, with a space between them and the beak-wattle; and when this is the case it is rarely that fine indented groove is absent, which is, perhaps, the *best* test of a really well-bred bird. Such a bird will be sure to have a thick under mandible.

Other wattles are the opposite of this, being ragged, flat in front or on top, or even hollow, instead of convex, and spreading at the back behind, over the edges of the upper mandible, so as to cover or destroy the space that should appear between eye and beak-wattles.

We come next to the under or jew-wattle. Some of the coarser specimens have this very full and large; and though by itself we greatly admire such, as it causes the bird to appear shorter in face and thicker in neck, still it has great disadvantages. Nearly all heavily-jewed birds are much pinched in the eye-wattle, the evils of which we have already seen; and are besides, and as combined with this, too often narrow in front of the skull. But again, the jew-wattle is scarcely ever seen unusually full without the bird having a great deal too much at the root of the mouth; and lastly, it is usually accompanied with a thin or poor under mandible, the growth

of wattle appearing to absorb the substance of the beak. Hence, much as we admire a heavy jew-wattle by itself, and as improving the shortness of face, on the whole we prefer a smaller amount, consisting only of three small divisions resembling pimples, which we will show by-and-by. Still, with all this, the heavily-jewed birds are so valuable as well as so scarce that we would not have them disparaged. From them come some of the very best specimens



Fig. 49.

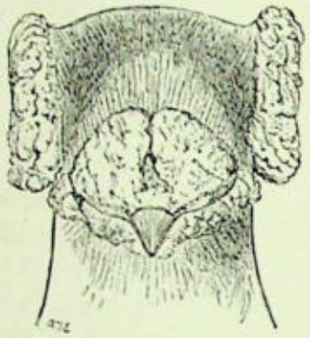


Fig. 50.

OLD DUN COCK.

and they are especially valuable for breeding *hens* of the proper shape and character of beak. It is a singular fact that breeding for extra large eye-wattles almost always produces, before very long, beaks too fine and long in front of the wattle, especially in hens; and to counteract this there is nothing like a cross with a heavily-jewed bird, which seems to restore both shortness and substance at once, and also the masculine appearance, since, without some stoutness of beak and some moderate jew-wattle, the best bird looks more like a hen than a cock.



Fig. 51.

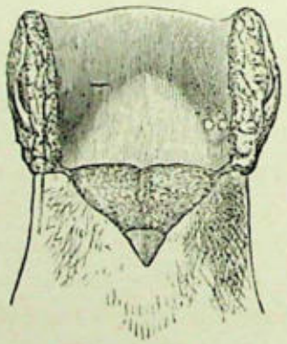


Fig. 52.

YOUNG BLACK COCK.

Finally, as regards the shape of the head, though we have already conveyed that there should be a clear space between eye and beak-wattles, the whole should be so combined that the entire "face," measured from centre of the eye to point of beak, be as short as possible, with no perceptible indentation or "stop" in the forehead, but the whole front of the head and upper mandible forming a kind of unbroken arch, or curve, into which the beak itself naturally falls, and thus terminates it. Having now described it point by point, we give in Figs. 49 and 50 two views of such a head, drawn very carefully from an old Dun cock, perhaps the best we have ever seen. These views are not in the slightest degree exaggerated as regards appearance, though we have found

measurement deceiving, a bird drawn the actual size appearing much too large all over. We have, in fact, seen even beaks quite as thick as here drawn, though not, perhaps, in quite so old a bird, age always shrinking it a little. We add two similar views of a young head, also drawn from life, and, as will be seen, from a rather smaller bird, at the age of about seven months. The beak here shown could not possibly be surpassed, and the fine chiselling of the skull in front was as conspicuous as in the old bird. We could not find, at the moment, a large young head sufficiently good for our purpose, but in all except mere size, Figs. 51 and 52 represent the head and skull of such a young bird as would develop into the old one above, except that the beak of the young one (a Black) is perhaps several degrees better, as regards thickness, than that of the old one. We ought to explain that one in each of the above views is neither taken directly from the top or from the front, but from a somewhat slanting direction between the two.

We hope these two views and our explanations will make the points of a fine head plain to all our readers, and also show them the class of young bird which will grow into a fine old one. But to make our meaning still more clear, we add in Fig. 53 a representation of a *bad* head. The

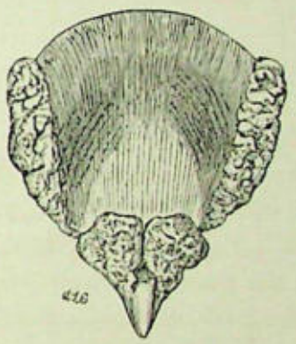


Fig. 53.

head here shown is not indeed bad in *all* points; such would defeat our object, since any amateur could have, in such a case, no difficulty. It has a good eye-wattle, though rather too convex, and a very fair width at back of the skull. But it tapers from back to front, where it is not nearly so wide as behind. The beak-wattle is narrow across, and the beak itself too long in proportion, as indeed is the whole skull; and these are the points to be particularly avoided.

We have next briefly to discuss the "colour-points" of the head, which in a Barb have some importance. The colour of the beak we have already mentioned; but we may here add that a black beak generally affects the colour of both eye and beak-wattle also, and thus makes birds of really the same head properties look far worse than others with pale beaks. Hence, colour as well as shape of beak must be studied in breeding, in no case matching two birds having a black one. It is also to be noticed that a dark-beaked bird is generally much longer developing its wattle than a soft-beaked one; and when it is fully developed, never seems to show half the properties it really possesses.

The beak-wattle, when young, is of a pinky colour, but as age comes on it seems as if covered with fine white powder. The eye-wattle is desired to be as bright-red as possible, but some allowance has always to be made. We have often noticed how much deeper in colour, both in eye and beak-wattle, are the Barbs imported from abroad than such as are bred in this country, and also that some strains produce a much deeper colour than others. As the deepest colour is preferred, the wattles are always washed before exhibition, which produces a little deeper and

brighter colour than is generally seen. Some exhibitors it is to be feared go beyond this, and apply a little magenta, or some other dye, which—bar the danger of detection—greatly freshens the appearance of an old stager; and while not always easy to detect, we fancy a professional *dyer* (who would be the most likely expert to call in) could throw an interesting light on some birds we have seen exhibited. Washing is, however, not only quite fair, but should be performed at least every fortnight on a good bird, whether shown or not, the wrinkles in the eye-wattle being very liable to get filled up with the dust of the loft, which, if left too long, may corrode or fester the skin, and cause canker and other diseases, which a regular washing to a great extent prevents. Some have thought that the rich colour of the foreign birds is owing to some difference in climate, and have considered this proved by the fact that some of the richest-coloured wattles have bred in this country very pale progeny; but in our opinion the cause lies in the use, by English fanciers, of the *Dun* colour for breeding. We have constantly observed, that the oftener the Dun feather is used in matching the paler will the wattle become, and also softer and sooner developed; it is, in fact, by this matching chiefly that the great improvement has been made in head-points, over the standard shown by imported Barbs; and knowing the preference of nearly all foreign fanciers for colour, it is probable they breed for colour both of feather and wattle, and neglect the Dun. This is borne out by the fact that while, as we have said, the Dun cross certainly does produce pale wattles, Blacks, Reds, and Yellows, bred together, generally produce good colour, as does also the White; hence we believe that our fanciers, while improving the quantity and shape of wattle by the Dun, have lost colour; and as this is of less consequence than good size and shape of wattle, we must, if so, be content.

The next point is the colour of the eye itself, or rather of the iris, which should, in a perfect bird, be white or pearl. But here we are perhaps most likely, if at all in this chapter, to displease many by saying that some judges lay far *too* much stress upon this property, and that a change in their view of it deserves at least the most serious consideration. Many times we have seen some of the finest specimens in all other points passed over unnoticed as worthless, on account of an orange-coloured eye, and this we consider one of the most unjust mistakes ever commonly made in judging pigeons. No one can say that the colour of the eye constitutes the Barb, as in no pigeon perhaps are what may be called "structural" head-points so largely what is breed for. Not that we would on that account have the colour of the eye indifferent, or wish an orange-eye to compete on equal terms with a pearl eye. No one we ever met with would pretend to such a thing; but for a bird possessing every other good point to be passed over, *as we have seen done*, for a bird which possessed no other really fine point except colour of eye, is what we protest against as simply destructive to all true breeding. It is within our knowledge that the best pearl-eyed specimens have occasionally produced orange-eyed progeny; while, on the contrary, by judicious matching with a pearl-eyed Red or Dun (for it is generally Blacks and Yellows which fail in this point) the fault is very easily corrected. On the other hand, a black beak is not only far more conspicuous and offensive to the eye, but far more difficult to eradicate; yet we never once knew a Barb good in all other points passed over for this fault, and indeed some of the talented judges, who have signalised themselves in the way we complain of, did not even *know* a black beak was a fault at all. Not that an orange-eye is not a great *fault*. Such we would consider it, and allow a fair number of points for it; but we protest against its being considered a disqualification, and a bird good in all other points thrown out of competition, when shown against birds really fine in no other. If a bird happened to be faulty both in colour of eye and beak, we would not complain, as such a bird could hardly win against decent quality, and it would be very foolish to even breed from it; but we do consider no bird should be disqualified for either

fault alone. Some of the very best foreign Barbs, from which the most improvement in our strains was derived, were orange-eyed; and from this source indeed we believe the fault was derived. There is a third colour of eye called gravel-colour, being as it were half way between the pearl and the orange, which is, however, as offensive as orange to some fanciers; but we never knew a bird yet disqualified for this; and, on the whole, what we think enough is to allow fair points for eye, and then deduct all three points for an orange-eyed bird, two points for a gravel-eyed bird, and one point for an eye sometimes found which can hardly be fairly called even gravel, but is also certainly not real pearl. It must be noted that a bird has a right to be called pearl-eyed, provided even the inner edge of the iris be a pure unbroken white, even though outside this there should be a little red or orange. With this allowance, the pearl-eyed bird must be very poor quality indeed if it could not beat an orange-eyed bird, unless it was very young; and this mode of judging would do justice to all parties, and assist judges in what is often their most difficult task, viz., to first satisfy *themselves* why they make certain awards, and then be able to inform all competitors who asked them in a becoming manner *why* they awarded prizes and commendations in any given manner.

What we have now described comprise nine-tenths of the properties of a Barb; and no matter how well-shaped in body a bird may be, if deficient in head it can never compete with any chance. Still, there are other properties. The neck should be short and thick, the thicker the better, as the better the bird is in this property the shorter in face does it appear. Hence the gullet should be very full; indeed, this is where the thickness of neck should be, and many birds owe much of their apparent shortness of face not to real excellence in that point so much as to an unusually good gullet, especially if down-faced, when a bird with full gullet hardly *can* look other than short. This is the one point where we must say we decidedly differ from Mr. Jones, who recommends a rather long and thin neck, with a clean run under the gullet. We can only say that we do so, not so much from any preference, as from observance of actual facts; for we do not think we ever saw an unusually good bird as regards shortness of face, which did not owe much of it to the point now described. This property does not develop much, however, till the age of at least two years, and must not therefore be looked for in a young specimen, which is the chief reason why these look so much longer in face when viewed in *profile*, as the want of thickness which age gives to the wattle is the reason of their looking so much narrower in skull from the front. For this reason, a bird that looks very short in face under a year old must really be something extraordinary in that grand property. The chest is broad, and becomes broader with age, but not remarkably so when compared with flights and tail, which should be *long*. A Barb may be *too* long in feather, certainly, as it should be a *compact*-looking bird, and hence extreme length is no beauty as in a Carrier. Still, we have generally noticed that a bird faulty in too great length is apt to be good and well bred, while those too short in feather are mostly very small and rarely more than very moderate quality, thus denoting late breeding. A nice, easy-looking, *harmonious* proportion, when compared with the short neck, is what should be aimed at. Lastly, there are the legs, which must be short compared with the length of body and feather, making the carriage and gait of the bird somewhat like that of a duck, in fact "waddling" considerably. These short legs, which should be free from feathers on the shanks, are what harmonises with the entire shape of the bird. Still, we do not think any judge, if he did find a bird with good head properties, would lay much stress upon too long legs; and even as regards feather, though it is a fault, still we have seen many specimens having the legs covered to the feet with soft downy feathers, somewhat similar to those on a grouse; and in nearly every case these were otherwise grand birds, and to our knowledge produced progeny free from the defect. Hence, too much

stress ought not to be laid on this point, the leg of a Barb being a very subordinate member after all.

We next come to the breeding of Barbs; and would say, first of all, that the fancier must not expect to rear many really good specimens unless he pays attention to providing a staff of good nurses or feeders, or can give the care required to feed by hand. Not that they are by any means delicate; on the contrary, Barbs are hardy, and good breeders, and the commoner ones will rear their own offspring well. But if the parents possess the much-coveted short and bullfinch beak, and their offspring inherit the same, then, while they will feed very well from six to eight days, after that time the shortness of the parents' beaks, and the fast-increasing thickness of the youngsters', will not allow of the latter inserting their beaks into the side of the parents' mouth, and feeding fails. The throat or gullet also becomes closer or smaller with age, especially in short-faced birds, which often become as small in the aperture as a Foreign Owl, and thus unable, when the time comes for feeding with grain, to allow of its free passage. Some even of the best specimens will rear their young well up to about two years of age, but after that time the shortening and hardening of the beak, and shrinking of the gullet, will almost always prevent it, the latter being seldom suspected, perhaps, and the fancier wondering, since most pigeons feed better as they get older, why his will no longer their young. We have known fanciers even give up the breed from this cause, Barbs being generally classed as good feeders; but this, as we have explained, is only so with medium-quality specimens when at mature age. The best class of birds for nurses are, first Dragoons, from three to five years old (when they have more space at the opening of the mouth, where the young beaks are inserted), which fill the crops of the young birds in less time than any other pigeon, but are rather wild. Secondly, we advise Barbs themselves; that is, the longest and largest-beaked ones the fancier can find. These can always be found in plenty, and when long in beak, no bird can be better adapted for the purpose. Beside these, many good *young* birds will make capital feeders, especially those which do not win as young ones, but are kept on hand to grow into good old ones. Such often look far too long in beak the first two seasons, waiting for more wattle and greater width of skull to take off the apparent length; and while in this state they generally make good feeders. And large-headed coarse Antwerps, short-faced or medium-faced, will also feed well. But we mention the common Barbs in order that those who prefer to keep only one breed, and have their stock look uniform, may know what is to be done; but no very short-faced *old* birds must be relied on longer than from a week to ten days. They will generally feed for that time; and of course the young can, if preferred, be fed by hand when they fail, as directed in Chapter IV.

The next point to be considered is of course the matching; and first as regards the colours. Though some other colours are more difficult to breed, the black is always, and probably always will be, the most liked, as no other colour shows off the wattle to such advantage. If it be desired to breed such birds as we have described, then, in Black Barbs, let first of all the cock be the black, yet, if *possible*, his beak all white, or rather pale flesh-colour. We say if possible, for such are not common; and if the lower mandible be pale, and the upper one only stained on the top, this will do nearly as well. Put him to a hen, if such can be obtained, with a good beak; this last being as we have seen a leading property, and to be much studied in both cock and hen, but more especially in the cock. The next quality will, of course, be width and *shape* of skull; and this in perfection is so rare, that at all times, when a bird of either sex offers at a fair price possessed of the square, parallel, well-chiselled formation already described, and illustrated in Figs. 49 to 52, we would strongly advise its being secured, if the purse allows, to strengthen the

stud, this being the *most* valuable of all the properties, so that we would even be satisfied with less substance in beak to secure an extraordinary good skull. The skull and a good beak we would therefore look for most in the cock; and as these points are very apt to be accompanied, say with some deficiency of wattle behind the eye, we would look for a hen to correct this fault. One very usual plan is to match the Black cock to another Black; and this very often answers well if the hen really has the points the other bird lacks; but it is so seldom we see Black hens not themselves faulty in eye-wattle, that it is not easy to match Blacks well. If we *had* a Black hen really good in skull, wattle, and colour of beak, she would be a capital match; and we would even risk the closest relationship for a really first-rate match, though not repeating it. It is, however, very rarely indeed such matches can be found, the Blacks being more than any colour liable to the faults both of pinch eye and dark beak. For the improvement of either or both these, then, with a Black cock thus faulty but fine in skull, we would select a Dun hen, this colour generally having a much softer and more regular eye-wattle, and very often also a wider and better class of skull than the Black hens, and almost invariably white beaks. Hence a Dun hen, besides producing a good black feather, is *almost* always the best match that can be found for a Black cock. The colour of the Dun matters little; if it be dark she will be very likely to produce pairs of Blacks in the nest, while if of a very light Dun, there may perhaps be both Duns; and if of a medium shade, there may probably, as with Carriers, be a black and a dun in each nest, the cock in the case we suppose being almost always the black one. Few Dun Barbs are, however, so light as average Dun Carriers, many being nearly black, and hence breeding more Blacks than Duns, which is another reason why the breeder need not fear using Duns, even if he does not care for the colour compared with Black. Most of the best Black cocks we know have been produced by this match of a Black cock with a finely-wattled and good-skulled Dun hen.

There are very few Dun cocks in comparison to the Blacks; but those few are, as a rule, very good. Their superiority lies more particularly in eye and skull properties, but they are seldom so good in thickness of beak, or have so much jew-wattle. For these reasons we would match them, if possible, to suitable Black hens, which are more apt to be faulty in eye-wattle and form of skull, but better in beak and beak-wattle, each supplying the deficiencies of the other, and at the same time keeping up the desired pale colour in the beak, and preserving the beak-wattle from that particularly unsightly fault of a black tinge. Of course in either of these matches we do not mean that it is any use *merely* to match black with dun because they are those colours, but solely to mate such properties as we have described. The great thing to avoid in breeding Blacks together is not to match on any account two birds *both* having black or even stained beaks.

If a Dun cannot be had, and a good Red can, by all means breed it to the Black, as all Reds have white beaks, and will besides greatly improve the *colour* of the eye-wattle, which the Dun does not. For this reason, if a Red of equal quality can be had, we would even prefer it to the Dun, the deep scarlet of the wattle, which almost always proves soft in texture, being a point adding greatly to the appearance of any bird. It is, however, very difficult to get a really good Red hen, owing to their being not much used for breeding with Blacks. The commonest fault in Red hens is absence of the coveted form and substance of beak, and this we suppose is the reason they are little used. With more Reds to choose from, however, this would no doubt mend, and as they are mostly good in eye-wattle, we hope to see the cross more used, as the most likely means of seeing more really good Red Barbs. It is singular that while the Barb, owing to the many crosses of colour, "sports" more than almost any pigeon, so that we have seen almost every colour produced from one pair during the same season, we can hardly, if indeed ever, remember to have seen a Red yet all over of the proper colour, there being always some variation from the rump to

the tail, besides which the quills of the tail-feathers are almost always stained as it were with dirty black. There may not unlikely be also a white splash or two in the tail; and we can suggest no better means for getting rid of these faults than the steady crossing of the Black with the Reds. To correct white feathers in the tail of a good Red, we would advise even a black-beaked Black, nearly all dark-beaked birds being harder in feather, and thus more likely to cause the disappearance of the foul marks, and even to make the Red itself more uniform throughout the body.

In either the Dun or Red cross, there is very little fear of getting faulty-coloured eyes, as either colour is scarcely ever seen with the orange eye, and we might say never with a dark beak —at least, we can never remember seeing such.

We come next to the Yellow. Many fanciers would put this colour before the Black as more difficult to breed, but we agree with Mr. Jones as to the comparative rank, the Black being so much more attractive. It is also to be remembered that all Yellows of the right colour are indebted to the Blacks for their colour, it being hopeless to breed really deep-coloured yellow birds from almost any of the Reds at present accessible. In fact—and, as in other cases, it is facts which we have observed that in all cases guide our opinion—all the best Yellows we ever yet met with were bred by crossing with the Black. Of course there are birds *called* Yellows that are at best only a poor mealy colour; but a true-coloured bird, the same colour on the rump as on the shoulders, is not only a most beautiful bird if good in skull properties, but, as far as we have seen, *never* fails to have a bright, deep-coloured, coral-red eye-wattle; whereas the pale feather is often accompanied by a pale wattle. This class of bird usually owes its faults to the poor colour of the Reds from which they were bred. To breed good Yellows, then, get if possible a good Yellow cock, which is generally far more easy than to get a good hen; but endeavour especially to get one with a good massive beak, since if this be wanting in the cock, a *hen* good enough in that point to make up for it can hardly be expected. Hence it will be best to choose the Yellow cock young and the hen older, in order to get his beak at its best. We lay stress on this point, because, as Yellows are very apt to fail in beak, it is the more needful to use every means in order to avoid losing so fine a property. Then mate him with a black hen of good properties, older than the cock, by which the yellow will be likely to predominate. At best, however, there will be very few Yellow pairs produced; still there will be more yellow birds than if a Yellow hen and Black cock is employed; though this, too, will sometimes breed many yellow birds when the hen is young and vigorous. If the cock cannot be got with a thick beak, then the black hen must be chosen with the more care as being good in that point; and Blacks having the best beaks of all, a good match can generally be found. Real deep Yellows may be bred together; but though *good* Reds would be the best cross of all, we cannot recommend the use of such Reds as are actually to be found at present, and consider the Black cross far preferable. There is, however, one cardinal precaution, which is, never to use in such a cross a black bird with a *black beak*, as we have found such nearly always imparts bad colours, the young coming chequered Duns and other bastard colours instead of rich Blacks and Yellows. Some of these faulty-coloured birds are useful in breeding, especially in breeding back to black; but there is always much uncertainty when once they get into a strain as to what they will breed.

The cross of a Black cock and Yellow hen may also be employed. And when by careful matching, and crossing with the richest Blacks, or otherwise, really *good* Reds can be had, they also may be bred to the Yellows with benefit. Both the latter colours have the advantage over the Black that they make up more quickly, and are less liable to have faulty-shaped eye-wattles.

White Barbs are, as a rule, much inferior to all the other colours, in all the characteristic

points, save colour of eye-wattle, which, as a rule, is a brilliant coral red. We cannot, as we write, remember to have seen more than *one* really good pair; that is, good enough to compare, *as Barbs*, with exhibition birds of other colours; and this pair was a chance product or "sport" from Blacks and Duns. Pure Whites generally breed true; but the other colours are so far from fixed, that any one desiring to improve a strain of Whites could readily do so by procuring as good a young White cock as possible, and mating him to a light, *soft* Dun. Some of these light-coloured Duns are really extraordinary in head properties; and as such a hen would probably breed, if not Whites, several birds with a great deal of white, suitable for matching to Whites again, the fancier would soon get what he wanted; and after the pure colour was once got, all difficulty would be over. Blacks more or less marked with white are also to be had, and are suitable for the purpose. We cannot say, however, that in our opinion the white would be so attractive as other colours, lacking the fine contrast which gives such beauty to especially the Black Barb.

As regards general points in breeding, if more wattle is desired, we would advise breeding together of old or matured parents; for it is found, as in all wattled pigeons, that the progeny of birds which are fully developed in their own wattles soonest develop their own. It may be too much to say that if a young and old pair be of the same quality, the progeny of the old pair will ultimately have more wattle; but we should certainly expect them to show it sooner. In breeding for shortness of face and beak, the general mode is to select the *smaller* specimens, by which unusually short-faced birds can soon be secured, while, on the contrary, such will not present the *width* of skull desired in a Barb. For these reasons it often happens that birds extraordinary in both properties are more often produced from a small and short-faced parent mated with a fine, large, wide-skulled, but rather long-faced one, than from the medium birds; and the crossing of one with the other is therefore advisable. A *thin* beak is, however, to be refused at any price. The size and development of a bird also depends much on whether one or two birds are reared in a nest, a single one reared by good feeders often becoming too large and coarse, while, on the other hand, if a pair be brought up by poor nurses, they will be stinted, and never become what they really might have been, well nourished; thence, again, their real good quality may be dormant, yet come out when breeding with stronger birds.

The Barb being a wattled pigeon, its diseases are generally very similar to those of the Carrier, and are to be treated in the same way. It has the same liability to canker in the ear and about the head, and needs the same protection against draughts, and a similar watch kept from time to time upon the condition of its eyes and eye-wattles. In *good* Barbs, it will often be found that about the age of three months, when the first moult begins, is a critical period, the bird either appearing roupy or dwindling away without any apparent cause. If a capsule of cod-liver oil be given every other day, it will generally bring the young birds safely through, and it is as well to do so, whether the birds appear ill or not, if the moulting time happens to occur in chill or damp weather. Pills of tallow, given once a day for a week or two, have somewhat the same effect.

Barbs need little preparation for exhibition. A careful washing will bring out all the honest colour there is in the eye-wattle, and any *dyeing* (which is beyond doubt sometimes practised) is at the exhibitor's peril. Sometimes a few ragged feathers project over the outside of the eye-wattle, and they may be removed without much wrong, as injuring neatness; there is fortunately no inducement to go beyond this, as diminishing the apparent width of skull. The legs, of course, will be carefully washed. We have seen some eye-wattles much cut

and carved; but the signs of what had been done were very evident. When the birds are fed from hoppers, the upper mandible will overgrow the under one; and this overgrowth must be removed from time to time, not only for show, but that the bird may preen itself properly. To attempt more is not only wrong, but will be found useless. Care will of course be taken to get the plumage in the best condition; and beyond this we do not know of anything that can assist in exhibiting Barbs, except that after washing the head of a black Barb, and whilst still wet, a *very little* butter—a mere trace—may be rubbed in with the corner of a towel, afterwards carefully endeavouring, as it were, to rub it all off again. If there is enough used to be perceptible, it is a ridiculous failure; but if not, the lustre of the plumage is refreshed after the washing, and the coral red of the wattle better brought out in contrast. We do not see that this can be called fraudulent; but whether or not, it is practised by all exhibitors. Only the head should be treated in this way.

JUDGING BARBS.—We have already given our general views so fully, that no remark is needed to explain the scale of points, except that all colours may be judged alike except white. This variety should count no points for colour of body when judged *as* Whites; but if judged against other colours may count them fairly, in order to make up for the difficulty in getting head-points. That is, although a White Barb deserves no points merely for body-colour, which gives no difficulty, it may fairly be allowed two points in judging against others; so that if a White and Black Barb were really equal in head, the White should have the prize, owing to the rarity and difficulty of producing such quality; so long at least as good Whites are so rare.

POINTS FOR JUDGING BARBS.

Beak: shortness, 3; shape, or equal fulness in both mandibles, 3; colour, 3; down-face, 1	10
Beak-wattle: regularity on each side, 3; fulness in front, 2; jew-wattle, 2	7
Skull: width, 3; squareness, or parallelism from front to back, 4	7
Eye-wattle: size, 3; regularity or circular shape, 4; thickness at edges, 2; colour, 1	7
Colour of eye: pearl or white round the pupil	3
Size of body	2
Thickness of neck	1
Length of flights and tail (proper medium)	1
Legs: shape and position	1
Depth of colour of body	1
Plumage and condition	2
	42



Vincent Brooks Day & Son. lith

RED & YELLOW JACOBINS.

CHAPTER XV.

THE JACOBIN.

THIS is a very ancient variety, both in England and on the Continent, the name of both the perfect variety and sub-varieties (such as Capuchin) evidently related to it, conclusively showing that the origin of all alike was the resemblance of the white head under the hood to the shaven head covered by a cowl. Moore describes it as follows, after mentioning what he calls the Capuchine and the Ruff as evidently related to or derived from it:—

"The Jacobine, or, as it is vulgarly called for shortness, 'the Jack,' is, if true, the smallest of all pigeons, and the smaller still the better. It has a range of feathers inverted quite over the hinder part of the head, and reaching down on each side of the neck to the shoulders of the wings, which form a kind of fryer's hood; from hence this pigeon has its name Jacobine, because the fathers of that order all wear hoods to cover their bald crowns: hence the upper part of this range of feathers is called the hood, and the more compact these feathers are, and the closer to the head, so much the more this bird is esteemed. The lower part of this range of feathers is called by us the chain, but the Dutch call it the cravat. The feathers of this chain ought to be long and close, so that if you strain the neck a little, by taking hold of the bill, the two sides will lap over each other in some of the best; but there are but very few now to be found in England compleat. The Jacobine ought to have a very short bill, the shorter the better, and a clear pearle eye. As for the feather, there are reds, yellows, blues, blacks, and mottles; but be the feather what it will, they ought to have a clear white head, white flight, and white tail. Of these pigeons some are feather-legged and footed, others are not, and both sorts are equally esteemed, according to the various inclination of different fanciers."

So far Moore, from whom it is quite plain that except the allowance of either feathered or bare legs, the best pigeons known in his time were, in all but one point, practically the same as now known. That point is the *mane*, the want of which is proved not only by all absence of even mention of it, but by the preference shown for *extreme* smallness of size, which, as we shall presently state, is incompatible with great excellence in mane. Having, then, noted this difference between the ancient and modern pigeon as interesting, we proceed without further preface to describe the Jacobin of the present day.

We have always considered the Jacobin the first in rank among *Toy* pigeons, as they are called, having, as before said, taken the Barb out of that category altogether. We do so both because of its great intrinsic beauty, and the number of properties apart from mere colour which are required to constitute a first-class bird: in this last respect there is but one other bird which can be compared with it—the improved or Russian Trumpeter. This high excellence is chiefly the work of English breeders; for though, after comparing old Moore with Mr. Brent (who spent much time in Germany) and others, it seems to us most probable the breed originated on the Continent, no one can deny the immense advance in nearly all points effected by the fanciers of England, and we can safely say we have never seen a single imported specimen which could be

even compared with good English birds as regards fitness for the show-pen. This arises chiefly from the best Continental birds only being bred to the old type as described by Moore, where smallness is made so much of, and no mention is made of mane at all. Hence these foreign birds have generally nice round heads and short thick beaks—both qualities without which no bird can be considered first-class—but are almost always deficient in hood, mane, and chain; and surely no thorough fancier can ever admit that two such qualities as the first, however good, and which are easily enough obtained alone, should be allowed to compensate for the want of those special properties from which the bird derives its very name. They give certainly the finish to a good bird; but as the properties of a Barb or Carrier lie almost entirely in the head, so nine-tenths of the beauty of a Jacobin lie in hood, mane, and chain, which we would place in the order named.

Many fanciers, following Moore, repeat that a Jacobin cannot be too small in size. We must say at once that we consider this a great error, only to be tolerated at a time when the properties were but half developed as they now appear; for it will be found impossible in an exceedingly small bird to get the properties above named in any such marked degree as is necessary to present a really striking appearance. Many say, for instance, that the bird should be as small as an Almond Tumbler. Now, we have seen and bred numbers of such, but in no one case did we find one with really fine Jacobin properties, for the simple reason that such small birds never have *feathers long enough* to show these properties. At the most, they may look well while held in the hand, as the feathers being so short may show much *regularity* of growth, and thus make the hood nice and close to the head. The feathers also forming the chain may be similarly regular, and even meet together for perhaps half way up from the bottom; but for the chain to meet together even under the throat is one of the difficulties of the breeder, and there the small bird will fail, the length of feather not being sufficient for it; besides which the cheek-feathers projecting outwards may keep the feathers from meeting. To remedy this we have seen the projecting cheek-feathers, or whiskers, as some call them, removed before showing, so as to allow the chain to come closer in front; and in some cases we have seen some of these extra small birds so good, that with this assistance it would meet, or nearly so, and some even without it, being, in fact, all that could be desired in chain, though this is rare. But even such birds have failed in the hood, though pretty and close-fitting, not coming forward over the head nearly so far as is desired. And above all, even if, as just now stated, the bird did look nice when in hand as regards these points, as soon as liberated it would in every case—for in this point we never knew *one* exception—show little or no *mane*, a point now so highly valued, though never mentioned in the old descriptions. All its good qualities appear in a front view, and especially in hand, but as soon as let loose the weak point appears.

While, then, we would certainly give preference to the small specimens as soon as they can be produced good enough in the main Jacobin properties, we can never agree to sacrifice these for mere size, which, after all, is chiefly a sign of too much in-breeding, and gives not the slightest difficulty in dwarfing at any time. The Jacobin, in fact, is such a vigorous bird that it will usually bear a great deal of in-breeding, and we have produced in this way some birds nearly as small as Foreign Owls, and which showed very fair Jacobin properties for their size; but when put beside really grand medium-sized specimens their inferiority was apparent at once. In fact, we reached the views we have now expressed through experience. Knowing the good constitution of the birds, and the little difficulty in rearing, we wondered at the few good specimens, and began to try what we could do ourselves. Like most other fanciers, we began with the extra-small specimens; but before the end of our first season changed the system, and procured some large-sized birds having plenty of the chief Jacobin points of hood, mane, and chain, though too long in beak and large in

body. This we remedied by crossing with the best small specimens, getting the best young ones towards the end of the season, those bred early being generally too coarse for show purposes. This was the foundation of our best Jacobins, which were equal, if not superior, to any then known. The second season we produced birds which far exceeded even our own expectation, one pair of which we had the honour of supplying to Her Most Gracious Majesty after winning with them at Birmingham. Such, in fact, was the quality of the strain thus originated, that from a cock bred by this identical royal pair we bred Blacks with a black hen, Reds with a red hen, and Yellows with a yellow hen of such merit, that this one bird's produce in three years, with the final sale of himself, realised the sum of £170. Several of his progeny won first honours at the principal shows, and it is well known that most of the best specimens at the present time are descended from this very pigeon. We mention this principally to show the great value of a really well-bred bird, and the usefulness of birds even much too large, for crossing with small ones to make up the latter's deficiencies; and by this means judiciously employed, with the fanciers now at work on this beautiful pigeon, we quite expect yet to see even small birds with all the qualities desired, when we need not say we should prefer them.

The first point in a Jacobin, then, is *hood;* and this is to some extent connected with the form of skull, for which reason it will be convenient to take them together. The head should be large compared with the size of the bird, and somewhat resemble in shape that of the Short-faced Tumbler, from which probably its character was derived, being broad and round, and rising well up in the front, and nicely arched from eye to eye. Many birds will be found to have a wide and flat skull somewhat like that of a Dragoon, which is called "mousey-faced," and makes the bird look much longer in face than it really is. Age adds much to the size of the head, as in all pigeons, but still if the form be not what we have described at the age of say ten months, it will never become so afterwards. When the skull is of the right shape, it is generally accompanied with the further good point of a short, thick, and nicely-shaped beak, inclined to be decidedly "down-faced," which increases the effect of the hood, whereas the flat-skulled bird, generally long also in beak, and straight in the face, never shows off the hood well, even if good, which it seldom is; whereas, when the skull is of the proper shape, it is almost always accompanied by a nice close-fitting hood. This should lie close, and come as far forward as the front of the eyes on each side, so that the hand can be placed over the hood without the bird seeing it; and lastly, should appear even and unbroken at the edges, and especially the front. It generally is found so in a good-headed bird, the only thing to be dreaded being a few feathers which will sometimes grow rather twisted just at the root of the hood feathers, and appear to come through them, or at least to prevent their lying close down on the head. To avoid these, many fanciers pluck such feathers out before exhibiting, and others cut them off close to the root, so as to allow the hood to lie down. The latter can always be detected by passing the finger over the suspected places, when the stumps of the feathers will be felt unless cleanly shaved off; but the best manner of detecting such trickery is to take the beak between the finger and thumb, and then making the finger and thumb of the other hand into a sort of loop, draw it over the head and neck, so as to "scrape" the plumage backwards. By this means the roots of the hood feathers are exposed, and it will be seen at once if the bird has been robbed of any, which we have seen done to such an extent that the whole back of the head was bare under the hood, so as to allow this to lie close. The long-faced birds, again, are mostly deficient in closeness and neatness of feather; so that even when, as often happens, they have good length and quality of feather in hood, mane, and chain, they seldom or never look nicely finished when let out of the hand, the edges then appearing loose, unfinished, and ragged.

The *mane* and *chain* must be considered together. The former, as we have seen, is a modern "finish" to the bird, and formerly, no doubt, the parting of the neck and shoulder feathers, one part growing forwards in continuation of the hood, and forming a kind of ruffle irresistibly reminding the beholder of certain Elizabethan costumes, and the other pointing backwards, was all that was required. It is scarcely or ever that a bird with good head and hood fails in "chain," which is now understood to denote the front portion of the parted feather. The perfection of this chain is, first, to come as low down the shoulders as possible, some small specimens leaving off with it little more than half-way down the neck; and secondly, for the feathers to be so long and so forward in their set, that the two sides *meet* together in front, from almost directly under the throat all down to the bottom. This can hardly be if the chain feather is either short or deficient in "set." Again, it must not only be so, but to make a first-class bird must be even on each side,

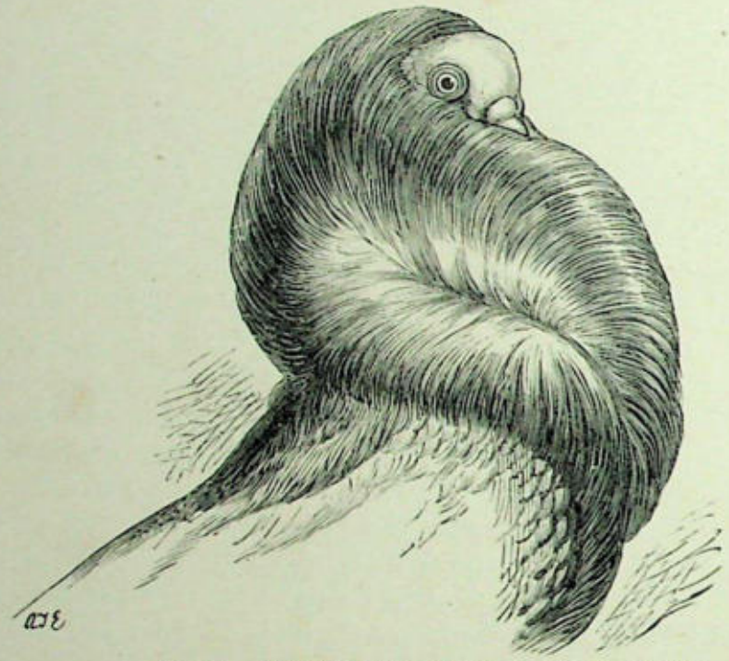


Fig. 54.—PERFECT HEAD, HOOD, MANE, AND CHAIN.

and so well filled up and *regular* in growth as to show a tolerably smooth and even edge, free from gaps or raggedness. When all is tolerably perfect, the effect is as if the head were closely encased in the hood and upper portion of the chain, which meets under the chin, and the apparent breadth or thickness of the neck, chain and all, when viewed in front, will not exceed one inch. Faulty birds, on the contrary, and especially some of the long-headed ones, either from the chain feathers being too short (which is the usual reason in very small birds) or not well set forward, show an open space down the breast between the two sides of the chain. Of course we do not mean that even a good bird never shows a glimpse of it; still the feathers should *about* meet, while the faulty ones will show a gap of an inch or more. To remedy this many cut or pluck some of the inside feathers, which allows the chain to meet closer; and according to Moore, some of the old fanciers used even to cut out a *strip of skin* down the centre of the breast between the two sides of the chain, and then stitch the edges of the wound together, which of course would draw the chain closer together; but we much doubt if this ever met with much success, since the effect of the scar "drawing" would almost certainly be to make the chain very ragged, crooked, and

uneven. Perhaps the old fanciers were less particular in these finer points of regularity and evenness than we are now; at all events, we know from experience that *no* artificial means can make a bad bird really equal in appearance to a high-class one, in the eyes of any judge who fairly understands the variety; and on the other hand, birds are bred now with chains so much better than in Moore's time, that such operations are really not needed, plenty of stock being obtainable which requires nothing of the kind. These are, however, almost always long-faced; and we have only seen very few indeed of the short-faced birds which were quite satisfactory in chain.

On the other hand, some of the long-faced and otherwise faulty birds often excel in one point in which the short-faced are, conversely, apt to fail, viz., the *mane*. This is also the great fault of the very small specimens. The mane is formed by the feathers which grow towards the



Fig. 55.—Long Head, Faulty Hood, and Short Chain, showing no Mane.

back, growing out so full, and so falling into what we may call the *sweep* of the chain and hood, as to form a full crest, in place of the notch which is seen in poorly feathered birds, formed by the parting of the feathers. It is not easy further to describe this feature, but we think all the foregoing remarks will be understood by comparing Figs. 54 and 55; where Fig. 54 shows the Jacobin points as desired, with hood, mane, and chain well developed and finished, and with a short head and good carriage, and Fig. 55 represents a long-headed bird, with hood loose and irregular, and no mane. It will be seen how the notch or hollow behind of the faulty bird is replaced in the model one, and in our plates, by the full crest or mane formed by the abundant growth of feathers behind. The more depth to the back of this mane the better, and in a first-class bird it will be as much sometimes as four inches from the front of the chain to the back of the mane. It is not, however, so hard to get sufficient depth of feather as to get the proper shape, which is termed by some, especially Manchester fanciers, the "hog-mane." It is wanted as full or convex as possible; smooth and even at the crest, not ragged or irregular; and thin, like a piece of paper folded, and not thick from side to side. It is strange that this grand property is oftenest seen in perfection on

large coarse birds, having no other good quality; and when all really is combined as in our figure—the neat close hood, the chain meeting nearly under the beak, and keeping almost close all down the front, the mane reaching far back and well-filled up in a neat uniform curved crest, and all the feathers nicely lying on each other, so as to look almost as if cut out—when all this is seen on a small, or even medium-sized bird, the result is a most beautiful pigeon, which all can admire, even if not fanciers; but such is seldom seen. On the other hand, all the faults in Fig. 55 are seldom seen together either, and in particular a good mane is often seen on a bird with just such a long, coarse head; but we collect the faults in one drawing for the sake of convenience.

If these points are good, there will be seen another property called the *rose*. This is formed by the parting of the feather at the mane and chain, showing the light under-fluff; and the perfection of it is for the feathers to spring evenly and smoothly as from a common centre, showing as much of the light fluff as possible. This will also be seen on reference to our plates, or to Fig. 54. It cannot be seen to any perfection except with good carriage; and, in fact, as it depends upon and presupposes a high degree of excellence in the preceding points, and cannot be dissociated from them, is itself a very fair indication of a good bird.

Such are the properties which really constitute the Jacobin. We have not by any means described ideals; for though such birds are rare, and we cannot say we have yet seen them on such *very* small specimens as some admire, we have not stated anything but what we have repeatedly seen, and now possess of our own breeding, on really neat and compact birds; except that we must confess that we have hardly seen quite such good mane as here drawn, unless on rather coarse specimens. We have next to describe what more is required to set off these, the essential properties; and as the bird is to some extent one of colour and marking, we will, for convenience, take as our text our chief favourite, the Black, both because it has been of late so much improved, and that it shows the contrast and points of colour so strikingly. We may note the curious fact, by the way, that a black Jacobin, when it *is* black, is far the best of all black pigeons, even the Magpie not equalling its colour in intensity and green lustre. And we are not sure the same might not be said of the Red.

But to resume. There can be no doubt that the Jacobin, as we have him, was produced by crossing with the Baldhead Tumbler, and the head *should* be the same marking as that bird, namely, white to just the bottom edge of the eyelash, going in a straight line from here to the bottom of the beak. This, as in the other case, is called being "high-cut;" and some fanciers place so much value on it, that they think nothing at all of even a good low-cut bird, which has often caused us to wonder greatly, especially when it has been so with some really good fanciers, whose ideas in general, we have been obliged to acknowledge, demanded every respect. For really three-quarters of the whole properties in this breed lie in the hood, mane, and chain; and to discard some of the *best* birds in these real Jacobin points for a mere fault of marking is what we cannot at all understand, and is at least contrary to all the principles on which we have treated *every* breed throughout this work—our guiding principle all through being to establish a fair value and balance of properties and no more, making absolute disqualification only of what is really destructive of, or at least highly injurious to, the breeding of the pigeon. Now a large portion—if not even a perceptible majority—of the best hood-mane-and-chain birds are low-cut; and not only so, but these birds are badly wanted to correct a far more glaring fault on the other side; for where is the fancier who confines himself to high-cut birds who is not constantly troubled with foul flights? Almost *every* high-cut Jacobin, in fact, is what is termed "too short" in flight feathers, or possesses, instead of ten white flights, some lesser number, even to as low as three or four only; and where is the fancier who will not readily admit that this fault is a far more conspicuous eyesore and more

difficult to breed out than mere low-cut marking? On the other hand, it is very seldom a low-cut bird is not good in both flights, and the fault is a great deal easier to get rid of than the otner; for faulty flights can seldom be bred out in less than three crosses at best, unless the breeder has recourse to the despised low-cut bird; and, indeed, we have known many fanciers who *never* could produce good flights in their lofts until they had recourse to this cross. We do not think there would be so much of this magnifying less important faults, either in Jacobins or other pigeons, but that when good fanciers get together, they will point out *every* fault in each other's birds, some from genuine appreciation, and not forgetting any merits it may have as well, and others from a little jealousy. This is all right enough; but there are almost always some listeners who really know nothing, but who suppose they have now got hold of a fault well worthy to be borne in mind (though perhaps of the slightest); and, grasping at it, on some subsequent occasion "air" the same remark as if emanating from themselves, and as if the fault *spoilt* the pigeon, which most likely the really good judge who had first uttered it never implied. There are plenty of these would-be authorities in the fancy, who seek to make a reputation for themselves by thus using up other people's remarks; but in most cases they spoil and *distort* them in repetition, and do much harm by making people think that what was only first spoken of as a blemish was tantamount to a disqualification, and thus discouraging and driving them out of the fancy. Equally culpable are those—and we have a certain anonymous writer who has systematically acted in this way, and drawn largely upon information derived from ourselves, particularly in view—who have, from the fact or suspicion that certain questionable practices are occasionally resorted to, and cannot always be discovered in the short time allowed for judging at a show, gone so far as to ape a kind of virtue for themselves, by accusing exhibitors and judges of *generally* practising or conniving at such things, and stating that "the honest exhibitor has no chance," which is simply either an ignorant or a wilful and deliberate falsehood. Either way, this narrow, evil-minded, carping, plagiarising spirit has done so much mischief, that these few words seem called for, and we hope may be self-applied by those whom they more particularly concern.

However, in itself the standard marking of the head is no doubt to be the "high-cut." Next comes the body, which should in our opinion be black, both over and under, back to the vent. This is the marking known as "dark-thighed," that is, the thighs the same colour as the body, a marking never seen on birds low-cut, and very seldom on one at all bad-coloured, so that it is a good sign of rich colour in either black, red, or yellow birds, as well as generally going along with the right head-marking.

Next come the flights, the colour of which is the most difficult part of all the markings. The desired colour of flights is readily to be found in coarse, common birds, but only rarely in grand specimens, and especially on *high-cut* birds. And as the flights are, next to the hood, mane, and chain, the most important features, we give some illustrations which will enable the reader more easily to see what is meant. The long flights should consist of *ten white feathers*, and in Fig. 56 we represent a perfect wing opened out, and so as to show how the outer and inner flight feathers turn in *opposite directions*, so that should a foul feather be fraudulently plucked it can be instantly detected, and any judge or purchaser deceived in this way really deserves no better. The next, Fig. 57, represents the flight far more frequently met with, especiallyin high-cut Jacks, namely, five of the outer flights white and five foul. We also represent in this figure another blemish which frequently accompanies it, though not always; namely, a foul feather among the *inner* flights, which should be all dark. This fault is, however, more often seen perhaps in low-cut birds, which have the outer flights right; but if in a good bird, some people will remove it as an eyesore, especially before exhibiting the bird. We say this is done by some; but as with many other of the

"dodges" named by us before, and with especial reference to the "honest exhibitor having no chance," as so often falsely represented, we have simply to say that it is the judge's own fault if he does not detect it, since he has only to open the wing and *count the flights*, unless, of course, it be just at the moulting season. Flights being a point of merit, it is the duty of every Jacobin judge thus to open and count the flights of any bird to which he gives an award, and every good judge does so; whence we would strongly advise the fancier to leave such a small blemish to the mercy of the judges, few of whom would attach very great weight to it, than to draw down on himself almost certain disqualification. Of course, in very equal birds the faulty feather would and ought to count, but it would seldom "throw out" a really grand Jacobin. Passing, however, from the foul inner flight, the class of outer flight shown in Fig. 57 is that to which we referred as "short-flighted," and which is so difficult to avoid in high-cut birds.

The next drawing, Fig. 58, shows a foul feather between the fifth and seventh flights, and is another fault often found in the high-cut birds, but rarely or never in the low-cut ones, just as we before saw in the Tumblers; the propensity to dark feather about the head coming out also in the wing, and the white flight with dark head being the difficulty.

Having shown these three flights opened out for examination, it will be as well to see them closed also, which is done in Figs. 59, 60, 61, so that the young amateur may know where to look for the fault on the bird in the pen. First of all it will be seen that in even the perfect flight only *eight* white feathers appear. This is simply because a young bird tucks up his wing so tightly, that only eight, or even seven, will show, and hence plucking one or two may pass so long as the bird is not handled; but opening out the wing will reveal the secret. But owing to this, two foul feathers only are not any great detriment to the appearance of a young bird, which tucks them up under the others, and we have seen even three feathers so hidden; but when the pigeon has bred two or three seasons, the wing becomes more slack, and the fault is seen even in one feather. Still, eight or more good flights, with other properties well developed, make a Jack by no means to be despised, though we must not regard as a standard less than "ten and ten" as in the Baldheads. In a case of actual competition, if a good bird had eight and nine a side, the remainder we would regard as probably the smallest fault the bird had, as probably scarcely appearing; but the *seventh* flight being foul would count far more seriously, as scarcely any bird can conceal it. This is seen in Fig. 60, where the really eighth feather, but apparently tenth, appears as foul in the closed wing; and we would again ask any fancier to look at such a wing, and again at a bird low-cut, and say if the wing is not by far the worst fault? If they disagree on this point, let them further try which fault is the *hardest to breed out*, and they will soon come round to our opinion. Finally, in Fig. 61, we see closed the same wing as in Fig. 58, which is even more objectionable, as being more conspicuous than the other, but which, like it, is also found in the high-cut, dark-thighed, and best coloured birds. Another singular point is, that the high-cut, dark-thighed birds here described are as a rule deficient in hood, mane, and chain. Hence to breed continually from them would be to risk the obliteration of the chief Jacobin points; and much, therefore, as we ourselves admire the high-cut marking, we feel bound to caution all breeders against placing too much value on it, and especially from depreciating or discarding the very birds which are most necessary to correct the faults with which it is so accompanied. We would certainly place more value upon good beak than upon mere high-cut marking.

The tail of the Jacobin, like the flights, should be white; but this point will give little difficulty.

There are also *whole-coloured* Jacobins, namely, birds which have flights and tail the same as the body. Some of these are very good Jacks, and the white bird in fact must be whole-coloured; but the want of marking is undoubtedly a great want of finish to the bird, and makes it of far

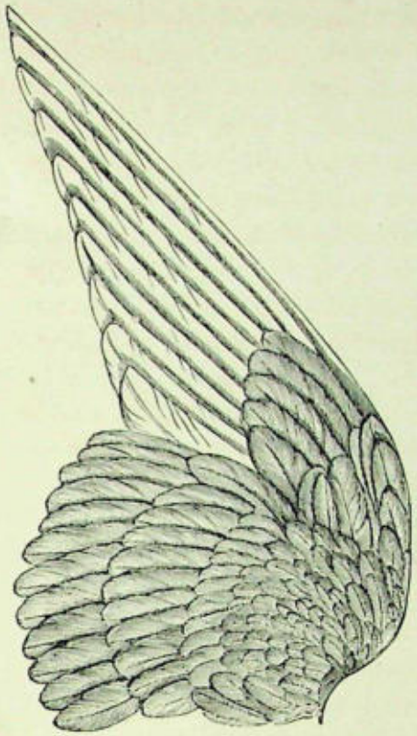


Fig. 56.
Ten Perfect Flights.



Fig. 57.
One Inner and Five of the Outer Flights foul.

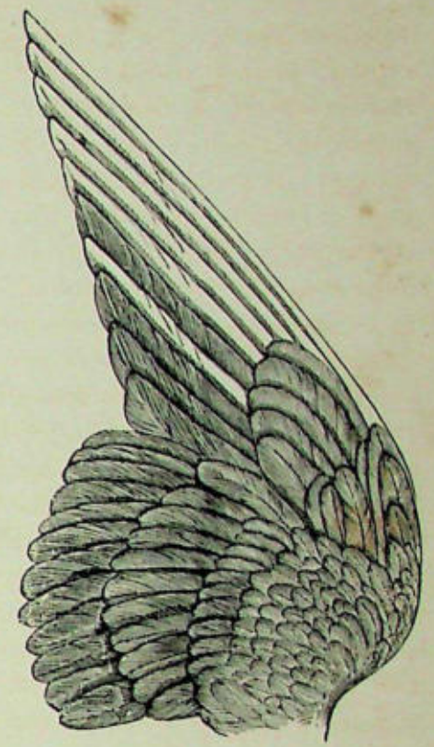


Fig. 58.
Sixth and last Three Flights foul.

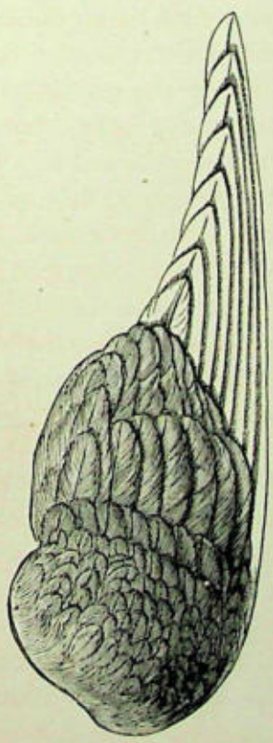


Fig. 59.
Perfect Wing closed.

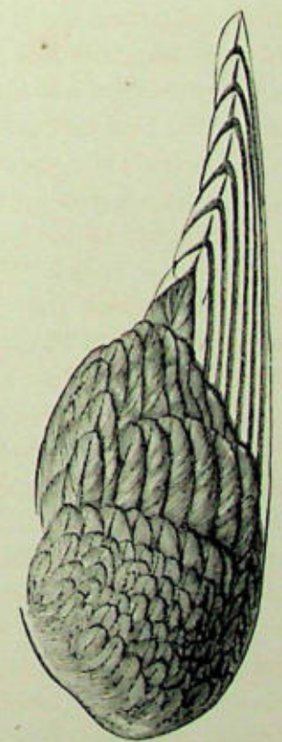


Fig. 60.
Three Foul Flights closed.



Fig. 61.
Flights as in Fig. 58 closed.

less beauty. Being also of much less difficulty to breed, we do not consider that whole-coloured or white birds should be allowed to compete on equal terms.

Low-cut birds are more or less white or clean-thighed, sometimes quite so; and some fanciers like this marking, while others consider it so great a fault, that no matter how good a bird may be possessing it, nor how bad one dark-thighed, they would throw out the clean-thighed bird. We need not repeat reasons already given why we cannot agree to this; but we may note the strong probability it adds to the belief of the Jacobin having been first produced by crossing the Baldhead with the Capuchin or some similar breed, and then developing hood and chain, some of the progeny taking after the clean thigh as well as head marking of the Baldhead, and others the dark thigh of the Capuchin. However this may be, and though we much prefer the dark thigh as so much removed from the Baldhead, and even prefer a bird high-cut, we can never, as some have done, rank a high-cut bird with dark thighs, but with foul flights and bad in hood, mane, and chain, over one fine in these points, but just low-cut and clean-thighed. Indeed, at one time the clean-thighed birds were fashionable, and as we have said, some admire them now. To find one perfectly clean-thighed is as difficult as to find one perfectly dark, but it would certainly be easily bred if wished. Were it not so we would as soon have it as the dark thigh, and almost even prefer it as far as looks go; but something is always to be allowed in a fancy pigeon for difficulty of production, which is on the side of the dark thigh. But either way, we would always wish for one *or* the other, and the greater part of the Jacobins to be seen at present are neither, but a mixture of both, which pleases neither party and is to be avoided. On the average, we certainly know the *best* birds we have seen in hood, mane, and chain have been clean-thighed and low-cut.

The eye of the Jacobin shows a black pupil surrounded by white or pearl. This colour, as in all short-faced pigeons, greatly improves the appearance of the head; but many birds, good in other points, have bull or broken eyes. These, or orange-eyes, would be with some judges a disqualification, and certainly we much dislike either. Still, we cannot agree with such extreme measures, having often noticed that birds so disfigured were apt to be the best in colour. We would simply allow it to tell fairly in competition, and judge the bird as a Jacobin, as with the other blemishes already mentioned. Moreover, a bull or gravel-eye can be got rid of in one judicious cross, and even the orange-eye in two, unless perhaps in deep Reds, which may take more time.

The colour of the beak should be pale or flesh-colour, except in whole-coloured Black birds. Some otherwise good birds have beaks rather stained, which, if not really black, is in our opinion of no great consequence. Blacks are very subject to a stain in the lower mandible.

The flights and tail should be *long* in comparison to the size of the body. This is, in fact, a *necessity* for a good Jacobin; for it will be readily seen that as a good length of feather is indispensable to form a good hood, mane, and chain, these points can hardly exist without the long feather also in flights and tail. Hence birds hatched early are apt to be the best in all these points, while, on the other hand, generally too large.

We like a bird to be rather tall on the legs, such birds being generally tight in feather; and a Jacobin at all loose in feather can never look well. Birds never look so well, in fact, as just after the first moult, when all the plumage is at its best; though, as regards colour and head, the old bird looks better. Longish legs also allow of a nice upright carriage, which sets off the peculiar points to better advantage, not only in mane and chain, but even the flights are better carried.

So much for what a Jacobin is or should be. Much of what we have said will give some assistance in matching for the breeding-pen; but we must now add a little particularly on that subject; and we will begin with the Blacks, as generally most efficient in the essential properties except perhaps the Blue, which is still worse, being as a rule inferior in hood, mane, chain, and

rose, to the Reds, Yellows, and Whites. Of course the White can show no true rose, which requires two colours to make it evident; still the formation is there; but the Black, too, owing to the fluff being dark like the body, often shows little of it, and hence loses a great beauty, since the contrast of white under fluff shows off colour as much as the white head. We have seen, however, some Black Jacobins with nearly white rose, so that we think the reason of not having it is simply not trying to get it. We should advise, then, the seeking first a good-coloured Black cock, by which we mean a deep raven colour, and showing no bluish or other different colour throughout, particularly on the belly and thighs, and with just as good Jacobin points as can be got with this. Such a bird should be matched to a deep-coloured Red or Yellow hen, but either of these *must* be true in colour, not washed out or mealy. If the hen can also be got dark-thighed, so much the better; and Reds and Yellows are *particularly* apt to be neither one nor the other, but a mixture of the two. Such birds are so very apt to breed an unsightly chequer sort of colour on both belly and thighs, that rather than risk it we would far prefer either one or both birds to be fairly and really clean-thighed. In fact, while we would far prefer both dark thighs, if this could not be we would next choose both clean thighs; but failing either would choose one bird with perfectly dark, and the other perfectly clean, thighs. If both parents are really good colours the progeny will almost always be the same, and frequently one of each; but sometimes what is called a "strawberry" colour will be produced, which would be more correctly termed a sandy, and is often intermixed with small black ticks through the feathers. These may be bred back to the Blacks if good enough in Jack points to be worth while; and, of course, if the breeder gets at once what he wants he has no more to do than go on his way rejoicing, breeding the best of his Blacks to the Black again, so as to get the colour true, the use of the Red in this case being not so much to gain colour as to impart hood, mane, and chain, which the Red chosen *must* have plenty of. This is why Red usually makes the best cross; and if even build, or close and neat formation be wanting, let there at least be *plenty* of it, this being where the Black, though usually very neat and trim, is deficient. The imperfectly coloured birds spoken of above as often produced by the first cross are also very frequently fine in these points, and hence valuable for breeding again to Blacks. Often, also, Reds are produced with black ticks; and these are not only valuable for breeding to the Blacks, but if bred to the Red generally improve that colour too, resulting in a splendid deep Red. If crossed with very faulty-coloured Reds they sometimes produce Duns; but these, too, are very useful in crossing with Blacks, provided the Dun be not chequered, when the result is unsatisfactory, being usually black, barred or chequered with an inferior or duller shade.

In crossing with the Yellow instead of the Red, the greatest risk is that of getting some of the yellow feather intermixed through the black, something like a Kite Tumbler. Of course such birds do not look well, and are useless for showing themselves; but crossed again with Blacks they breed beautiful colour, and in fact the most lustrous Blacks we can remember were so bred. So that we would just as willingly use a Yellow as a Red for breeding Black Jacobins; and consider the only reason there are so few good Blacks to be met with is owing to the constant breeding together of Blacks alone, which are, as we have said, generally deficient in Jack points. Blacks constantly bred together are peculiarly apt to be stained in beak and "short-flighted"—only four or five on each side; which fault, too, is most easily corrected by the red or yellow cross, which most frequently possess the proper number of flights of any colour. It is also to be observed that such Reds and Yellows themselves as are bred from this cross are generally of splendid colour, much better than when bred to their own colour; the cross producing even in Yellows a lustre which the Red cross itself does not impart to that colour.

We come next to Reds. which are most generally bred with Yellows, so as to get progeny



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith.

JACOBINS.

BLUE. WHITE. BLACK.

of each colour. The yellow thus bred is of course very good, but the red, as we have so often seen in other breeds, of course loses. On this account, unless the Yellow bird was really wanted to improve some other point, we would rather breed the Reds to themselves if we could find suitable matches. We would do the same with Yellows until the progeny began to come too pale; and to avoid this as long as possible, carefully avoid breeding together two *young* birds, which, as we have before remarked in this work, causes the yellow to become too pale much sooner than if the same birds were bred from when mature. Always therefore match a young bird to an old one, the younger, if possible, being the hen; and in the case of Reds, which improve more than any other colour with age, breed if possible two mature birds together, which will both produce better colour and also better heads and beaks. And when crossing is required, either Red or Yellow may be crossed with a rich Black, as before noted.

Whites of course have not and cannot have the same attractive qualities as the other colours, and in fact in scarcely any variety has white any right to contend on an equality with other colours which present any difficulty in marking. Whites have originally, no doubt, "sported" from Reds and Yellows, and hence have often very fine Jacobin qualities, which make them attractive. No one has done so much for the improvement of White Jacobins as Mr. Van Haansbergen, of Newcastle, some of whose specimens have left scarcely anything to desire; and indeed we scarcely know of one *good* White at the time we write which does not owe its origin to this gentleman's strain. It is a beautiful sight to see in one pen four *good* pairs, one of white, one black, one yellow, and one red; when the white seems to set off all the others, and each borrows attraction from the rest. To show the vigorous constitution of the Jacobin, and how much may be done by judicious breeding, we may state that to the best of our belief all Mr. Van Haansbergen's strain came from *one* pair claimed at a Glasgow show, and which we believe were the produce of some Reds. The great difficulty in breeding Whites is to keep up the hood, mane, and chain, with the *pearl eye;* white Jacobins, like all other white pigeons, being so subject to bull-eyes. It is strange that if an otherwise white bird have even a few foul feathers on its body, it will often have nice pearl eyes; but if *really* white, there is the difficulty, and very few indeed are the Whites with pearl eyes which do not owe a little to a "sudden moult." To improve Whites we should advise matching one *pure* white—no matter if bull-eyed—to a pale-coloured Yellow, and selecting the nearest to white for crossing back to the white parent. If another White can be got we would match it to another of the half-bred Whites, and keep on selecting till the produce was pure white. If again a *clear* red bird splashed on the body can be had, as it often can, we would gladly cross such too in with the Whites. It is in such ways the colour of eye is gained along with pure white body, and that hood, mane, and chain are kept up; and when these points are once got with really white plumage, the result is a most beautiful and much-valued Jack.

There are, as before said, whole-coloured Black Jacobins; but very few, if any, fancy them. Their breeding would give very little comparative difficulty.

We have never seen a really good Blue Jacobin. The difficulty is that there seems nothing to start with, beyond a cross with the blue Baldhead. We believe, however, that bad-coloured Blacks would produce blue-chequers, and a pair of these Blues. To improve the Blues can only be a work of time, though being the strongest feather, they would be easy to breed when once produced good.

It is often necessary to breed out faulty-coloured eyes in otherwise good-coloured birds. If the fault be a bull-eye, one cross with another good-coloured bird will often erase it; and, if not, re-crossing certainly will. The colour which gives most trouble to get rid of is the orange-eye. Should it be a Red with this fault, breed it to a Black or Yellow, but not to another Red, which

will often fail. In all cases, in fact, the fault, according to all our experience, is much easiest got rid of by crossing with *another* colour, and not to another even pearl-eyed bird of the same. Of course, no such bird would be bred at all unless it had other useful qualities; but grand properties in hood, mane, and chain are not to be rashly sacrificed for any other points.

To breed the essential Jacobin points to a high degree of perfection will require some degree of patience, unless the fancier has the good fortune to start with a much better stock than ordinary. He will usually have to mate one good bird with another much inferior, and then, by breeding back the best of the progeny, work to what he desires. In particular, it is especially difficult to get good *mane*, which, as we have hinted before, is very often, indeed generally, found best on very large, coarse birds with long beaks, and which possess scarce anything else. Match, then, such a big bird to a small specimen, which will almost certainly be wanting in mane, and probably also in even depth of chain from front to the centre of the rose, though very likely trim and neat in what it *has* got. Then select such of the progeny as nearest resemble the pattern given both in Fig. 54 and in our coloured plates, and re-cross again with another small pigeon as good as can be had; for it is wonderful the great amount of hood, mane, and chain which can be got by even *one* good cross with a large bird having plenty of feather, and more especially if bred early in the season, when all feather breeds strongest; and of course these Jacobin points depend very greatly from their very nature *upon* getting strength of feather, but on small instead of large, coarse birds, in which lies just the difficulty. Hence the crossing of the large, coarse, early-bred bird with the small one; by which means also constitution is kept up while still keeping down the size to at least a medium, which is what most of the best Jacobins are; and when an extra-small bird does happen to be thus produced, there is some chance of its being what is desired. The mane, however, has difficulties of its own. It is not so very hard, though not easy, to get abundance of feather in the desired place; but even when you have got that, it is too often loose and wild-looking, instead of smooth and close.

Most Jacobins of the present day have much too long beaks, more like Fig. 55 than Fig. 54. This, too, arises from the necessity of keeping up the grand points of hood, mane, and chain, the really short-faced birds being so often wanting in sufficient length of feather. And until we have enough of small or medium-sized short-faced birds we must not discard those with faulty beaks, but do our best by matching one to the other, to get what is required in both points. This is not so hard as might be expected, since it will be soon found that a short-beaked, down-faced bird does not really *require* such length of hood to make it look well as a long and straight-beaked bird. The one class of bird we would never breed is such as, besides faulty beak, has the hood rough and standing up, as in Fig. 55, unless for an unusually fine mane, which could not be got in any other way. To get all the points—and especially to get good mane without sacrificing the others—the breeder will, however, find tax all his skill; and whenever he does attain it, he will fully agree with us in placing the Jacobin at the head of all Toy pigeons. In fact, in our first edition we could not say we had ever seen quite so good mane as in our illustrations; but since then, so great has been the improvement, that we have seen as good mane with even better hood and chain. There are of late years so many clever breeders cultivating the Jack, and they have among them already improved it so much, even within our own recollection, that we fully expect ere long to see all that can possibly be wished for.

As we have said before, and whatever may be said by people who know nothing of the matter, there is *no* means of so "preparing a bird for exhibition" as to make a really bad Jacobin into a good one. There are sometimes to be found a few odd feathers which, growing awkwardly, prevent a really good hood from lying down as it should, and these can be readily removed. But

in saying "a few" we *mean* it, for although—as already explained—many and many a bird has been extensively trimmed all round the back of the head, any judge, with his senses about him, by simply drawing the head and neck through his thumb and finger as described, would—or at least ought to—instantly detect it, and is to blame if he does not. Similarly, a feather or two which may grow unkindly will sometimes greatly interfere, not so much with the whole development as with the smoothness of the chain; but here, too, only a little, and that on a really good bird, can be done. Some have said it is possible by a judicious use of hot iron after damping the feather, to "iron down" a bad hood, &c. It is often found that a really good hood, mane, or chain will have some little awkward place that *will* stand up ragged, and in such cases we can well believe a little ironing might bring it into place; but we are sure no hood not already really good can thus be made so. In fact, we may say once for all, that no one who intelligently understands what is wanted to make a good Jacobin as described by us, will ever be deceived by such artifices, or think of employing them beyond smoothing over or hiding such small blemishes as it must be held venial, if not innocent, thus to remove.

JUDGING JACOBINS.—Our general notions as to the judging of this pigeon will have been already gathered, and it is only needful to add the scale of points. In judging White Jacks against the coloured varieties, the white should lose all points for colour and markings, unless in cases where the prize was given for the best Jacobin irrespective of colour and markings; because neither the colour nor the markings are the *real* properties of the Jacobin, though they give the birds a more *finished* look, and, being of greater difficulty to produce, *should* be of more value.

Beak: shortness, 2; thickness, 2	4
Down-face	1
Head-size, 1; roundness, 2	3
Hood: size or length, 4; shape and close-fitting (without trimming), 4	8
Mane: shape and depth	4
Chain: closeness, length, and regularity	4
Rose: size, clearness, and regularity	2
Head-marking: high-cut	2
Correct number and evenness of flights	4
Dark thighs and vent	2
Colour of body	3
Colour of eye	2
Length of flights and tail	2
Size (smallness)	2
Carriage: upright and strutting	4
	47

CHAPTER XVI.

THE EXHIBITION ANTWERP.

FROM the composite bird developed by the fanciers of Belgium for flying purposes solely, is beyond doubt descended the Antwerp of the show-pen. In the original many races have mingled, and hence the characteristics of some of the very best performers differ widely; but one prevailing type, distinguished by a capacious skull and massive beak, has been most commonly found, and this has been developed and fixed by breeding till the type has become as invariable as any other. Such is the "Antwerp" proper, as distinguished from the mere "Homing Pigeon." By careful selection the shortish beak has become still shorter and more massive, and the skull still broader, till we have the highest type of show-bird, known as the "Short-faced Antwerp," which has of late years become a great favourite. Instead of describing the pigeon more minutely, however, we will at once proceed to the notes with which we have been kindly favoured by Mr. J. W. Ludlow, one of the oldest cultivators of this variety.

"As a show variety these birds are comparatively a new kind, for although as a breed the Antwerp has long been known and valued as a trusty messenger, it is not more than about twenty years since they were first acknowledged as worthy occupants of the exhibition pen; but since they have been deemed of value as show stock it is marvellous to what an extent the fancy for them has grown, and also remarkable the immense improvement which has taken place in the breed of late years. It is only a few years ago, when Antwerp fanciers were few and far between, and those who did discover meritorious properties in them were often derided for want of taste and discrimination in their selection; but now, to what a prodigious extent has the liking for them reached! No show, whether large or small, is complete without a well-filled Antwerp class; few fanciers are content unless they have a trial with them; until, at the present time, the number of Antwerps has become legion, and their admirers quite incalculable, and yet the fancy for them is still growing with remarkable rapidity; the passionate inclination for them seems both acute and contagious, and promises fair to extend to all sections of fanciers ere its zenith is attained.

"Belgium and France have for a number of years been the chief centres of the culture of flying pigeons. In those countries the fancy has run exceedingly high for Antwerps, though, as we shall see, for a different purpose have they been esteemed; indeed, to the present day, there seems no diminution in the zeal and admiration even of those who had them first and have kept them so long; the propagation of the breed still goes on, the same enthusiasm prevails in their trial-feats of flying; for it is by reason of their *flying qualities*, almost solely and exclusively, that they are prized in other countries than Great Britain, for as show stock I believe they are ignored. Yes, the *homing faculty* is the primary consideration in those parts. As 'couriers,' or aerial messengers, the Antwerp is the *ad extremum* of the pigeon fancy. The proof of their qualifications is drawn from the ordinary practising trials of young birds, or the grand periodical flying events of older and more perfected fliers. These periodical trials, or matches, engross the attention of large numbers of all classes of society. In Belgium, and France more especially, is the pleasure of this pastime

participated in by that extensive class of ardent fanciers who keep and breed them, and are ever ready to invest their capital upon these well-practised, tested, and proved, trusty aerial voyagers, the majority of which are subjected to a daily course of hard labour upon the wing as soon as they are enabled to use those members for journeying in the realms of unbounded space.

"In order to give some idea of the importance attached to pigeons as fliers both in France and Belgium, I need only remind readers of the late Franco-German War, the investment of Metz, and the Siege of Paris. These events alone will recall to mind the invaluable services rendered by these birds when no other service (except the very uncertain balloon post) could be brought into requisition, and this fact has materially encouraged and given wonderful impetus to the fancy and culture of these birds in this country. In these notes I propose merely to briefly allude (and that almost of necessity) to the typical fliers of foreign notoriety, because they will probably be treated of at length in another chapter devoted specially to their consideration; but as the Short and Long-faced Antwerps are by direct descent somewhat allied, one cannot well refer to one sort without touching upon some of the properties and characteristics of the other section, for there appears to me very little doubt that the Short-faced show kind have been produced by a careful selection and mating of direct issue of such as have displayed in the greatest degree the desired indicative features of a flier, and which we now see concentrated, beautified, and stamped as permanent upon the Short-faced stock. A considerable number of years may have been spent in fixing the combined special properties which may (at the onset) have developed themselves, by chance or design we cannot possibly determine; nor does it matter which course, so long as we do know that such special features were generally sought and bred for, and that, by a universally concentrated run of ideas in the minds and selection of fanciers, the typical Short-faced Antwerp was in prospect discovered, and in his rough state we received him; and, by a similar unison of thought in the minds of British fanciers, the breed has, in our hands, been vastly improved and perfected to its present state.

"The 'Antwerp,' whether for show or flying properties, derives its name from the city of Antwerp, in Belgium, at which place a passionate desire for courier pigeons was at one time more particularly concentrated. Brussels being now the capital, the sport has in consequence become in a great measure transferred thither. As I have briefly shown, Belgium was the original birthplace of the Antwerp, still it does not follow that the pigeons of either Belgium or France are *all* of good quality, for in truth there are hosts of 'duffers' in every sense of the term, the *majority* even being of very inferior and common appearance, simply because they are selected and bred for their homing powers solely; but most of them possess a good sound vigorous constitution, and strong capabilities on the wing as aerial travellers; therefore, in such well-crossed studs where physical power, endurance, and the consequent development of the homing faculty is the chief desideratum, there is afforded in these a splendid groundwork upon which any carefully and judiciously selected birds possessing certain desirable peculiarities of form or feather may be built up and established, provided, of course, the line of procedure is wise, and that there is also a unity of effort amongst fanciers in the same direction.

"The Belgian and French varieties of ordinary flying pigeons are of various kinds. First, there is the native, half-wild sort, which take up their abode in the turreted buildings, and forage at large for their own living; then there is the big, strong, bold, and lively *Owl*, which is an admirable flier, and which possesses the double advantage of being a strong and enduring flier, whilst, during its journeys, it traverses out of gun-range; and, further, there is the coarse, rough-skulled, ordinary British Carrier, or rough, wide, barrel-headed Dragoon, which is a low but very swift flier, and, in its uncrossed state, is a fair and speedy traveller; but when crossed with the afore-named kinds,

which possess, as they do, other properties of flying, yet of a different order, the happy combination of desired flying qualifications is perfected. It is supposed by many fanciers that the Barb, also, has been infused into the Antwerp and become part of its composition—in some cases it *may* have been—but it is a mistake to suppose that the Antwerp has been improved by any such injudicious cross. There is a strong resemblance in the formation of head between the two, and that it has been so crossed by a *few* fanciers who conceived the idea I am fully aware; but certain disappointment is the result, and the cross is betrayed at once, and its evil consequences apparent in every generation. If the reader compares minutely the points of each sort, they will be found to differ very considerably. Young Antwerps will often show up a reddish cere and a white eye, and this, no doubt, has led to the idea of a Barb cross, when in reality there is not the slightest affinity between the two; and when we consider that there are at least eight or ten varieties wherein there is a tendency to a red lash, we may infer that it is not at all remarkable that there should be an occasional red-lashed Antwerp amongst our young stock. Antwerps, also, occasionally throw a Black; but these, although being black-feathered, bear no more resemblance to a Barb than any other colour, and rarely, if ever, show a red eyelash. I generally keep a Black in my stud simply because they cross well with Blues, and tend to preserve the uniformity of colour upon back and thigh. The commonly-known, yet extraordinary, 'Voyageur,' then, is the produce of the complete admixture of the different sub-varieties of the three kinds named; and, as may be well imagined from the fact of systematically crossing the long-beaked birds with the short-billed ones, the medium character (as in the typical bird) becomes stamped and fixed as a style. Well, then, it is from numerous large studs of such medium-faced big-headed Antwerps, such as may be found in Belgium and France, that the Short-faced show-bird (the subject of these notes) has been propagated and so improved of late years, until the distinctive features of the *ideal* have now become permanently impressed in the *real* object to as certain a degree as in most of our British pigeons.

"My chief object in digressing so far from the main subject is to show the origin and capabilities of the *parent stock* from which the more handsome show-bird has been produced. Nor is the especially-keen instinctive homing faculty of the original entirely lost or eradicated from the more perfectly formed and handsome offspring. Certainly not; though it must be admitted that from the fact of continually breeding to one ideal of form from certain selected birds which reveal one type of merit, at least some, and in most of the best birds, much of the vigour, pluck, and knowledge, or instinct, of the race must be—in fact *is*—lost in the produce of the pretty and more attractive offshoot. I have on several occasions subjected some of my Short-faced prize (Exhibition) birds to moderate trials, and although but short distances, I have found them, as a rule, return remarkably well; but as the Short-faced birds have reached so high a value for show purposes, one does not care to run the same risk as with ordinary birds, and for this reason I never cared to trust my show-birds to a greater distance than twenty to twenty-five miles from home. That they *will* fly and *can sustain* a good journey I am sure, provided that they are subjected to the same regular ordeal of practice which is imposed upon their Long-faced and more common allies; but if confined within limited space, or even when permitted to enjoy a quiet, undisturbed, lazy freedom upon the house-tops, amongst the chimney-pots, the faculty becomes dull and dormant, and the specimens thereby rendered useless as homers.

"I remember sending one of my best birds off by rail to be tossed a distance of twenty-one miles from home; this I did for a mere risky trial-experiment; and although the wind was blowing a gale at the time, and against him, and notwithstanding the fact that he had not been previously *taken* any distance from home, he returned in about two and a half hours. I simply mention this

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BLUE-CHEQUERED RED-CHEQUERED

SHORT-FACED OR SHOW ANTWERPS

RED-CHEQUERED BLUE-CHEQUERED

LONG-FACED OR FLYING ANTWERPS

to show that this display of talent was at least favourable, and which, with other cases I could cite, tends to show what they *could* do if put to the ordinary tests. I imagine a systematic pigeon-trainer laughing derisively at this 'great event;' nevertheless, it served my purpose by the proof it furnished, viz., that, whilst the records of victories won in the exhibition pen told well of my stock, I have also the satisfaction of knowing that they are not a race of idiots made perfect in form and feather at the entire sacrifice of their physical, and mental, or instinctive, condition.

"Some years ago, in my search after good-looking Antwerps, I discovered a wonderfully-developed Short-faced cock bird amongst a lot of ordinary fliers in the pen of a man who was a successful long distance match-flier, and this bird I afterwards heard was known to be a 'very fast and sure bird as a hundred mile flier,' and the moment I spied his massive features I exclaimed (inwardly), 'He's mine!' for being smitten with him I at once set about negotiations for his transfer to my loft; but, alas! whilst I obtained a fair promise that after the next nest of young he *should* be mine, I subsequently found out that two other of my Antwerp friends had made the same discovery, and had in their turn obtained also a '*fair* promise' of full possession; indeed, one of these worthy Antwerp growers had put a mortgage on the bird, therefore on hearing of this I did not further press my claim on that *naughty*, *wicked*, *common* pigeon-flier, who, alas! alas!! in his love for gain, did not hesitate to tamper with the keen affections of no less than three ardent lovers of the noble and attractive Antwerp. The bird was a very good one as a show-bird, and independent of that quality, he had successfully competed with all comers as a flier. Further, a few years ago, I had in my possession a remarkably fine hen bird, in colour what is known as Silver Dun. This bird was a show-bird, though a little coarse, but as a flier she was a wonder, being the winner of ten matches from Paris to Brussels, and had upon her leg a ring or ferrule, upon which was recorded the number of her victories. So that it will be seen the Short-faced Show Antwerps may be successfully trained as ordinary fliers, and that amongst the number are some *extra*ordinary performers.

"I will now describe the characteristics of the Show Antwerp in perfect birds. Before doing so I will say that there are four recognised kinds: first, '*Silver Dun*,' or '*Mealy*;' second, *Red Chequers;* third, *Blue Chequers;* fourth, *Blues;* and although I always object to show a bias or preference for one kind more than another, I think they should be placed in the order of merit I have arranged them: then follow four other sorts, which are offshoots of the afore-named—*Silvers*, *Silver Chequers*, *Creamies*, and *Blacks*. The colour-properties of each individual sort I shall describe further on. I will now consider their general formation and points of merit, which applies to the whole lot.

"First, then, the Antwerp should be of good size, as boldness and vigour are desirable features. The smaller birds either too oft reveal their Owly origin, or else indicate a delicate and used-up constitution. The head should be large and massive; the skull wide, and free from an angular appearance when viewed at any point; but the head should be of a big, elongated, or oval shape, composed of a clear but gradual curve from base of skull to tip of beak, across from eye to eye, without gaps or hollows whatsoever, but should run in one clear, continuous sweep, in which curve should be included *wart and beak*, in an even, unbroken line. The beak wart should be large, and well raised up, and inclining forwards, no matter how large, so that it be not uneven, ragged, or lop-sided, but a fair division from its centre, and kept well within the prescribed curve of head and beak. The lower mandible, too, should be amply furnished with an even-shaped, warty substance, running along the mouth-line down to lower jaw, to match the warty nostrils, and thus form an acute, wedge-shaped frontispiece, when either seen at front or profile view. The beak must be short, thick, and close-fitting, and of the bullfinch character, hard and strong, both mandibles

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showing an apparently powerful pair of jaws. The eye should be large, bold, and prominent, and of an orange-red or blood-red colour, wild, and full of fire. The fleshy circle around should be of fair size, circular, and of a pale colour, but not coarse or overhanging. A moderately-full eye-cere adds greatly to the apparent width of head and general appearance, provided it is even in formation and not overhanging, in which case it becomes coarse and objectionable. Some fanciers I know prefer but little eye-cere ; but I have found that such paucity of eye is generally accompanied with a scantily-furnished beak. These features of eye and beak I have found invariably to accord in development: if we want the one, we must have the other, and, for my own part, I prefer *both*, as being in harmony with the general formation of the breed. The eye and beak should be as far asunder as possible, and this, in my opinion, is a great point, and in young birds is a fair indication of a probable *big head* when at maturity ; for, bear in mind, a Show Antwerp must have a '*big head*'—a capacious cranium for the development of a large brain. These qualities, as in a perfect bird, are shown in Fig. 62.



Fig. 62.

"The neck should be moderately long, and slender at its upper portion, and *not* dewlapped or 'throated,' as some prefer, for this is a characteristic of the Owl, and when seen upon an Antwerp, there are sure to be other Owly features to accompany it, such as short neck, leg, and body, which are *not* desirable properties of the breed under consideration. The shoulders should be broad, and wing-butts prominent, and well separated from the body; the breast full, and the entire body long ; the wings of good length, and composed of broad feathers well knit together, so as to insure buoyancy when upon the wing ; the legs should be long, and feet of good size. The general aspect of these birds is bold, dignified, and intelligent. There is an arch expression of the eye, which bespeaks keen and knowing features of more than an ordinary character. These, then, constitute the primary properties of the breed. I will now give the various colours.

"*Silver Duns*, sometimes called 'Mealies,' are of an extremely delicate, creamy-white tint, bordering upon white itself, but when actually in contrast with pure white shows clearly the colour (little though it be) of which it is composed. However, this faint tint should be as pale and clear as possible throughout the entire body, flights, and tail. The head itself (in cock birds) should be of floury whiteness to a line beneath the lower jaw (hens are, as a rule, of a darker shade) ; the neck and breast should be of a deep rich coppery bronze colour, without the semblance

of any greenish tinge thereon; across the lower extremity of wing should be two distinct, well-defined brown bars; the beak should be dark, nails to match; the eye of a rich, orange-red; and the shafts of feathers of a whitey-brown colour. Depth and richness of neck-colour and bars are most desirable. Faint bars, and grey or grizzly neck, most objectionable.

"*Red Chequers* are of two kinds—dark and light; viz., that upon which the red prevails, and the other upon which the lighter, or 'mealy,' shade predominates. Both are very pretty; but for my own taste, I rather prefer the darker ones, so far only as colour is concerned. The dark ones have a rich-coloured red head, with brilliant and deeply-bronzed rich coppery lustre upon the neck, and with deep, rich 'dapplings,' or 'chequerings,' upon back and sides of wings. This chequering upon the darker kind frequently extends down the back to the rump (in the lighter ones it never does). The tail and flights are of a clear whitish aspect, the latter being tinted with red colour seen from within, but not externally, unless the wing is opened. The breast, and down to thighs, is of a distinctly dappled cast, assuming more of an ashen hue towards the nether extremities. Depth and purity of colour and regularity of chequering are the chief colour points. Purple-red, smeared, or irregular chequering, are ordinary defects.

"Light *Red Chequers* are, as a rule, nicely marked on sides and across back, the head being of a much lighter colour, and assuming a still lighter tone to a line beneath the lower jaw. This is the principal difference of the two sorts; it is quite a matter of choice which is the better kind. Beak and nails are of a lightish brown colour; eye bright orange-red. The common defect in these lighter kinds is unevenness of markings, the majority being too light in centre of pinion.

"*Blue Chequers*, like the Reds, are of two sorts, viz., dark and light. In the former the black predominates, in the latter the blue colour prevails. It is quite a matter of individual choice which is preferred. In the darker sort the back and rump are chequered, upon the breast, too, is evident strong indications of markings. In the majority of the lighter kind the sides of wings and saddle only are chequered; but although not so entirely marked as the darker sort, still the chequering which is apparent is of the brightest and most distinct character, the blue being of a pale yet attractive tone, and the chequering of more intense blackness, thus displaying a far more agreeable and distinct contrast. The head of the lighter kind is blue to a line in a similar manner as Silver Duns, but of course not so conspicuous; breast, thigh, back, rump, and tail are blue, the latter member being of a darker hue, with a black band near to its extremity. The lighter kind I consider far more attractive and pretty, but they are apt to breed white-backed progeny, and this detracts from their value as exhibition birds. But as I have found that the white and light-rumped ones invariably beat the darker ones in head-properties, I regard them of great value, and would, therefore, not insist too rigidly upon the blue or chequered back simply on that account. Uniformity of colour and markings must be had, of course, but head and beak points should come *first*. Beak and nails, very dark; eye, bright orange-red.

"*Blues* should be of a uniform colour throughout. The lighter blue is, I think, the more attractive, and upon which the black bar stands out in bold relief, also the darker and brilliantly-coloured neck, dark flights, and tail-band, are far more conspicuous and beautiful. White back or thigh is very objectionable. Beak and nails, very dark; eye, bright orange-red.

"'*Silvers*' are of a most delicate chalky-white tint throughout entire body; the bars across primary coverts are of a deep tone, merging upon black; the head, neck, breast, under parts, and tail, of a deeper ashy colour, the flights being still a little deeper at their outer extremities; the neck is coloured, but to a far less degree, and only shows up in semitones; the general appearance of this kind is refined and pleasing. At or near the extremity of tail is a band of dark colour, in

conformity with the colour of bar. The beak is of a pale colour, the top bill being a little darker along its upper ridge.

"*Silver Chequers* are similar to last-named, but, in addition, are chequered throughout the sides and saddle with precisely the same dark colour as bar of aforenamed Silvers, in every way else *fac simile*. Beak and nails to match, and both of pale light colour; regularity of chequering most important feature of the colour and markings. These are useful to cross with Blue Chequers, to brighten and lighten, and thereby make more distinct, the markings of the former. Silvers also may be used with Blues, but I do not advise the cross of either Silver or Silver Chequers with other kinds, only under special circumstances—in the absence of better kinds, and for counteracting the dark or dingy tendency.

"*Creamies* are of very pale faded colour, flights and tail being of a creamy tinge; bars of a yellowish cast, and neck and breast, too, of a similar tone. These are the offshoots of *Mealies*, and *may* be mated with them, but are not actually a desirable cross.

"*Blacks* are generally of a blue-black cast, invariably with a faint trace of bars. These are of service as crosses for Blues, and may be used with great advantage for producing or retaining the sound Blue of uniform shade, but if used too frequently a dingy tone will be the result. I have used them with both Blues and Blue Chequers, but there is little gain by the latter cross, unless the Black possess *form* properties, which you would wish to embody in the Blue Chequers. Having now enumerated the meritorious and distinctive qualities of each sort, I will now give a few hints on breeding and mating, which may be useful to those who seek such information.

"First, then, *Silver Duns*, or *Mealies*. I mention both these names in conjunction (I rather prefer the latter term, 'Mealy,' but as the variety are better known as 'Silver Duns,' I name it so as to be clearly understood). Well, then, I have described what a Silver Dun or Mealy should be to be perfect, and for exhibition the desideratum is to obtain a perfect match, cock and hen alike, or as near so as possible. This is often a difficult matter, as the hens are invariably darker in colour throughout. In order to produce a similar colour in both sexes, a different system of mating should be adopted, for if light-headed hens be paired with light-headed cocks, lighter and still better coloured *hen* progeny will invariably be the produce; but the majority of male issue will be grey upon neck and breast, sometimes *all* the neck and breast feathers tipped with grey; and if this system be followed up, both cocks and hens thus produced will in time become too light, and thus lose the brilliant neck-colouring which adds so much to their attractive appearance. For breeding good-coloured Silver Dun cocks, I have found the better plan is to mate a good clear light-coloured cock with a clear-coloured but very dark-breasted hen—I mean with such a hen as shows a good *deep colour* right up the neck, even though the head, too, be dark. The colour of each parent is, of course, occasionally imparted to the offspring (in some cases it may be often), but, *as a rule*, I find that the majority of young partake more of the colour of the *paternal parent*, especially the *hen* progeny; it will then be seen as reasonable inference that, whilst the issue partake more often of the colour of the father, still the darker colour influence of the hen checks the natural tendency to the grey neck, which is strikingly manifest in so many birds. Some years ago, I remember, we had to be satisfied with dark hens, for at that time a light-headed, good-coloured *hen* was a rare and much-valued bird, and good-coloured cocks (so far as colour only was concerned) were then in abundance; but the general demand was for good-coloured hens, and by mating the lightest coloured hens that were procurable with cocks of lightest shade, the ideal has been reached by that course; but it has resulted in the almost total abolition of the deep, rich, uniform bronzy neck and breast of the *cock birds*. Happily, by the cross of darker hens, as suggested, they may again be bred as heretofore; but at the present time good-coloured hens are in



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith.

SHORT-FACED ANTWERPS.

BLUE. SILVER-DUN.

LONG-FACED ANTWERPS.

SILVER-DUN BLUE.

abundance; whilst good-coloured, clean-cut, well-marked cock birds with properties of form in combination are decidedly at a premium. It is mischievous, then, to mate the show pairs together for breeding purposes; for whilst it is proverbial that a well-matched pair often breed inferior coloured offspring, an ill-assorted, yet judiciously mated pair, will often breed the best of colours. It does not by any means follow that the best will breed better, or even issue *equal* to themselves, for the contrary is the fact; and this applies equally, or perhaps with greater force, to *form properties*, for the Antwerp is a *manufactured* breed, as it were, to obtain which we must from time to time have recourse to the rough element (the longer-faced, big-headed birds), and actually use birds of inferior general aspect, but which possess some good qualities desirable to embody in the more perfect strain; and strange as it may appear, it is absolutely necessary to cross with a commoner-looking and coarser specimen, in order to work out further improvement or to maintain the good properties which may have been already obtained. Some thoughtless ones may consider it wisdom to try to *keep up* the points of merit of the one stock without the introduction of new blood, but there is in most breeds a tendency to degenerate, and in the Antwerp pigeon especially is this noticeable; his points of excellence cannot long be preserved without occasional crosses; it is the fancier's own fault if he make not selection of a *suitable* cross. In this breed one cannot work *at* a good stock very long without observing its gradual but certain destruction; for as they have been 'made up,' so to a great extent they must still be made up. The only difference is, that now we have around us abundance of half-made, viz., imperfect Antwerp stock, any of which, by judicious mating and crossing in good hands, may be raised to the present well-known standard, which was merely ideal but few years ago.

"In making selection of stock for breeding purposes, always give preference to *big fine hen birds*, for with little hens success cannot be reckoned upon. A big, good-shaped, dark-necked hen, even though rather long in beak (provided it is well warted), may be put to pretty coloured, Short-faced cocks, with good results; some excellent birds will be the issue. The male issue are more likely to be the better birds; but in every case look for good *head properties* in *both birds* if they are matured specimens. A perfect specimen must be good at all points, form, and colour *in combination;* but in the Antwerp breeder's pen '*form*' is the *first* and *primary consideration:* colour is more easily and more speedily obtained. Both are necessary to each other, but are achieved by different means. Much care should be taken in keeping a record of the pedigree of every bird that forms one's stock, so as to know what may be *expected* from every cross. As a rule, Silver Duns should be mated to Silver Duns, dark with light, but may *occasionally* be crossed with Red Chequers to the advantage of each sort; but if crossed with either Blues or Blue Chequers, a bluish tinge pervades the entire feathering of the progeny, more especially observable upon the tail, which will show an indication of the dark band, instead of the clear, desirable colour. *Blues* may be crossed with Blue Chequers, if for the improvement of some desirable point of *formation*, but not of necessity for improving colour, for there is nothing can be gained at that point by either. *Red Chequers* may be crossed with Blue Chequers, the former gaining by a *casual* cross, the latter deriving the greatest advantage thereby, by reason of the overwhelming power of the Black and Blue influence of which its feathering is composed. In short, *all* the varieties are necessary *to each other*, but in order to obtain the best of colours, and maintain them, great care must be exercised. It is almost impossible for one to attempt to *fix* or determine a safe line of procedure in the absence of a reliable *pedigree* of those birds upon which we are about to commence operations. But, assuming that we have to deal with a mixed medley of fair-looking birds, I would always advise that they should be so mated as to obtain between them the desired points, *i.e.*, wherein the one was imperfect, the other should be of good or *extra* development at *that* point, and this pursued

until the desired amalgamation is obtained: for, as I have said, we cannot work long successfully *at* a perfect pair, we must *work up to it;* and this can only be done by taking into consideration the *individual merits* and *descent* of the stock upon which we may practise.

"Some Antwerps develop at a much earlier period than others. I have invariably found that those which look the best the first year are those pretty Owly sort which are often *fully* developed at eighteen months, whereas most of the *very best birds*, ah! I may say *all* the *crack birds* which have come under my observation, have continued to develop until the fifth or sixth year, at which time the massive head will have reached its desired proportions. What numbers of fanciers in their selection have been deluded by the term '*Short-face!*' and have chosen those early, ripe, pretty, attractive, Short-faced, but imperfect specimens, which are fully-blown at the early age of say two years, at which time the *best birds* are just *commencing to develop* with speed and certainty. The best birds, then, are *not* those with the *shortest head*, for upon their neat little beaks there is not space for the growth of the proper amount of beak 'wart,' which is so desirable a feature. Therefore it is a mistake to make choice of the shortest-headed youngsters. Such birds are useful stock birds, for mating with birds of a heavier and coarser type, and from such the happy medium is obtained; but the promising young Antwerp should have a head of *medium* length, and of good width to start with, for the skull does not grow much; the beak also must be thick and strong, for this feature, if not good in the beginning of life, never grows to the desired proportions, so that this part must be good from the nest, and when it *is* so, we may expect there is a good prospect and fair foundation for an abundant growth of wattle thereon. The nostrils should be full and extend well along the beak; and although the beak may look rather too long the first year, still in the course of time those parts will fill up, for they are just the features which *do grow* if there is sufficient space for development. So that, in making selection of young stock, we should have *at once* the points which do not materially increase, and at least discern a probable development of those features which grow only in the course of time. One good feature I think I have omitted to mention, viz., that the head feathers of a well-developed bird should be rather of a rough, disordered texture, diverging from the base of the beak-wattle towards the centre of top part of head. This causes a fulness which considerably enhances the appearance of the bird, and in mere unfledged nestlings there should be a sort of tuft of yellow down which indicates a probable realisation of this property when at maturity.

"The Antwerp is a strong, hardy, and prolific variety, but, like all other kinds, is subjected to similar diseases, through which they (as others) *must* pass, earlier or later, in life; but once safely landed over these inevitable maladies, the Antwerp will attain a good old age. I have at the present time some veterans who have survived the dangers of many trying seasons. I know of several birds whose ages range from fifteen to twenty-two years, and most of these are useful stock-producers at the present time. And as for the value of Antwerps, I may say that, although they have become so numerous, the *best birds* command nearly as high a price as any other kind. They are a variety which I am prepared to admit are not at first sight of prepossessing appearance. I have heard them decried by many who now keep them. The fancy for this kind is one that grows upon one. There's no 'love at first sight'—no sudden 'awakening passion' for them. They must be kept for a time to be appreciated, but need not be kept long (by those who like pigeons), ere a strong feeling of admiration for them is engendered."

We have very little to add to the foregoing very full notes. As regards the Short-face proper we have indeed no remark to make at all, except that we know the Barb *has* been used by some fanciers to produce exhibition birds. Not that we place any reliance upon red cere or pearl

eyes—both of which, as Mr. Ludlow truly observes, are not very certain as signs of a cross—but we happen to know that the extreme shortness and massive character of beak, and shortness and width of skull in some specimens, actually were produced in this way. No doubt such a cross would bring with it many faults, and would need to be controlled with the nicest judgment to get and to keep any good results without the accompanying evils; still, that it *has* been introduced, and with success, we know, and mention of it cannot therefore be omitted as amongst the possible means towards producing Short-faced birds.

Beside the true Short-faced Antwerp, however, there has by degrees arisen a comparatively uniform standard for breeding and judging pigeons which, though of the same type, have no right to that name. Of late years, in fact, even this class of birds has been again subdivided, and at many shows in the Midland Counties prizes are now regularly offered for both "Long-faced" and "Medium-faced," as well as the true Short-faced birds. By many persons these classes are confounded with those known as "flying" classes; but they are not identical. They are, it is true, often judged very inconsistently by people who do not understand them; still they are strictly exhibition and not flying birds, with as strict a standard as the Short-faces regarding colour, and their proper type is becoming every day better understood. We cannot say that we "see much" in them, since it appears to us that all their properties are brought out more distinctly in the Short-faced birds; but they have their use, as Mr. Ludlow has pointed out, even for crossing with the latter to keep up the size of head, and appear great favourites in some localities.

The type of the Long-faced Show Antwerp is seen in our coloured plates. The colours are to be judged as in the higher type of bird; and with regard to form of head, which should be judged as carefully as the other, the chief point is that the skull be "filled up," as Mr. Ludlow terms it, and partake of the very same character, though with the "long face" of one inch and five-eighths or more. That is, there must be no stop or hollow in the forehead, and no sudden pinching at the nostrils; but the profile well filled up with a full beak-wart, and the skull broad and round, and especially a nice width just behind the beak. This last, too, must be thick and massive in both mandibles; in fact, the whole head and beak such as, if only shorter, would make a good Short-faced bird. The same may be said of the Medium-faces, a name peculiarly indefinite in itself, and which sounds rather absurd to most fanciers, since these always try to obtain properties in their extremes, and beyond roundness and size of skull, a "Medium-face" Antwerp scarcely appears to have any.

The true Homing Pigeon we must reserve for a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.

HOMING PIGEONS.

We hinted in the last chapter at the many sources from which had descended the bird now known as the Antwerp Carrier, Voyageur, or Homing Pigeon. The foreign names by which the varieties believed to be its parents or component parts were known will be found presently; but there can be little doubt that the Volant or Cumulet was a Tumbler, the Cravate Français, otherwise known as the Smerle, originally either the Owl or some strong pigeon with a great deal of Owl blood, and the third pigeon the English Dragoon. The Owl blood is shown not only by the frill, but by the very form of the head, and the fact that the Owl is a strong and quick flier, though it does not fly high; the Dragoon has been directly traced; and the Tumbler blood is made probable not only by the high-flying for which the Cumulet was employed, but by the fact that specimens were said to be found with both clean and feathered legs. We believe that the long-faced Beard has also been introduced, from many signs of this cross in various examples which have come under our notice. For instance, among the birds which won prizes in the Alexandra Palace Pigeon Races of July, 1875, was one showing indubitable evidence. On inquiry we found it to be of unquestionable Belgian descent; yet it had an evident white "beard," white thighs, and *white flights*—all, but especially the last, when combined with a thin beak, show very strong proofs of Beard ancestry.

Being thus a composite race, it has, since its origin, been bred with no attempt at uniformity; all shapes, all sizes, all colours, being freely and indifferently used. Not being thus a fancier's pigeon in any sense, we have to confess our ignorance regarding it; but are enabled to place what is necessary before our readers through the kindness of Mr. J. Harrison, Secretary of the London Amateur Pigeon Society, from whose pen are the following full and interesting particulars:—

"The amateur who adopts as his pet this bird, generally renounces much of the glory gained as well as much of the difficulty encountered by one who breeds the more delicate, and, as one may say, abnormal, varieties of fancy pigeon. In fact, in one sense of the word, a homing bird is scarcely a fancy pigeon at all. His merits are his intelligence, and the proper results therefrom, rather than his colour and outward appearance: yet he is none the less a thorough pet, and one adopted by thorough fanciers. His owner looks at his finely-developed body and his fierce and resolute eye with no whit the less pride because he has a patch of white on his blue head or a splash of black on his red flight-feathers, as the case may be. He has, probably, flown for many miles to his old home, and is proportionately valued and honoured. If a reliable foreign bird, he has been bred from a long line of ancestors who have gained laurels in the aerial contests, and can safely say that 'he has a grandfather.' The love of the homing bird surely needs neither defence nor apology. Many great men have been enamoured of still less and more insignificant things, as Robert Pollok says, in his beautiful and immortal verse:—

'Abundant and diversified above
All number, were the sources of delight;

As infinite as were the lips that drank;
And, to the pure, all innocent and pure;
The simplest still, to wisest men the best.
One made acquaintanceship with plants and flowers,
And happy grew in telling all their names;
One classed the quadrupeds, a third, the fowls;
Another found in minerals his joy;
And I have seen a man—a worthy man,
In happy mood, conversing with a fly,
As he, through his glass, made by himself,
Beheld its wondrous eye and plumage fine,
From leaping scarce he kept, for perfect joy.'

"In treating of the homing pigeon, I hasten at once to acknowledge my indebtedness to the two works of M. Chappuis; to one of the organs of the Belgian Pigeon Societies, viz., *L'Épervier;* and to the hints and experience of many valued friends, from which I have been enabled to supplement my own experience and observations.

"The first thing that challenges comment is the name by which the bird should be known. Among those not conversant with pigeon lore, there is a general impression that the birds used for homing purposes are all classed under one designation, that of 'carriers,' because they 'carry' messages or information. This, of course, is not correct, as all versed amateurs well know; but for the information of the general reader, it may be well to state at the outset that the *carrier* pigeon, properly so-called, is the bird now exhibited at every show in various whole colours, with a remarkable excrescence, or wattle, growing to an enormous size round the eye and the base of the beak. This bird is bred for show purposes to an ideal standard of perfection, and is not used for flying at all, being in no way adapted for that end, and being far too valuable to be sent out on a journey. This bird has been treated of in an early part of the present volume. The birds used for flying, or 'homing,' as it is termed, are of a much more common type, as may be seen from our coloured plate, which gives portraits of well-known and good performers. Some long-faced birds, as Dragoons, for instance, are used for homing purposes, as are also birds of the type of very long-faced Beards, and even occasionally Owls have been flown; but the generally-adopted homing bird, the subject of our investigation and consideration, is the only type with which it is necessary to deal. Much misconception prevails in the public mind as to the habits of these birds. For instance, it is a notion very generally entertained that all one has to do to send a message by a pigeon is to catch the bird, tie a letter, no matter how large, to its body, no matter how clumsily, and then send it off to the required destination, *from* its home or *to* its home. This appears so utterly absurd to the amateur as to need no refutation, the fact being that these birds fly *to* their home only. It is their innate love of home, their dislike to change, which causes them to seek their old habitation as speedily as possible; therefore it is that they are called 'homing birds;' and a better or more expressive name cannot surely be required. On the Continent they are termed 'les pigeons voyageurs.' In England they have been called, indiscriminately, 'carriers,' 'messenger pigeons,' 'couriers,' 'travellers,' &c.; but I am of the very decided opinion that the name now generally used, and which appears at the head of this chapter, is the best that can be used, being most comprehensive and explanatory of the distinctive faculty of which the bird is possessed.

"It is not germane to my purpose now to go into the traditional history of the use of pigeons as a means of communication during very early ages. Suffice it to say, therefore, that it is mentioned in this connection by Anacreon and Pliny; and tradition says that Taurosthenes, when a

victor at the Olympic games, used a pigeon to carry home the news of his success. In England the birds have been used for carrying the intelligence as to the winners in horse-races, for monetary intelligence, before telegrams were invented, and for a few other purposes; but only to a very limited extent.

"For many years Belgium has been the chief abode of the homing bird. There he has been bred for many successive generations with a view to the obtaining of a strain embodying all the perfections of an ideal racing bird. To that quarter, then, we must look for much information, the necessary consequence of great experience, the benefit of which we obtain without the toil, loss, disappointment, and labour, by means of which it has been obtained, though with all the information we may have *on paper*, success is not to be obtained without *personal* experience and individual sacrifices. There is no reason in the world why we in England should not be able to breed as good birds as the Belgian amateurs do, if we only persevere as they have done, breed from none but the best, throw the middling birds to the dogs (or cats), and in practice carry out literally the theory of the "survival of the fittest."

"The shape of the bird is somewhat like that of the common Blue Rock pigeon, but the breast is very full and wide, the head rounded at the top (there are some birds with high heads, having the top slightly flattened), broad between the eye, giving a very capacious skull; the eye is prominent, with a deep orange pupil, having a bold and determined air about it. Round the iris is sometimes found a circle or line of a darkish hue, and as a rule, such birds, being good in other respects, are highly esteemed. The beak is thick and black as a rule, though in many birds the beak runs out somewhat, and accordingly loses in thickness and strength, and occasionally a white beak appears where the birds are descended from others of a light colour, but generally the beak is of a medium length, measuring from the centre of the pupil to the end of the beak one inch and five-sixteenths being an average length. When a bird has a thin beak it is apt to be thought longer than it really is, in consequence of the variation in the proportions; a thick beak of medium length is the most general among good birds. I now merely refer to the birds as bred for flying. The wattle upon the beak is in some breeds much more prominent than in others; some have very little indeed on the upper mandible, and none on the lower; others have a larger amount, which is generally rather flat, running upwards from the beak towards the head, where it rises into a sort of ridge, running across each half of the wattle. Again, some have a rather round, or pea-shaped, wattle. The shape or quantity of wattle, however, differs in the various strains, though all may have proved themselves of equal excellence. On the lower mandible a wattle appears on each side, but is of small proportions. The wattle round the eye in some specimens is of a dark colour, in place of the usual white powdered appearance. In some breeds, and especially in many foreign strains, a sort of incipient frill is to be observed in the front of the neck just above the breast. This has doubtless been handed down by the breeders from the original stock from which the present homing bird has been formed. As regards the purpose for which the birds are bred, I am inclined to look upon the frill with disfavour, as likely to present a hindrance to the attainment of speed when the bird is on the wing. The gullet appears, also, in some strains in the same manner as in the Owl pigeon.

"The wings are very powerful, and form a distinctive feature of the bird. Standing out from the body-feathers, they show their thickness of bone and muscle, and seem ready at once to perform their work. It will be observed on stretching out the wings that there are ten large, long feathers called the primaries, or, in pigeon parlance, the flight-feathers. These are each of them very broad; thus one overlaps the other to a great extent, and forms a powerful engine of locomotion by reason of the solidity of the set of feathers opposed to the air when striking downwards in flight.

The great desideratum in a homing bird is the strength of wing and the breadth of the individual flight-feathers; without this the bird is useless in any competition for speed, and is seriously handicapped when compelled to battle against bad weather. The first feather, counting from the extremity of the wing, is slightly shorter than the second, which is the longest of any, the others gradually diminishing in length to the tenth or last. The next set seen—still holding out the bird's wing—are the secondaries, also highly important to the bird, but rather for supporting the body than for gaining speed in progression. The flight-feathers, from their elasticity, bend upwards at their tips when beaten downwards by the muscles, and thus, as it were, pushing against the air in a backward horizontal direction, force the bird horizontally forward. The bones of the wing also carry the smaller quill-feathers, or tertiaries, and the bastard pinion which appears at the wing-butts. When the bird is standing at rest the wings should be tucked up closely, and in nearly all healthy and good birds are so carried, though some people, I have heard, like to see the wings drooping a little; I cannot but say they then appear to give one the idea of an unhealthy or distressed bird, or of a very weak wing. The tips will meet, or very nearly meet, over the rump, thus forming a rough triangle, of which the wings are two sides, and an imaginary line joining the wing-butts across the breast of the bird the third.

"The tail has twelve feathers. It should not be too fully developed as regards breadth. As a rule, a small tail is regarded with greater favour than a large one, though the reason does not seem very obvious. In flight, the tail supports the hinder portion of the bird, and, when alighting, assists it in stopping. The pigeon then depressing its tail, the action of the feathers spread out against the air through which it is passing, causes the fore part of the bird to be raised from the horizontal to a somewhat more perpendicular position, thus enabling the wings to press against the air from back to front, instead of beating downwards as in full flight, by which means the bird stops himself quickly, even when in rapid flight. The tail is not likely, whether large or not, to impede a bird's flight, seeing that it passes through the air in the line already taken by the body preceding it, which encounters the full resistance of the air. The legs are rather short in some breeds—the birds appear to stoop, or "skulk," on this account—the feet small.

"As to the colour, there are whole Blues, Blue Chequers, whole Reds, Red Chequers, Mealies, Blacks, and birds splashed and mottled in every possible manner. The birds are bred for flying, and colour, therefore, has hitherto gone to the bad. Any bird that works well is kept and bred from, be its colour what it may; for this reason, queer markings of all sorts crop up in breeding, and it is seldom that they will breed true to colour.

"Having thus seen what the subject of our consideration is like in outward appearance, we may well inquire from whence he came? how was he bred? what his origin? As far as it can be ascertained, the present breed of homing birds was originated some sixty years ago in Belgium, by crossing the bird known as the pigeon Cravate Française—a bird with a very short beak and a frill on the front of the neck, like an Owl pigeon, in fact—with another variety known as the Camus, which it appears is now scarcely ever seen, but which had a large thick beak with a good-sized wattle round the eye, the head being small and round. Some authorities hold that the English Dragoon was used in the crossing by which the homing bird was formed; but be that as it may, there can be no doubt that the Volant, or Cumulet—a high-flying pigeon chiefly bred in former years at Antwerp—has been used to throw in the habit of flying high, which is almost a *sine quâ non* in a homing pigeon. From the breed thus obtained only the very best and fastest birds have been kept and bred from, generation after generation, until the present race may be considered as the very *élite* of homing birds, and annually prove their excellence in the long Belgian contests. Nearly all the birds used in England which are of

any value for flying have been brought over from Belgium, or are the produce of such imported birds, and it is but in the nature of things that this should be so, since the Belgians have been breeding and perfecting their stock for years, while in England the fancy is as yet in its infancy.

"I propose to treat of the subject before us under the following heads:—First, the loft and its appliances; then of the stock to put in it, going on with general management and breeding, treatment of young birds, training and racing, pigeon-flying Societies, and, finally, uses of the Homing Pigeon.

"First, as to the loft. So far as regards the health of the birds, position of loft, and general construction, I need add nothing to what has already appeared in a former page of this book; but for homing pigeons it is especially desirable to have a warm aspect, so as to induce breeding as soon as the weather is fit and proper for the good health of the young, and also that the loft should be in an elevated position; and it cannot be too strongly impressed upon the amateur who

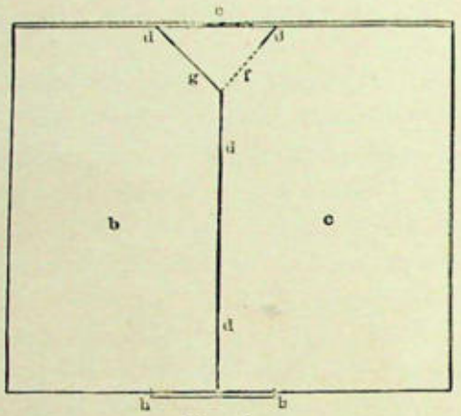


Fig. 63.

intends to work his birds that the higher the loft is situate the better. A low position (especially if at all shaded by trees, as often occurs where the pigeon house is in the garden on the ground) militates very strongly against the birds, both old and young, by inducing laziness and a disposition to sit and mope about the place, instead of going for a good fly and coming in again quickly. The birds are also less in danger from cats and rats if higher up in the house, or over a stable, coach-house, or out-building, than when on the ground. Young birds, particularly, fly better in a loft which is well up in the world, and find their way in and out of it in a very short time, thus giving less trouble and causing less anxiety for their owner than when hanging about outside a house in the garden, in momentary danger from cats.

"The outer door of the loft, and, in fact, every door in it, should be made to close itself, which may be done with a spring or a weight. For my own part, I have always used a counter-weight with a cord over a pulley; then there is no danger of losing a valuable bird by any negligence or forgetfulness in leaving the door open. The loft itself may very advantageously be divided into two parts by a partition running from the back of the house or room to the window or trap, with a door in the partition near the window, so arranged that, by closing it on one side, the birds on one side of the house shall be cut off from the window, and those on the other side shall be allowed free ingress and egress; thus the birds on both sides would become accustomed to the same area and trap. Such an arrangement is shown in Fig. 63, in which a plan of the loft is given: *e* represents the window; *h h* the doors; *d d d* being a partition running across the loft to a



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith

HOMING PIGEONS.

2 YEAR-OLD COCK.
3RD NEWCASTLE RACE (300 MILES) JULY 1875.

2 YEAR-OLD COCK.
WINNER NEWCASTLE RACE (300 MILES) JULY 1875.

1 YEAR-OLD COCK.
2ND NEWCASTLE RACE (300 MILES) JULY 1875.

YOUNG COCK (7 MONTHS)
10 GUINEA LEEDS CUP (215 MILES) SEP 15TH 1875.

THE ABOVE ARE THE PROPERTY OF J. OLIVER ESQ OF BEXHILL AND
WERE TRAINED BY THE BRIGHTON & COUNTY OF SUSSEX SOCIETY

point near the window and there diverging to the right and the left; in these arms a large doorway is cut at *f* and *g*; the door, swinging on the point from which the two arms of the partition take their origin, will thus close either side. It is shown closing the side *g* in the sketch, and that at *f* is left open to the birds on the side of the loft marked *c*. Such an arrangement is very convenient for more reasons than one. If one has imported birds to breed from—and there is no surer mode of obtaining good birds than obtaining them direct from Belgium—they must necessarily be prisoners so long as one intends to keep them. They, therefore, could have one side of the loft reserved for them, without causing any inconvenience with respect to the other birds, which may still be flown. Again, in exchanging birds for crossing purposes, the new strains can be put into one side of the loft, as shown above; and further, should the amateur be inclined to keep any of the fancy varieties, as Carriers, Jacobins, &c. &c., he can, by this arrangement, do so without interfering in any way with his flying birds; and still, when a change of fancy or policy occurs, his loft is ready to be thrown into one at a moment's notice by removing the door, or even the whole or part of the partition. If flying birds only are kept which have their liberty, it will be found useful to keep the old birds on one side and the young on the other, that they may be flown separately. The partition should be composed of light deal frames, with wire-work over, and the



Fig. 64.

lower portion, say two or three feet from the bottom upwards, boarded. These should slide in a groove made with a couple of pieces of beading nailed on the floor, and fixed on the roof or ceiling.

The nest-boxes shown on page 15 of this work will be found to answer admirably for the free birds; but for any prisoners, large nesting-places must be provided, in each of which a pair can be at any time confined for a few days, with food and water, and plenty of room for themselves, the vessels, and a couple of nest-pans, the use of which larger nesting-places will be seen presently, when speaking on the subject of breeding. The general requirements of the loft have already been spoken of in an early portion of this work, and a recapitulation is not, therefore, necessary. A very convenient form of feeding-trough and hopper, which I use myself, is shown in Fig. 64. As will be seen, it is a hopper and trough, with a lifting-lid to the latter, so that the food can at any time be cut off by letting down the lid, which can be raised and lowered by a string and pulley without going into the loft oneself. This is of some utility when training the birds, and during the autumn and winter, when there are no young ones in the nests which require a constant supply. The sketch given speaks for itself. The original stands with the back to the wall; but if used in the middle of the loft, being inserted in a hole made for the purpose in the partition of Fig. 63, and made a double trough, so that the birds could feed from either side of the trough, front or back, and on either side of the partition of the loft, the trough would be still more useful, as both lofts could be supplied with food at one and the same time, thus saving time and trouble; and by the doubling of the trough itself, more birds could feed at once, and, there being more room, less

quarrelling would occur. Along the front of the trough runs a little piece of wood from end to end, covering the open part for about a quarter of an inch in width, so as to prevent the birds from scattering the corn; transverse wires are also of utility in this connection. There must be an area for the birds to pass through on leaving or entering the loft. That shown on Fig. 13, p. 25, upon the top of the detached house, is of the usual construction, which is more fully seen in the illustration upon the preceding page (p. 24). It is useful, also, to have a few bolting wires *inside*, between the area and the loft, so that when a bird comes in, it is fastened in the area, and thus is easily caught. A few minutes may be soon lost in catching a pigeon when he has joined the others

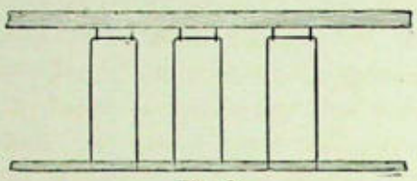


Fig. 65.

in the loft. This loss is avoided by such an arrangement as will keep him out of the loft after he has entered the area, if it be so desired. There may be two, three, or four, if light ones, to one roller, or there may be three or four pairs of wires hung upon staples, without any wooden rollers at all, as shown in Fig. 65. The wires are simply bent at right angles at the top, where the staples carry them, and rest inside a beading at the bottom, so that they will open from one side only. Buttons of wood may be used, or a wire passed through an eyelet, so as to come right across all the hanging wires like a bar to a window, or a piece of beading used as a slide on the floor, so as to catch the lower ends of the wires, and prevent them from being forced back by the bird in the area *or* in the loft, as the case may be.

"If the pigeon-house be in the garden, or in any position in which cats can approach it, a cat-proof entrance will be necessary, in order that the entrance to the loft may always be open, if required,

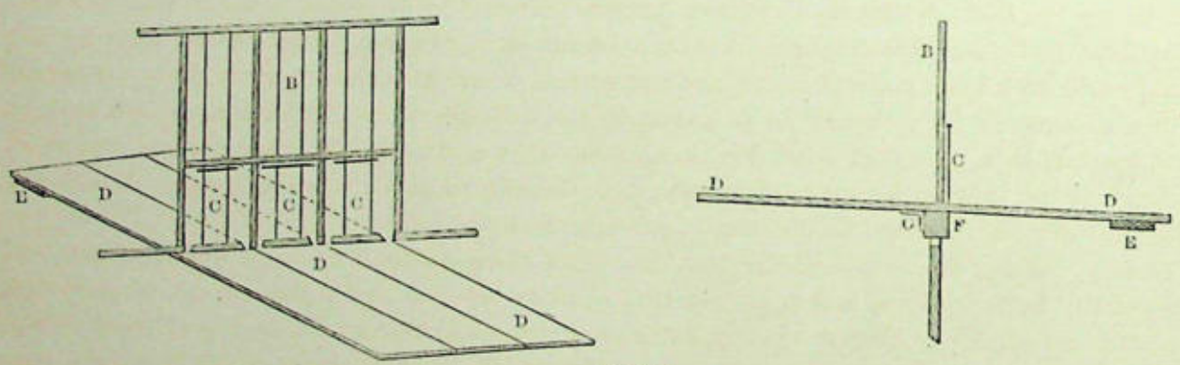


Fig. 66.

without danger from any feline intruder. To accomplish this, let the board, upon which the birds alight (when the trap is closed and admission only to be obtained through the bolting wires), be carried upon a pair of hinges, and weight the inside end of the board so that it will carry a pigeon on the outside end without falling down. To test it, place a 1 lb. weight upon the outer end, and load the inside end until it keeps in position. If the board be broad, say 14 inches or more, then cut it down lengthwise, and hinge and load each piece separately, until the required width is attained.

"In the sketches given, B represents the front of the loft or area, as the case may be (for sometimes one has to do without an area outside the loft); C the bolting wires, D the lighting boards,

with the weights at E, on hinges G, which are fixed on the cross piece F (see view and section). If a cat jumps upon a board thus arranged it immediately lets her down, and resumes its original position; but the weight of a pigeon will not overbalance it. In a wide board it is necessary to divide it, and balance each piece separately, as otherwise the weight would be so great at the back that a cat would be able to stand upon the board if she got upon it close to the front of the wire-work. All the entrances to the area, loft, or flight, should be painted white, that the young birds may the better distinguish them when let out the first time or two.

"Secondly, as to the stock to put into the loft. It should, of course, be of the very best in quality; the quantity is matter for consideration, as to space, expediency, and money. The best plan is to obtain birds from Belgium by going over and fetching them yourself, or in default of that, by obtaining them through an amateur friend who either fetches them or knows some amateur residing there who will get what is required. I have obtained for some years some excellent birds from Belgium for my own use, and continue to bring a few over each year to supply the places left vacant by losses, and to introduce new blood of the best strains. Thus I have been enabled to maintain a loft of pure Belgian birds from the prize winners in long-distance races without difficulty, though, unfortunately, my professional vocation gives me too little leisure to attend to their training and flying as I ought. From the experience I have had with birds, both English and Belgian, I advisedly urge every amateur to get his birds from Belgium if he means to fly them. I have tried with birds brought over here as squeakers, and with old ones brought over to breed from, and have some difficulty in stating which I consider to be the best plan. With respect to the squeakers, they ought to be flown and trained a few miles before they are bred from, in order to get rid of any slow or stupid birds (for *some* such will be found among them, no matter from how good a strain they proceed), that the best alone may be used for reproduction. This entails the loss of several youngsters with which one is loth to part, and for which, perhaps, a long price has been paid; but it is a good plan nevertheless, as then one knows what the birds are which are breeding, and is not tempted to spoil a nest of eggs in order to try the birds during the breeding season. Young birds, when brought into the loft, should be kept in for a couple of weeks, and then let out in the evening with others, after a good meal; they will then keep close at home, and get settled down with the others at once. If breeding birds are obtained, they should be procured in the autumn after the long races are over in Belgium, and put in a place set apart for them, with large nesting places (one for each pair), in which they can be shut up if, and when required, as mentioned in a preceding page. A pedigree and list of performances should be obtained if possible with the birds.

"Thirdly, having thus stocked the loft, the next thing to look to is the management and breeding of the birds. In the first place, no bird must be allowed to see the outside of the loft if it has been flown anywhere else previously, or the first time will also be the last in all probability. Such birds as are brought into the loft as breeding birds, after having had their liberty elsewhere, must be kept in rigorous confinement at any risk and trouble: as much space should be afforded them for flight as can be allowed them *inside the wires*. Only a few days ago a Belgian bird escaped from the loft here in London, and returned to Brussels, although it had never been flown in England. It was returned by former owner, so there could be no mistake about the bird having done the distance.

"The large nesting places will be found eminently useful for the old breeding birds, as they may be locked in when just going to nest; or the others not nesting may be locked in, and those going to nest only allowed the use of the loft, or flight, until the eggs are laid. Unless this precaution is taken, it will be found that a goodly number of sterile eggs will be laid; the cocks, when

all together, being so prone to interfere with the enjoyment of the conjugal rights of their fellow cocks, that many of the eggs are 'clear,' that is, not fertilised by the male birds. This is a frequent source of annoyance and disappointment, but may be remedied by allowing each pair when going to nest to have the loft to itself for a short time. Care must be taken that birds nearly related are not mated together so as to breed in-and-in, but crossed with fresh blood as far as possible, thus being more likely to hatch strong birds, and even then several eggs may not hatch out properly, as the birds being confined after having enjoyed their liberty seldom breed so successfully as could be desired. It will not do, therefore, to breed in-and-in with birds which are prisoners; and I go further and object outright to in-and-in breeding in any case whatever with Homing Pigeons, or any birds, in fact, which are required to be strong, healthy, and robust. In matching up the birds, the simple rule is to use only those which have given some evidence of excellence in flying: a bird that invariably comes in late, or is constantly beaten, ought not to be bred from, because the use of such a bird does not tend to improve one's strain. The birds hatched before the end of July will be found the best for breeding, as also for flying. As to colour, amateurs who make flying their sole object take no heed of how the birds are matched in this respect; and as a rule, one can never tell what colour may not be bred from any given pair of Belgian birds, as they may, during the last two or three generations, have been bred from as many different colours. Very often from well-coloured birds of any one colour, say Blue Chequer, a Red Chequer young bird will come, possibly with a splash of white in it; from a Mealy cock and Blue Chequer hen I have just bred a young Mealy with a large white spot on the top of the head, and sometimes a white bird comes to light from them. Thus one cannot at present rely on the birds breeding anything like true to colour, whatever we may be able to do after a few years of attentive breeding for that particular point. The birds may be paired at the end of January, or during February, if the weather be not too cold, as then the first young may be hatched in February or early in March; and provided the season be favourable, it is advisable to get the young ones hatched as early as possible. As a general rule, the birds are allowed to rear their own young ones, but some amateurs have a few common feeders, to which they transfer one young one, that each bird may have the full care and attention of two parents. If the old birds are engaged in any race it is of course advisable to transfer the eggs or young to a pair of feeders, so that there may be no risk of losing them through the absence of one or both of the parents. The young birds being hatched and grown old enough to take care of themselves, they may with advantage be placed in one part of the loft to themselves, if possible, with means of egress and ingress, for the purpose of outdoor exercise, as they are then more likely to fly round well than if let out with the old ones, which are probably at nest, and going out for a hurried turn round the house, come in again to the eggs or young in the nest. If space cannot be afforded for this purpose, the youngsters must be content to fly with the other stock.

"They should be let out in the morning as early as convenient, and without being fed. Here is one advantage of the feeding-hopper I have before described, with the lid to the trough, as that may be let down at night, and the birds are thus prevented from feeding before they are sent for their morning spin. If they are regularly let out every morning, they will soon get into the habit of going off at once for a good fly, and being hungry will then come in for their breakfast, pass through the bolting wires, and are secured from hanging about outside the loft during the day. They should not be let out again after a good meal, or they will loiter. They will soon understand the use of the bolting wires, and, if a little shy of them at first, will use the dropping holes till accustomed to the proper entrance. Young birds ought never to be let out with their crops full, or they will speedily fall into the habit of sitting outside the loft asleep for an hour

or two at a time, and will, in all probability, when in a race, lose a great deal of valuable time in the same manner after their arrival home. The object in view is to get the birds to go out for a good long fly, and to see them come into the loft again when it is over without any delay whatever. This is more easily done when they are in a loft to themselves, as they can then always be let out hungry; but it is rather difficult to manage that point successfully when the young birds on the wing are in the same loft or part of the loft as the old birds which are feeding young ones, and therefore require constant access to the food. If, however, the young ones persist in attempting to spend their time in sitting outside, they should be frequently frightened up, until they, to escape the annoyance, come down sharply and rush in at once.

"Fourthly, next in order of the subjects for consideration is the method of training the birds with a view to the developing of their homing faculty; and this naturally leads to the inquiry, what is the homing faculty?

"It has been frequently and vigorously contended that the birds 'home,' as it is termed, by instinct pure and simple; also, that instinct has nothing to do with their power of homing at all, but that the sight alone enables them to reach their lofts. Various other theories have been started, as that they will only fly to the north; but the true theory doubtless is, that it is partly instinct, and partly sight, intelligence, and memory. I say *partly* instinct advisedly, though probably many on reading thus far only would be ready to combat the idea. The mainspring of the resolute action of the homing bird in endeavouring to reach its home is, no doubt, the natural love of home, which is shared in by all the Homing Pigeons, and this I term instinct. As far as one can tell by careful observation, *every* homing bird, when thrown, endeavours to find its home at first. It stretches its neck as it flies round (or even if it pitches on some neighbouring roof), in its apparent endeavour to ascertain which direction it ought to make for. This, surely, which is developed in every bird, may properly be called instinct. It is the same with dogs, cats, horses, cattle; it is, in fact, on record, that a race was once carried out with cats, which were taken away from their homes and let loose. With dogs it is an every-day occurrence; and it is well known that cattle, when escaped from a field at a distance from home, will often beat about, until at last they walk into the homestead. But though this instinct may cause all the birds thrown at one time and place to endeavour to reach their respective homes, it does not enable them all to attain success. When they have started, and done their best to find out which way to go, instinct seems to have run its course. Then all these birds having probably, and, as I contend, the same instinct, have used it for the same purpose, and to the same end. But now come upon the scene other forces, namely, memory, intelligence, and observation. These enable a bird to remember the localities in which it has been flown before, to recognise landmarks it has noticed previously, and which are now pointed out to it by an intelligent observation of the country beneath it. Thus it is seen that though all may start fair, as it were, at first, still those endowed with the more retentive memory, the greatest intelligence, and the most accurate power of observation will, *cæteris paribus*, come home first. The instinct, then, being naturally present to a certain given extent, it forms a basis upon which man can work, and the materials to be used in the work are the memory, intelligence, and power of observation. These must be educated, improved, perfected by man's labour and toil, in order to obtain a first-class bird. What one has to do, then, in training, is to give the birds a good knowledge of locality by repeated and ever-increasing trials, which will try the endurance of the bird as well as bring its gifts to perfection, and in doing so the greatest care is needed.

"As soon as the young birds have flown round their home for a few weeks, and appear at home on the wing, flying with some spirit and confidence, they may be taken in hand for

training, and, as a general rule, it will be found that the age of twelve weeks is early enough. Many amateurs train even earlier, but I do not think it advisable, as many good birds are thus lost, for though a few precocious birds may succeed, yet the majority are not then in fit trim for the ordeal, and thus it may be that the many are sacrificed to the few. It is well to have the outside of the loft near the area, as well as the area trap, &c., painted white; it serves as a mark for the young birds in finding their way in and out. The landing-place outside the area itself should not be too large, so as to afford the birds a temptation to sit about on it instead of coming into the loft.

"Having selected the birds one wishes to train, they must be taken out in a box or basket to be thrown the first time. The distance should be not more than 500 or 600 yards, and the time morning, as early as you like. The birds should be hungry, not voracious, but just nicely hungry, so that when home they may come into the loft to feed at once. A nice, clear, tolerably still day should be selected for each throw when commencing to train, if possible, in order to give the young birds every advantage. They may then be taken the next day, or as soon as convenient, but the sooner the better, to the same distance, in another direction, and so on until they have been sent in four, or at least in three, directions around their home. This done, the distance may be doubled, and again sent to the four points of the compass. They will next be taken a mile, or a mile and a half in each direction, and by this time will have a pretty general acquaintance with the country immediately adjacent to their home in all directions.

"If the birds are to be trained for any particular race, they may be sent only in that one direction, but if to be *generally* trained they should still be taught to fly the country on all sides of their homes. The stages may now be two miles, then four, eight, twelve, twenty, and then ten miles at a stage, but I should not recommend longer stages than that until they have passed fifty miles, when they may be sent sixteen and twenty miles at a step. This course of training is the gentlest that can well be imagined. It will, of course, take some trouble to carry it out, as in the preliminary lessons a large number of throws are given to the birds with but very little increase in distance; but it will *make* them fly about well all around their home whether they like it or no. There is not much risk of losing them at such puny distances, but they are all the time learning what is required of them. They begin then to see what to do, and though flying round and round for a long time at first, soon understand their business, and gradually lose less time in starting; then, when they are in their actual distance training, they are up to their work and do their best to get off to their homes without delay. Many amateurs train their birds much more severely and much less gradually even here in England; but it may be taken as an axiom of pigeon flying that you *cannot* train *too* gradually, train how you may. I write this for the novice who wishes to learn how to begin; the experienced amateur needs no such information—his tutor has been Experience, and as each one may well say, a harsh one too. The birds should, as before mentioned, never be thrown with a crop full of food; the bird is not then inclined to fly, would rather pitch upon some roof and have a sleep, and if it be towards evening may chance to stop there all night, unless some cat should sup and choose pigeon for treat. Care should be taken, when beginning to train a bird, not to liberate it in the immediate vicinity of buildings if it can possibly be avoided, as such a course tempts the bird to alight, and it will then soon grow into a *habit* of alighting, when thrown, if it have the opportunity. When liberated the bird should be thrown upwards from the hand firmly but gently, and without pulling out or disarranging the feathers. I have said *pulling out*, because inexperienced persons, when throwing a bird, are apt to retain a few feathers in hand after the bird has flown. One of my hens sent to be thrown thus lost every feather of her tail, both large and small, and in such a state I saw her when she arrived. In the preliminary stage, say up to ten miles or so, it is

the better plan to throw each bird singly, that it may, without any others to distract its attention, encourage, or mislead it, use its own faculties to regain its home; afterwards they may all be thrown together, and have the chance of competing on equal terms. If it be desired to test the birds more severely after having been well trained all round for two miles or so (which I consider to be an *essential* lesson), they may be sent five, ten, twenty, and so on to fifty by ten-mile stages, and may then be sent from sixteen to thirty miles at a stretch, but probably at the loss of a good many birds.

"The Belgian method of training is pretty much the same as described above, except that the stages are, after fifty miles, exceedingly severe, the birds being sent fifty, a hundred, and even more miles at a single stage; but the losses among these birds are likewise proportionately heavy in bad weather. Some of the best lofts in Belgium have been fearfully depopulated at a single stage.

"Young birds should not be thrown in the evening or late in the afternoon. The morning is the proper time, when they are fresh and sharp. When the birds are well in for their training, one soon sees which birds are likely to turn out the fastest, and under what conditions. At every throw, the time should be taken as nearly as possible, the wind and weather noted, and the performance of each bird accurately recorded; and for this purpose a book may be ruled with columns, for date, description of bird, where from, time started, time arrived, wind, weather, and remarks. The various flights may then be put down, as they occur consecutively one after another, or each bird may have a separate page or half-page to itself, so as to have all its performances together. In this manner the owner can see at a glance what work each bird is doing; and special attention should be given to the results so obtained, as it will be found that some or one of the birds will battle with a head wind much better than others or another, and will come better with the wind behind it, while a third will come with the wind or rain against it or without. One is thus enabled to tell pretty well, when waiting for the birds coming in, which will be home first of the lot sent, by the state of the weather at the time.

"Some amateurs keep their birds in the dark for a short time before flying, being of opinion that it makes them come more quickly; and the Belgian amateurs prefer to keep their lofts rather darker than we do here.

"When the birds are in regular training, their bodies feel much more compact, their feathers are harder and closer to the body, and the birds altogether seem brisker, sharper, more healthy than when idle; and there soon disappears the superfluous fat, which is quickly replaced by muscle. When taken in the hand, if in proper condition, the bird will have a sort of propensity to slip through the hands, the head up, and eyes looking out for a chance to be off and use the wings, which are ready and willing. The bird, in fact, appears to be in perfect trim and splendid mettle.

"In training the birds, it will be found in most cases impossible to send an attendant with them, when the distance is at all considerable, though this is the only certain plan of getting them thrown properly, and cared for as they ought to be; but, as a rule, they must be intrusted to some one at their destination to be thrown, and have to risk the weather they are liberated in, and other hazards. If no friend reside at the place from which they are to be thrown, the ordinary course in practice is to consign them to the station-master, who has been communicated with beforehand, with the necessary instructions. Nearly all the masters are kind enough to give their assistance when allowed by their company; and I believe the London and North-Western Company to be the only company which refuses to allow their station-masters to aid amateurs in this respect. As a general rule, the birds are thus liberated fairly enough. But if they arrive at the station

in bad weather, and the master should not himself be an amateur, they may perhaps be sent off in a pouring rain; or, perchance, they are delayed in their arrival, and liberated at sunset or later still. Again, the station-master himself may be away or particularly engaged, and the birds be thus unavoidably relegated to a porter, or some one else, and thus receive too little or *too much* attention, as the case may be! All these difficulties are obviated by the employment of an attendant; but the luxury is a costly one, and, therefore, cannot usually be indulged in by the ordinary run of amateurs.

"The receptacle for the birds during transit is worthy of some thought, and especially that one in which they are carried when taking their early lessons, and have therefore to be carried by hand. A small wicker basket does very well if nothing else be at hand, about fourteen inches by six inches, by eight inches or nine inches deep. This will hold four birds very well. A better plan is to be provided with a box made of light pine, fourteen and a half inches by six and a quarter inches, the depth being regulated by the number of floors required. Each floor should be about five inches in height, with a partition running diagonally across from corner to corner, but not running quite close up to the sides, leaving a space of one inch or half an inch between the end of the partition and the sides of the box. The top, sides, and bottom are all dovetailed, or otherwise secured, a leather handle being screwed upon the top. The ends should be made to draw up and down (as the lid of a box for chessmen would if the box stood on its end). The plan of each floor would be thus with the partition *a* upon it. Each floor thus holds two birds, and by

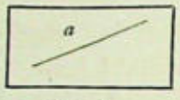


Fig. 67.

having two or three floors, which will not make the box too deep to be carried comfortably, two or three pairs are easily stowed away. The air-holes should be bored on *one side* only, two or more rows from the top to the bottom. The box can thus be carried with the side pierced with the holes inside, next to the legs when walking, and it is almost impossible for passengers to tell that it is a pigeon box at all. This is an advantage, as some people are particularly curious as to pigeons, especially youngsters, who hope to see the birds liberated. A box so constructed is very easy to carry, as the arm may be kept tolerably close to the side, and not have to be stretched out a foot or so as with a broad hamper; the birds are also kept separate, and there is no unseemly fighting or cooing on the way. In filling it, care must be taken at each end of the box to put in at the top, or *first*, the bird required to be thrown *last*, as on pulling up the end the bottom bird is liberated first.

"For training a number of birds by rail various hampers or panniers have been tried, but those used by the London Amateur Pigeon Society appear to me to be of a very convenient pattern. They are made of osiers peeled, and in size are thirty-six by eighteen inches, and nine inches in depth; the fronts and backs are closely woven, as also the ends, with the exception of a space left right across from front to back, across the ends, through which the birds may put their heads to drink from a vessel placed in a wicker guard, interwoven with the hamper. The tops are open wicker-work, and made fast with the ends and back, having also a small opening in the centre about seven inches by five inches through which to fill the pannier. The front hinges on the bottom, and thus lets down, like the trap of an area or as a flap. Two straps go round across the top, bottom, and sides, one near each end, and riveted to the bottom. A piece of cloth or sacking is put at the bottom, and a layer of dry tan put in. This is the best possible material for the purpose, as it does

not shift much during the journey, and quickly dries up the droppings; the birds can also find the corn thrown to them on a long journey better than with straw, long or short; sawdust is too small and light. When prepared for a journey the straps are buckled up tightly, and a string or tape passed through each loose end and the main strap, and then tied in a knot; the centre of the falling front is also tied to the top. Each of these strings, the front one, and that on each strap, is then passed through a leaden seal, which is impressed with the name of the Society by means of a pair of pincers carrying dies. The strings are first passed through the leaden blanks, then tied again, and sealed tightly with the pincers, technically called in Belgium *pince à plombs*. The birds are then passed into the pannier through the small opening, the lid of which is afterwards sealed in the same way. The panniers of the Brighton and County of Sussex Society open at the top, which has a margin of closely woven wicker work round the edge, which strengthens the top, and may keep the birds quieter when in transit. In providing panniers it may be taken that each bird should be allowed twenty-seven square inches superficial. This will fill the basket, and yet give the birds room enough. In Belgium the government, in whose hands the railways are, make special arrangements for carrying the birds sent to the different stations in France for training, and an enormous number of birds are thus sent weekly. On the 16th May, 1874, no less than forty-six panniers passed through Brussels on their way to their training stages, which would represent about 30,000 sent on that day alone. On the 24th of the same month 30,000 were sent, and on the 31st 40,000. Again, on the 23rd of May, 1875, the province of Liège sent 46,000 birds for training by *two special trains, each being composed of twenty-three vans*. In many instances an attendant or *convoyeur* accompanies them, but that course is not general at present. It has been suggested that the various Societies should have agents at the towns from which the birds are trained, and that they should throw any birds sent to them.

"It is well to mark all birds used for training as soon as the feathers are long enough to carry the brands, which will be when they are six or seven weeks old. Various methods are adopted for the printing of the name and address of the owner. It may be a stereotype, printing the name and address in indorsing ink or printers' ink, or a block printing a black ground, and leaving the letters bare without ink. The ordinary type used for printing also answers very well indeed, if the letters have a broad surface, so that they can give a nice clear and wide impression; a stencil plate gives a clear mark, but it is rather troublesome to use, as one must have both hands engaged when marking with it. The ink is taken up from an ordinary cloth pad, which is kept moist therewith. If one pad only be used, put a little ink under the top layer of cloth, and stamp the pad with the type a few times to distribute the ink equally over the same. If two pads are used, put the ink on one and rub the two together. India-rubber brands are also in use, and *if kept clean*, are well adapted for the purpose. A set of numerals, from 0 to 9, should also be obtained, and the birds, if many are kept, stamped with numbers which are entered in a book, so that they may be traced and recognised at any time in one's books, and also identified in case they are found by strangers, by brand and number also. I find that it is most useful to number every bird as soon as it can fly, as being much more easily remembered and readily referred to than if named, though sometimes one is apt to name a special favourite also. The marks are placed on the flight feathers of the wings or on the tail, more usually the former. It is better to have an assistant to hold the bird and extend the wing, so that the feathers be flat on the corner of a table or on a small box or block, while the brands and numbers are put on by oneself, placing a thick pad of india-rubber or blotting paper beneath the feathers operated upon; or, in case no aid is at hand, a wooden block may be used, with two stout wires knocked into it perpendicularly, each about one inch long and about one and a half from each other. Then place the wing on the

block, with the feather to be marked between the two upright wires, which will thus keep off the other feathers, and, holding the bird in one hand, stamp with the other before it raises its wing off the block. The marks must of course be renewed as the feathers are thrown in the moult.

"The work of training is certainly somewhat arduous, and oftentimes discouraging; but it must be gone through in one way or another if the birds are ever to do any long distance or to race for any distance at all; and on the subject of racing I will next touch. It will be well, perhaps, at this point, to inquire what has been done in Belgium as regards pigeon racing, before considering the sport as it at present endeavours to exist in England.

"It was in the year 1818, M. Chapuis says, that the first race of any note took place, by certain amateurs of Herve sending their birds to Frankfort-on-the-Main. And about 1820 a bird flew from Paris, carrying off the first prize in the race; and such was the homage paid to the winner, that it was carried in state through the town, preceded by musicians, and followed by two small cannons, which were discharged at intervals to notify to the astonished inhabitants the passage of the victor. The amateurs of Verviers sent their birds to London in 1823, and the fact of their return is well authenticated. Then followed a race from Lyons, which was at that time considered a very long distance indeed. The birds used to be sent to neighbouring towns in a cart hired for the purpose, upon which hoops were placed, and these were covered with some waterproof material, the birds inside being provided with perches, food, and water, were not so badly off, I think. Gradually the Societies grew, and, as the means of transit improved, longer distances were reached, until, at the present time, every town in Belgium has many Societies, and almost each village has at least one. The King and the Count of Flanders each subsidise the Societies by giving prizes, as do also the communal authorities. As before mentioned, the railways are under the control of the State, and special arrangements are made for the benefit of the pigeons and amateurs, so that they have every facility and encouragement, including a clear atmosphere and a flat country.

"In order to have the old birds in good condition for the long races in July and August, they endeavour to retard the moult as much as possible, and this they do by keeping the birds on short commons during the winter and early spring. The birds thus begin to lay late, are breeding late, and moult late; but they are careful that the birds should not weaken themselves by allowing them to rear too many young; and the young of these birds being valuable, the usual course is to change the young with a pair of common birds, giving the two good ones to the common parents, and placing not more than one of the common squeakers under the good birds. With reference to the speed of the birds in the Belgian races M. Chapuis gives the results of twenty-one races. The particulars of the four showing the highest speed attained are given below:—

Society.	To	From	Date.	Yards per Minute.
Hirondelle	Dison	Blois	3rd June, 1860	1,772
St. Esprit	Verviers	Châtellerault	16th July, 1856	1,449
Union et Progrès	Brussels	Châteauroux	5th July, 1857	1,443
Dinantaise	Dinant	Paris	21st June, 1857	1,422

"We may compare the above with the average speed attained during 1874 and 1875, and the comparison will be interesting, as showing whether or not any advance has been made in the capabilities of individual birds.

"The winning birds in the various races flown on the dates given in the following table

attained the average speed as appended. It will be remarked that all the days named are Sundays; it is the custom on the Continent to fly all the matches on that day if possible:—

Date.	Yards per Minute.	Miles per Hour.	Date.	Yards per Minute.	Miles per Hour.
7th June, 1874	860	29½	30th May, 1875	699	23¾
14th ,, ,,	831	28¼	6th June, ,,	1,531	52¼
14th ,, ,,	1,383	47¼	13th ,, ,,	1,531	52¼
21st ,, ,,	853	29	20th ,, ,,	1,476	50¼
28th ,, ,,	1,208	41¼	27th ,, ,,	1,208	41¼

"Thus we see that the average speed of the four fastest races chosen by M. Chapuis, ranging from 1854—1860, is 1,521½, and the average speed of the first four weeks in June, 1875, taking the long races with the short, and the slow with the fast, is 1,436½ yards per minute.

"The number of birds actually thrown in each race is very large; and when one considers that many Societies are racing from the same point at the same time, the trouble experienced in getting them all thrown fairly and properly at a railway station may well be imagined. Thus, on Saturday, 26th June, 1875, there arrived at Châtellerault railway station the following panniers for the liberation of the birds, numbering in all about 2,000, at the hours given:—

Society.	Town.	Panniers.	To be Liberated.
Snelle Duif . .	Turnhout . .	1 . .	4.0 a.m.
Vreyheid . . .	Berchem . .	3 . .	4.15 ,,
St. Sébastien . .	Antwerp . .	22 . .	4.35 ,,
l'Espérance . .	Malins . . .	9 . .	5.0 ,,
Snelle Vlucht . .	Eecheren . .	5 . .	5.0 ,,
Federation . .	Vieux Dieu . .	5 . .	5.0 ,,
,, . .	Lierre . . .	4 . .	5.0 ,,
,, . .	Binche . . .	13 . .	4.50 ,,

"The following statistics will give some idea of the birds thus said to be flown in the various races, and the distances attained by so large a number of birds, which have successfully gone through the training ordeal:—

Date.	To	From	Miles.	Birds Started.
14th June, 1874	Lille	Chartres	164	1,266
,, ,, ,,	Roubaix	,,	166	300
,, ,, ,,	Namur	Ferté St. Aubin	226	602
,, ,, ,,	Elberfeld	Breme	145	689
28th ,, ,,	Antwerp	Châteauroux	320	544
29th ,, ,,	Liège	Charmant	433	320
5th July, ,,	Lokeren	Tours	298	776
,, ,, ,,	Dampremy	Châteauroux	273	1,106
12th ,, ,,	Namur	Périgueux	400	670
25th ,, ,,	Brussels	Montpellier	487	667
,, ,, ,,	Ghent	Morceux	545	587
18th ,, ,,	Liège	Toulouse	505	260
6th June, 1875	St. Nicholas	Orleans	243	1,445
13th ,, ,,	Dampremy	Bourges	242	1,588
20th ,, ,,	Waesmunster	Blois	267	1,579
11th July, ,,	Charleroi	Blois	234	2,005

"The long distances attained, and the number of birds sent those distances, should be noted in the above list, proving, as it does, that the good birds in Belgium are legion.

"In the race from Blois, the last but one mentioned in the list, the number of prize-winners was 248. Of these we have selected a few, giving below the order in which these selected birds came in, and the speed they attained, to show how near they come together. The speed is in mètres, as showing the exact classification by the Society organising the race:—

No.	1	attained a speed of	1,095	mètres	per minute.
	2	,, ,,	1,094	,,	,,
	3	,, ,,	1,092	,,	,,
47—	53	,, ,,	1,050	,,	,,
	54	,, ,,	1,049	,,	,,
	203	,, ,,	1,012	,,	,,
	204	,, ,,	1,011	,,	,,
238—	248	,, ,,	1,004	,,	,,

"In the race from Orleans (last but three on the same list), flown on the 6th June, 1875, the birds were *timed* in as follows:—

1,445 birds, 243 miles, thrown at 6 a.m.

No.	1	arrived at	10.51 a.m.
	2	,,	10.53 ,,
	3	,,	10.53 ,,
	4	,,	10.54 ,,
20—	25	,,	10.58 ,,
	31	,,	11.0 ,,
	214	,,	11.14 ,,

Thus the 214 birds were all in within twenty-three minutes.

"Some of the races arranged for July and August, 1875, were as follows:—

Agen to Liège	485 miles.
Tarbes to Malins	554 ,,
St. Sebastien d' l'Indre to Malins	337 ,,
Ambazac to Malins	365 ,,
Montauban to Brussels	476 ,,
Agen to Malins	487 ,,
Bayonne to Ghent	560 ,,
Bordeaux to Liège	478 ,,
Lourdes to Liège	565 ,,

"The following return of the races, the results of which were published in *L'Epervier* during the years 1873 and 1874, is of great interest, showing as it does the increase in the number of races from year to year:—

Provinces.	1873.		1874.	
	Races.	No. of Prizes.	Races.	No. of Prizes.
Brabant	287	5,126	334	6,859
Hainaut	206	4,424	230	5,487
Flandre, East	147	3,232	116	3,898
Liège	134	3,637	183	3,917
Flandre, West	133	2,227	155	2,535
Anvers	74	2,763	90	3,250
Namur	64	1,247	75	1,548
Foreign Places	95	2,114	115	3,026
	1,140	24,770	1,340	30,520

"The approximate number of the pigeons and value of the prizes would be:—

	Pigeons.	Value of Prizes.
1873	197,160	591,400 francs.
1874	244,160	732,480 ,,

"That a large number of the birds sent to these races never reach their homes is no doubt a fact, but the birds are generally lost at long distances, and not during the shorter training stages, as the case is here very often; for the birds being marked, and so many people keeping pigeons, as soon as a bird is found the owner is communicated with as a rule, either directly or through *L'Épervier*, the organ of the Societies and amateurs; though of course the persons who make a business of trapping birds for the London and other gun clubs take care to keep the birds for the purposes of their traffic. But possibly this organised system of theft will soon be put down by the law in Belgium.

"Every owner of fancy or Homing Pigeons should carefully note any bird which has strayed to his loft, catch it, and, if branded, communicate with the owner; or in case no name and address, but only a private mark is on the bird, inform the editor of one or other of the poultry and pigeon papers of the fact, in order that the bird may be returned if possible. The bird may be of value to the rightful owner, but is useless to the finder. He may himself be the loser of a bird some day, and glad to get it back again by the same means. The *wings* and the *tail* should be thoroughly examined, as I state once again for the benefit of novices, the brands are always to be found there if at all.

"I now come to the method of carrying out a race, and in this connection may mention that the two leading societies in London—in fact the only Societies of any note—are the Alliance Amateur Pigeon Society, and the London Amateur Pigeon Society. There are also Societies in the larger provincial centres, such as Birmingham and Liverpool. The Alliance is the older of the two London Societies, and formerly did not race on the Belgian system, but recently has adopted some of the Belgian regulations in certain of their races. The London Amateur Pigeon Society, however, has adopted the Belgian system *in toto* (except that hitherto the races have been open to members only), and therefore I propose to give a sketch of the routine of a race as carried out by them. The birds must be entered on or before a certain day mentioned in the conditions of the race; the distances from the starting-point to *each* member's house are ascertained, and must be challenged (if at all) before the entries are closed. The distance between each member's house and the nearest telegraph office is also ascertained, and ratable allowances made on such distances of ten minutes to the mile. The birds are then marked and registered with their number and description in a book kept for the purpose, the entry fees and training fees paid per bird, the latter fee being optional, as members may train their own birds if they wish. The birds are then delivered at the Society's rooms each day named in the conditions, placed in panniers sealed with the Society's leaden seals, and sent for training, and so on for each stage. Notice is given to the secretary of the birds sent each time, and he on hearing particulars of the start sends a copy of the same to each member having birds started at the particular stage in question. The night before the race, all the birds members intend to race with are brought to the rooms and given into the custody of two deputed members (if possible members having no birds entered); they are, after the meeting is over, privately marked with a letter, in addition to the stamp and number already on the wing, each bird with a different letter or letters, and the two members have them in their sole charge, and see them off on

the following morning to the starting-point. The starter telegraphs the time of the start, and each member on the arrival of his bird must telegraph to the rooms the description of the bird, *number, and letter;* the latter of course he cannot know until he sees it on the bird, and must in the evening produce the bird alive at the rooms. The time is taken from the time of 'handing in' the message to the telegraph clerk, *less* the allowance for the distance from the loft to the telegraph office. The distances of each bird, and the time of each, are then the basis of classification of the winners; the bird doing the greatest number of yards in a minute wins, the bird doing the next number to be second, and so on. Thus each bird is classified according to his own actual and individual speed.

"The whole of the numbers, marks, &c., distances, and times, are entered in a racing register kept for the purpose.

"For the young birds a special stamp and set of numbers is kept, so as to distinguish them from the old ones at the latter end of the season, when the young birds' races come off. This system seems to be as fair as possible to all competitors, and the objectionable practice of running with the birds through the streets, and taking the time from the production of the same, is superseded, thus enabling the whole thing to be carried out quietly and without much risk of failure, except through actual fraud, which has no place in a society of gentlemen.

"In any race which occupies more than one day between the start and the arrival of any of the winners, the better plan is not to count against the birds the hours from sunset to sunrise, as no bird would be likely to be actually flying during that time; and such an arrangement prevents any unfairness in favour of a bird just reaching his house at night, as against another bird which has to fly a much greater distance on the following morning, having flown up to dark, possibly in company with, and therefore at an equal speed with, the one having the shorter distance. Thus, if two birds, A and B, are flying from Berwick, A to go to Peterborough and B to London, both arriving at Peterborough together at sunset, A goes into its loft, possibly taking first prize, while B, which has flown at an equal speed, may start again in the morning, and fly on to London still faster, but be placed low down on the list, because he would have the hours of the night reckoned against him. This is avoided by the plan above recommended and now coming into vogue.

"The formation of Societies is the grand means of cultivating the Homing Pigeon; and to all who desire to train cheaply, whether they are prepared to race or not, opportunities are now offered, so far as London and the suburbs are concerned, of doing so themselves, as well as of aiding others, by supporting Societies which have for one of their objects the raising of the *status* of pigeon-flying as a sport.

"The uses of the Homing Pigeon have been fully exemplified already by what took place during the Franco-German War of 1870—71, and the result is that nearly every European country except England has adopted the bird as a means of conveying military intelligence; and military lofts are being rapidly established in all parts of the Continent. In ordinary times of peace they are of great use in conveying any kind of intelligence, if good birds are used and properly trained, so that some dependence may be placed upon them. The sport is growing fast, and promises soon to become popular, as it is even now supported by many members of the middle and upper classes."

One of the most difficult questions to decide in connection with Pigeon Shows is the proper *status* of Homing Pigeons as regards the show-pen. At a large proportion of exhibitions now, a class is added "for the best Homing bird;" and no class so invariably gives rise to a large amount of dissatisfaction with the awards. The reason of this will be seen if the plate of Homing Pigeons be compared with any of the representations we have already given of Long-faced Antwerps. By

many judges the two are confounded still, and the prizes hence awarded to birds which present in most perfection the settled Antwerp type, which is recognisable enough. But the true Homing bird is not bred in this way, and cannot, as we have seen, be depended on for colour, or even for form. True, there is a general *character* which may perhaps be said to distinguish the *majority* of the best flying birds; but in details even of shape, such as length and thickness of beak, or shape of skull, two noted champions may differ widely, and it is not only possible, but far from improbable, that the really "best" performer may be the very ugliest bird in the class; and it certainly does happen with singular regularity that such usually gets overlooked.

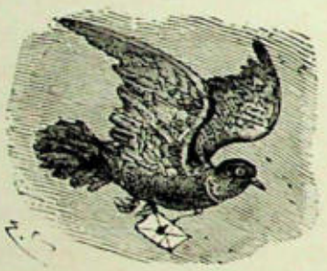
It is easier to find fault with this than to find a remedy; and the question rather seems to us to be, whether the class, as usually described, is not *per se* a mistake. How *can* a bird whose sole standard of value is what it can do, be judged by its looks? That is the fundamental difficulty; and to meet it, many shows now stipulate that all the birds be stamped and flown, and the prizes only given if they are safely returned. This certainly proves that the birds *can* fly, more or less; but it does no more. It frequently happens that the winners are owned in the immediate neighbourhood, to which any bird accustomed to liberty would easily return; and such a test by no means gives any security that the winners are the *best* Homing birds. The difficulty is, in fact, very similar to that which would have to be encountered by a judge of horses, were he called upon to select from their *looks alone*, without ever seeing them run, the best of a lot of race-horses. It is, however, greater, the difference in external appearance being far more; and it seems to us so impossible, and is proved so by daily experience, for a judge to select the best performers as they stand in the pens, that it would appear better to contrive some change in the conditions which place the matter upon a more logical footing.

We can only propose two alternatives, one of which is suggested by the very comparison we have just drawn. It is, that the title of the class should be changed to either the "likeliest" or the "handsomest Homing Pigeon," requiring a declaration in writing before any prize was actually awarded, that the bird had been really flown for some given distance—say 100 miles. Such a declaration would be more real guarantee that the birds *were* Homing Pigeons than the mere fact of returning to a home which is very probably close by; while, on the other hand, the *status* of the whole class being thus guaranteed, the actual awards would professedly be based on the only possible ground of *appearances*, and no room left for complaint because the judge did not perform the impossible task of selecting by eye alone the "best" Homing Pigeon. Judging a class which by the conditions are insured as being really a fair quality of Homing birds, he would not even pretend to do more than pick out the most pleasing to the eye; and with this we think all parties would be better satisfied than with the state of things which has hitherto usually prevailed.

The other suggestion is, however, in our opinion, far preferable. It is to make such a class a *local* one, so that the birds entered may be flown *to* the show instead of *from* it, from a point announced in the schedules. By such a plan, with a fair time allowance for distance from the exhibition hall, the birds would be really tested, and it would be in fact a genuine pigeon-race, with the addition that all the competitors were exhibited and their order of arrival named, for the information and interest of the public. Wherever there are sufficient amateurs around any given exhibition to support such a class, such a plan as this would be far the best; and it would possess the further great advantage, that a class of birds which were stated on the pens to have *done a given distance in a given time*, would probably do more to awaken public interest in pigeon-flying, while on view at a large exhibition, than anything else which could be devised. At the start for a special pigeon-race there are but few spectators; at a large and popular show the competitors and winners in such a race as we suggest would become objects of interest to thousands; and though

somewhat of an innovation, we venture on these grounds very strongly to recommend this method of solving the difficulty to all committees who can find sufficient local support for it.

It may be well to add a few words regarding the transmission of messages by Homing Pigeons. The popular notion as to the mode of doing this has been already sneered at by Mr. Harrison, and is well depicted in the tail-piece below; it will be obvious to any one on reflection that a bird thus burdened could never fly far. The message must in all cases be written or printed on a small, and particularly a *narrow* slip of paper. During the siege of Paris many messages were set up in type in columns like a page of a newspaper, and then photographed in microscopic size on a document about two inches long by an inch wide, which on receipt was enlarged by a magnifier to be copied out in writing. Such a small slip may be either wound closely round the shank of the leg, and then gummed on the edge to keep it there, or rolled closely into a small cylinder, which is then tied by a thread round each end, under and close to the quill of one of the middle tail-feathers. Fastened in this way, the flight of the bird is not impeded in the least, and thus a message may be sent for hundreds of miles.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TURBIT.

THE Turbit well deserves to be ranked amongst the "high-class" Toys, having, like the Jacobin, Trumpeter, &c., other properties besides colour or marking. From Moore downwards we have never seen any satisfactory explanations of the name by which it is known, though he says that the Dutch call it "Cortbelle," or short beak, from the character of its bill. The thought has struck us whether the shape of the coloured portion of the wing may have suggested some resemblance to the "Turbot," and hence been corrupted into Turbit; but this is but a doubtful fancy at best.

There is no doubt that the bird is of Eastern origin, and from it are descended a whole class of what may be generally described as the Frilled and Short-headed Toys. There can be no more doubt that the Owl Pigeon and the Turbit are most closely related, or rather, one actually bred from the other, though it is not so easy to decide which was the original variety. There is little, if any, difference, except in the crest and the colour; for which reason the birds sometimes called Whole-coloured White Turbits might just as accurately be termed Peaked or Crested Owls, the colour and the crest being almost the only distinction between them. The coloured varieties are numerous, comprising Blacks, Reds, Yellows, Blues, Silvers, Mealies, Blue and Dun Chequers, Blue with White Bars, &c. &c. Whatever the colour is, however, it is or should be confined to the shoulders of the wings, the flights and all the rest of the bird being pure white. Formerly all but Reds and Yellows were preferred with coloured tails, but these are now scarcely ever seen.

Turbits of ordinary quality are hardy, and very good breeders, requiring no nurses to rear their progeny; but, like many other varieties, it is different with birds of very high-class quality. This arises from the fulness of the gullet hereafter to be described, and which adds so much to the beauty of high-class specimens. It is generally found that the better this point is developed the narrower or smaller is the *internal* gullet or throat, so that the old birds find it difficult or impossible to disgorge food for their young ones. This is the simple reason that very valuable Turbits or Owls so often fail to rear their young. These are as strong as other pigeons; but the old birds find it so difficult and even painful to disgorge food for them, that they either soon cease, and allow them to die, or the effort produces some sort of inflammation, which causes canker of the mouth in the young ones. We have known many of the best young birds perish in this way, and would therefore recommend all who know that they have really first-class stock to provide nurses, for which duty nothing can be better than the coarser birds of the same breed.

In proceeding to enumerate the points of the Turbit, we will take first the beak, which is desired short and thick, with a downward inclination, the same as in the Owl. This appearance is greatly increased, as in the Antwerp, by a good development of wart or wattle on the upper mandible, but this, of course, greatly depends upon age, and in this particular, therefore, the Turbit improves as it grows to maturity, though a good thick beak will mature the beak wattle a great deal sooner than one of little substance.

The next property is the gullet before mentioned, called by others the dew-lap. This property

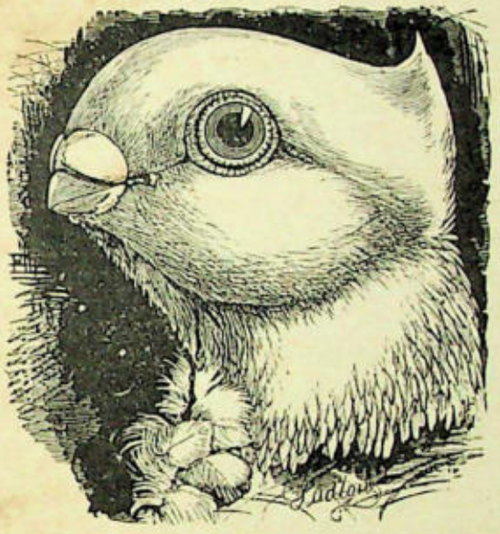
adds greatly to the appearance of shortness in beak and face; indeed, without it we do not think any bird can have the appearance a fancier desires, and a good gullet will often give a very fair or even fine appearance to a bird really faulty in the beak. This gullet is not the real throat, but merely a development of the skin, being quite transparent if a lighted candle be held the other side. In a good specimen it appears to start from the very base of the under mandible, and looks like a stay, as if to draw and hold the beak down. It should be as deep as possible—deep, that is, from front to back, rather than from top to bottom. We value this property very highly, especially when found in a nice "arch-faced" bird, because it is one which cannot be imitated or improved by art, but must be bred in the bird. Mere down-face is often imitated, the beak being manipulated in the manner already described in the chapter on Barbs, which improves the downward set of the beak. But what is desired is one downward sweep from the highest point near the back of the head, and this form of the skull cannot be produced by art. Here is the great value of a good gullet, that it is generally (we have seen a few exceptions) a pretty good test of the genuineness of the other point. A really good bird has naturally the finely-curved head; and when these points are naturally in the bird, a good gullet is rarely absent. Such a bird need not therefore be suspected; but if a bird with fine down-face be found with no gullet, or very little, there is—not certainty, perhaps, but cause for very grave suspicion, that the other point is the result of art. We never saw a really naturally good Turbit that had not a good gullet; while very rarely did we see this point good that the bird had not other valuable properties. Some have said that a good gullet is the effect of age, and not to be expected in a young bird; but this is not correct. With age it does become somewhat fuller and deeper, but if the desired quality be not clearly discernible even in the nest-pan—say, at the age of three weeks—it will never be what is desired; and when the bird is a few months old it should be, though not perhaps quite fully developed, well marked and prominent.

Next is the head itself, which should be, like the gullet, well formed from an early age, and if not well formed in the nest-pan, never will become so. Of course age will increase the size and development of the head, as in all other varieties of Short-faced Pigeons, but it adds little to shape. This should be finely rounded in front, showing an even curve or arch from the point of the beak to the top of the head, and thence sloping to the back. This causes a rather long appearance from the front to the peak or crest; and if the bird has a good gullet and the peak or crest is on the proper part of the head, the effect is a great appearance of depth from gullet to crest, especially in profile. The front of the skull should be very broad in proportion to the size of the bird, as also the cheeks under the eyes. This last point is called by some fulness of muff or whisker, and is rarely seen in inferior birds.

The next point is the peak or crest, though the latter term is more strictly applicable to what are called shell-crested birds. These latter, we believe, were at one time preferred, and the peak-crest, now so greatly admired, seems to be the work of modern fanciers, by whom it is so much preferred, that the old shell-crest is now almost discarded. We certainly consider the peak-crest much the most attractive as well as most difficult to breed, and that in fact with it the Turbit has gained an additional point; still we must regret to see the shell-crest despised, knowing, as we do, that but for it we should never have attained the peak-crested birds. Too many birds, indeed, show neither a good shell-crest nor yet a peak, but a sort of half-and-half thing which is neither; and such crests often undergo a second moult before exhibition, to make them into good peak-crests, but such seldom succeeds. A good peak-crest must be high up, and evenly formed; and when this is naturally so, there will be found underneath what is called the mane, or a meeting of the feathers into a line at the back, as described in the Jacobin. This is possessed in perfection by

few, and never by an imperfect crest, which at the best is only accompanied by an irregular cluster of feathers, some straight, and others twisted, and curled, and uneven. Also, instead of rising well behind the peak, such a crest will show a hollow curve underneath, so as to make the neck from gullet to peak appear narrow. Some pretty good peaks, if set on too far down from the top, will show no mane; but a good peak, which requires no trimming, if high enough up, rarely fails to have a good mane. Sometimes an otherwise good peak will be much on one side, and, not seldom, the abstraction of a feather or two only will make all nicely even, in which case, we fear, few fanciers would refrain.

Better to explain the foregoing remarks, we give, in Fig. 68, representations of a Turbit head, with a good peak-crest, and all points as desired, and another showing the corresponding faults. Of course it will be understood that *all* the faults here shown, viz., the long beak, the want of gullet, the deficient mane, and peak too low down, are seldom seen collected in one bird;



PERFECT TURBIT HEAD.

Peak-crested.



FAULTY HEAD.

Showing long beak, long skull, bad crest, and no gullet.

Fig. 68.

one bird will be faulty in one point, and one in another; but it is convenient to show them thus collected, and a comparison of the two drawings will sufficiently answer our purpose.

The shell-crest hardly needs to be described, consisting of a fringe round the back of the head like the edge of a shell, very analogous to the crest of a Trumpeter, but not nearly so much developed. As regards crest alone, we think the effect of this much inferior to the other; but the curious thing is, that these two styles of crest are generally accompanied by inverse rank in other qualities. Few indeed are the peak-crested birds which possess the short, thick beak, fine skull, and good gullet we have described; and, as peak-crests are bred together, while the peak and mane improve, the other points become worse and worse, the beak getting thin, the skull narrow, and the gullet poor. On the other hand, these points are generally found in great perfection in shell-crested birds, which we believe to be the original of the Turbit; and therefore, much as we prefer peak-crests when we can see them of the right sort, we must not forget that chiefly from the shell-crowned birds have been obtained those other important qualities in which at one time peak-crests were so deficient.

The eyes of the Turbit, singularly enough, are black or "bull" for all varieties and colours.

The eye in all good specimens should be large for the size of the body, but the dark colour makes it appear larger still. Perhaps this apparent size may also be increased by the fact that instead of appearing near the centre of the side-face, as in most other pigeons, the eye of the Turbit is nearer the back of the head. Though the rule is for bull-eyes, we believe little if any objection would be made to birds with pearl or even orange-eyes, and we have seen a few very good birds with orange-eyes, and also broken eyes, or half bull and half orange. It would certainly be unjust to pass a bird first-class in other respects merely for the colour of the eyes. The colour of the eye is one of the points which tends to show that the Turbit was mainly derived from the White Owl, and the colour and crest from some other variety, which is our own opinion, though some good fanciers think the Owl was derived from the Turbit.

We come next to the prettiest of all points in this pigeon, viz., the frill on the breast, which is the most difficult of all the points to obtain, as it should and sometimes actually does appear. Of course all birds should have *some* frill; but in nearly all there is a great deficiency, not only in the proper quantity, but the manner in which it lies on the breast. The greater part have not half enough to begin with, and of these too many have it all on one side; and few indeed have a full development, parting in the middle as represented in our plates, and coming down from each side of the gullet at the top, becoming larger and wider till it rounds nicely off at the bottom. Such is termed a "rose-frill," and, like a good crop in a Pouter, hides a multitude of other faults, when found really good, and indeed is only too rarely found but in company with foul thighs, or some other such blemish.

The colour or marking of the Turbit, as already hinted, should be confined to the shoulder or covert-feathers of the wings; but it is difficult indeed to get this marking accurate, there being, as a rule, too much colour towards the lower part of the breast, and round the thighs. The latter is called being foul-thighed, and few really good specimens—especially peak-crested—are quite free from this fault. A bird quite faultless should, when both wings are lifted up, appear all pure white underneath, and this is found only when all the flights are perfect in colour. These should be pure white, and as in the Jacobin, perfection in the number of flights is necessary for freedom from foulness on the thighs, or even more so, as we never remember a Turbit short in the number of white flights but was more or less foul in thighs. With regard to this point of the flights, our illustrations (see page 251) of a Jacobin's wing may be referred to, as whatever is a fault in the one is a similar fault in the other. The cleanest-thighed birds, in fact, are generally those which have one or two of the *inner* flights white as well as the outer flights, on which account we would value such highly for the production of clean-marked birds, as the least foulness in the thighs is observable at once if not removed. This is often done by plucking; but the more skilful, as in other cases named by us, prefer to *cut* off the foul feathers close to the skin, which is permanent till next moult, whereas the plucked feathers soon grow again. From long experience we may give the following as a very generally safe rule to go by in deciding whether an apparently clean-thighed bird owes this point to trimming or not. If it has nine and nine white flights, or still better ten and ten, the fancier or judge may conclude that the bird is quite possibly genuine, and very little trimmed, if at all; but with less than nine white flights a side it is nearly impossible the thighs should not be foul, and as the coloured feathers are chiefly the soft downy ones, detection is easy, by blowing them apart, when the gaps may be seen. If nothing can be observed after parting the feathers all over the thighs, the removals must have been so very few that the bird may be fairly entitled to rank as a clean-thighed one. Perhaps some judges have rather caused this kind of manipulation by laying *too* much stress on clean thighs. For ourselves, we do not think the fault should be ranked as high



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TURBITS.

BLACK, RED, YELLOW.

as imperfections in head, beak, gullet, frill, or carriage, unless the thighs were so very foul that there was little hope of getting rid of it even in the produce. In that case the fault should discard the bird, unless when thus foul it was competing against other birds very inferior in other points; for as the Turbit is both a Toy Pigeon and undoubtedly a bird of colour, shape, and marking, points in these should be allowed great weight.

The colour of the Turbit is rich and good, the Reds and Yellows particularly being much better than most other varieties. Faults in this particular we would view much in the same light as we would view conspicuous foul thighs, the proper place of a badly-coloured bird, if good enough in other points, being in the breeding loft. It is hard enough to get what we want from even good-coloured birds; for a well-marked Turbit should show up the coloured portion as sharply and distinctly as if it were cut out of a piece of paper and stuck upon the wing. *All* the rest should appear when the wings are lifted as if a white pigeon. Few indeed can be seen of such, which we confess we have often wondered at, since it is an undoubted fact that all pigeons having so much white about them as the Turbit can be much more easily bred clean-thighed than others, such as the Pouter, which carry much more colour over the body.

The plumage of the Turbit is remarkable for the extra lustre on the neck. All pigeons appear lustrous, with a kind of metallic sheen (if coloured) on this part, when in good health. White pigeons show it to some extent; but what we mean is that the Turbit exhibits it far more than any *other* white-necked pigeon, its neck being like a piece of fine white satin, and sparkling in the sunshine in a most remarkable and beautiful manner.

The flights and tail are short, the whole bird, indeed, being rather short, tight, and compact, with a broad chest compared with other proportions. In this it resembles the Owl. It stands well upon its legs until age comes upon it, when it begins to droop its wings like the Short-faced Tumbler. Some of the larger specimens show more lengths of flight and tail, when aged, than we like, and the constitution of this variety is so good, that we have met with many twelve and fifteen years of age. Exhibition specimens, like all Toys, should undoubtedly be *small*, and as small as can be got without actual dwarfing, and the sacrifice of other qualities, but no one should discard a large bird, if good in points. As a rule, it is these larger specimens which possess in most perfection the points desired for exhibition, and are, therefore, most valuable stock birds. Not that we would prefer large birds even for breeding, if the fancier already possesses smaller, of good, sound constitutions, which exhibit all the points he desires; but in the absence of such, or should his small stock have become delicate and difficult to rear, one or two fine and large young hens, good in head properties, will often work wonders in a strain.

The legs and feet of the Turbit are clean, and in average proportion to other pigeons of the same size.

By some strange oversight, in the first edition of this work we entirely omitted even to mention one of the chief properties of the Turbit, viz., *carriage*. It is the more unaccountable, because, no matter how perfect this pigeon may be in all other properties, it cannot be considered a good specimen without the final grace of carriage and general shape. The carriage is upright, with the head thrown well back, as in the plates. Like the frill, when once obtained, this carriage can be preserved in a strain with only ordinary care in matching.

In dealing with the breeding of this pigeon, we naturally take as our standard the Black, because the contrast of its colours is greater and more pleasing. We would advise the fancier to first match a fine Shell-crested Black to as good a Peak-crest as he can get; and if he can find a good peak-crest in the cock, and on a young and vigorous bird, so much the better; if otherwise, let the hen be the more vigorous of the two, that her properties may have the predominance;

though we must say that, owing to their vigour of constitution, difference in age has less influence in this pigeon than in most others. However, get if possible a good peak-crest in the cock, and choose the hen for her colour and markings, skull, frill, &c. As to her crest, there are now almost as few really *perfect* shell-crests as peaks. The true shell-crest should reach all round the back of the head from eye to eye, ending on each side in a nice finish. Even the best of such crests do not look so attractive as the peak, in our opinion, though pretty and finished-looking; but in the anxiety of fanciers to get the peak, three-fourths of even so-called shell-crests are half-and-half; but this very fault will make it so much the *easier* to breed good peaks from them than if the shell-crest was the proper shape. The peak on the other bird, we need hardly say, must be good, for there can be little chance of breeding any quality from parents neither of which really possesses it, and the more so with a property which is itself rare. Of course, when any one may really have good-peaked birds, possessed of all other properties he desires, we would not advise him to cross with the shell. The point is too easily lost for that; and when the desired combination is once attained, it must be kept up in the usual way. Even a chance shell-crested bird bred from such a formed strain, if good in other qualities, would be a valuable stock-bird, as the progeny would probably go back to peaks if crossed with a good Peak-crest, and might be matched to such, even though deficient in head, beak, gullet, or frill, which are the great properties of the Shell-crest, while, on the other hand, the Peaks are often better in clean thighs and flights. So each bird should be selected as perfect as possible in its *special properties;* when of the progeny we would select the peaked bird which came nearest to the desired points, and breed it to the peaked parent, while, on the other hand, we would take the best Peak to breed to the Shell-crested one. We would even go as far as to breed the grand-daughter to the original Peak-crested cock, carefully choosing her for the beak, &c., which we had sought in the shell-cross, in order to keep the peak-crest well grounded in the strain; and by these means the breeder would be able to keep to the *same* strain for a good while, and be able to judge how to rectify every want that appeared.

When the head and similar points are got right, it is possible the markings may be somewhat faulty. If so, care must be next given to breed together those most free from foul feathers; and, of course, if the breeder's means and accommodation have allowed him to match up from his first materials several pairs, one adapted to secure one point, and another some others, he can proceed with much more certainty, as he can probably find from the progeny of these just what he desires. Thus he may get from one pair matched for head properties a bird with peak and beak and gullet all he wishes, but foul-thighed, and may find from another pair one with fairly good peak, but inferior in other points, yet clean-thighed. These, if of opposite sexes, and suitable in other respects, he may match together. It is in this way, by breeding for one or two points at a time, that perfection is at last attained; and to breed for all points together, from birds neither of which is perfect, is simply breeding for chance and nothing more. Of course all breeding is chance to some extent; but still the man who breeds for one point at a time, and secures what he has gained, will see that steady improvement in his stud which is the chief pleasure of a fancier, while he who trusts to get all at once will probably get nothing, but give up the attempt in disgust before he has really improved one single property.

We have spoken only of breeding Blacks together, so far; but, as with other pigeons, this is not always the best course, the progeny of such being frequently of bad colour, and sometimes Dun-chequers or Dun-chequered Reds. When the colour fails in any way, we would match the Black with a rich-coloured Red; and as Reds are mostly much cleaner in thigh than the Blacks, better in flights, and even as a rule in crest too, such a cross will probably do good in other ways. A rich-coloured Yellow may also be used in the same way, and generally, whenever a pair of Blacks

breed bad colours, if it occurred in a second nest, we would dismatch them at once, and put up again with something else. When both Yellow and Black are of the proper deep rich shade, this cross almost always produces good colours, and when there is an exception, the most likely "sport" will be Dun, which, when thus bred, is most valuable for breeding back to either Black or Yellows, producing the parent colour with either. The best-coloured Yellow Turbits we have ever seen were bred from such black-bred Duns. Similarly, the Red and Black cross may produce, as well as pure Reds or Blacks, Red interspersed with black ticks, or Strawberry-coloured birds, either of which will be most valuable for crossing to the Black again, with which they will produce beautiful lustrous black. But such birds should be avoided unless they were either bred at home, or at least known to be bred from good colours.

Red and Yellow Turbits are often found so fine in colour and markings that they really need only two properties to make them all that could be desired, viz., shortness and thickness of beak, and a great deal more frill than most of them possess. These points, as in the Blacks, are often found better developed in shell-crested specimens, and the same mode of breeding the two crests together is then to be advised. Many of these birds are, however, too large, since a Turbit should be very little larger than a Short-faced Tumbler. The Silvers are nearest the mark, perhaps, in point of size. In breeding Red or Yellow Turbits it will soon be noticed how much better the colour becomes with age, as in all other pigeons. Colour being of unusual importance in our present pigeon, all the notes and precautions we have laid down before for breeding these colours are to be particularly studied, breeding Reds from birds of mature age, whose colour and lustre is at their best, and doing the same with Yellows, sometimes crossing these with Reds, and especially re-crossing birds (either Red or Yellow) thus produced back to *Yellows* only, since while Red judiciously introduced greatly improves Yellows, the Yellow cannot improve the Red, and its products are therefore to be most carefully kept from contaminating the Red strains. It is chiefly the breeding together of young birds not matured in colour, or the injudicious crossing with Yellows, which produces the many pale-coloured Reds seen at the various shows. Such pale birds improve little with age, and even when crossed with Yellows do not improve them, but generally produce either a light mealy tinge or a kind of chequer of slightly paler colour than the ground, which when once got into a strain is most difficult to get rid of—on this account, rather than breed a good-coloured Yellow to a bad-coloured Red, we would far prefer to breed it to a good-coloured Black, provided the Black be perfectly free from all bluish tinge. If bad colours be produced we would breed them back as before stated.

As to the general want of frill, the only means of remedy is self-evident, viz., to breed from the best, matched together, that can be had. Many of the birds which are worst in nearly every other point greatly excel in this one alone. Thus the material lies at hand, but it will be seen how much must be done to get the perfect bird. There is so much less to do in Reds and Yellows as compared with Blacks, however, and both can be used with such success to help the Black, that it is perhaps through these colours success can be soonest obtained.

The Blue Turbit, like the Blue-pied Pouter, has one extra point among its properties, viz., the bars on the wings. It is as usual the most hardy of all the various colours. The Silver has the same qualities, and may indeed be considered as a sub-variety of the Blue. The proper Silver Turbit should have bars as dark as those of the dark-barred Silver Dragoon; and we have, indeed, heard people talk about their "black-barred" Silvers, but must say we never yet have seen one. We say the Silver *should* be thus barred; but the great majority of birds are kite-barred, and some so bad in colour that the bars resemble a kind of washed-out yellow. Such bars are very dangerous to breed, especially with a Blue, for not only does the faulty bar appear on the Silver

progeny, but even on the Blue, spoiling the whole effect, since a Blue pigeon can never look well without nice black bars. No matter how good the other qualities of such a kite-barred or brown-barred Blue Turbit, the fault is so glaring that it would inevitably cast a bird in anything like good competition. We have seen so many really fine Blue Turbits lose their chance in competition through faulty bars, that we thus strongly caution the amateur against ever crossing such a Kite-barred Silver with any good Blue, if he can possibly get instead a fair bird with dark bars. Far better get if possible a Blue hen; though this is not easy. We believe, in fact, the usual custom of breeding a Blue cock to a Silver hen to be connected with most of the mischief. It leads to the great comparative scarcity of good Blue hens, while the imperfect Silvers are plentiful (and of course it is much easier in comparison to select from such birds) with the other desired properties. When a Blue is really sound and good—and the deep clear colour of the Dragoon is what we mean—we would be content to breed it with a good dark-barred Silver, when the bars would probably be good in both sexes of the progeny. Still we would prefer, if the birds suited, to breed such Blues together, when the colours and bars of the Blues will almost invariably be good. Even such pairs of Blues will throw Silvers, and when such is the case, the bars of these too are generally excellent in colour. The Silver is only really needed when the Blue is of a hard colour, or when it begins to show slight signs of black ticks amongst the Blue. Then it is certainly time to throw in a judicious mixture of the lighter shade. Blue-chequers, which are not unfrequently produced from pairs of Blues, are also good matches in Turbits for Silvers. The two last—the too deep Blue with signs of black in it, and the Blue-chequer—are the only proper matches for faulty-barred Silvers; and being too dark, or having too much black, while the pale-barred Silver has not enough, they will often correct each other and breed very well-barred birds. We note this, because while it is much better to breed with good colours, and such produces what is sought much the soonest, these faulty colours give a chance when so used to the poor fancier, who can buy such at a lower price, and thus with more time attain the same end. For our own part, we would never breed Silvers or *for* Silvers at all, considering it as only a light and bastard Blue, were it not for one point in which it surpasses the Blue, and which makes it valuable as a cross. That point is, cleanness of thigh and number of flights, in which it often surpasses the Blue. We have often found Silvers with some of the inner flights white as well as the outer, and such are of course valuable for crossing with foul-thighed birds. For this reason alone it is sometimes worth while to breed Silvers with Blues; otherwise, they come quite often enough even when breeding Blues together, without the trouble of breeding for them.

As hinted at the beginning of this chapter, there are Turbits of other colours than those now mentioned, and which form the standard varieties. There are whole-coloured Blues with black bars, and also Blues with cream-coloured bars, sometimes called "white" bars, but this is a misnomer. Although these have the peak, they are by their whole colour as near the Owl as the Turbit, and might perhaps be better termed peak-crested Owls. We believe that nearly all such birds are in fact half-bred pigeons, as we have known several actually produced by people who matched the two breeds up with the hope of getting the Turbit markings with the superior head of the Owl. We have seen this nearly accomplished in Blues, but the colour of beak and eye in the Blue Owl is more difficult to get rid of than the colour of the plumage, and is rather conspicuous on account of the Turbit's white peak. We have never seen such experiments followed up as they might be; but they suggest means by which we might probably produce something beyond any Turbit yet shown; the Owl's head, though of the same character, being more perfectly developed than in any Turbit we have seen. What might be called an ideal or perfect specimen of the Turbit would be, in fact, a fair-sized white African Owl, with good head, but with the



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TURBITS.
BLUE CHEQUER & SILVER (SHELL CROWN)
BLUE, (POINT CRESTS)

peak and markings of the Turbit. There is in the White Owl all that is wanted in these two qualities, in greater perfection than any of our present Turbits, particularly as regards diminutive size, and frill; also colour of eye. We believe, indeed, as already noticed, that the original Turbit was produced from the Owl, by crossing it with the Capuchin or some similar bird, which would account for the majority of the best birds, and the oldest strains especially, being shell-crested. There is even another variety of the Turbit, called the Plain-headed, which has no crest at all, but is in every respect like a large Owl with the Turbit markings, so that each link in the connection seems complete. It would therefore be well worth while to breed good Turbit cocks with moderate-sized White Owl hens, in order to improve the size, head, and beak points, and frill. We say moderate-sized hens simply to secure their being breeders, the smaller ones being notoriously uncertain in this respect, and perfect fecundity being especially desirable in all crosses, that the breeder may have more room for his selections. We may add that since the first edition of this work was published our advice has been followed in this point, and the result has been all that we expected from it, birds so produced beating all competitors up to that time.

Still further progress has, however, since been made. At the date of the first edition of this work, Red and Yellow Turbits far surpassed Blacks and other colours in the combination of all properties; but since that time the perseverance of breeders may be said to have almost reversed the position of matters in this respect, the rapid strides made in the improvement of Blacks and Blues having not only astonished many fanciers, but presented one of the most remarkable transformations ever known in the pigeon fancy. The other standard colours have also been improved, and what many experienced breeders believed would require many years to accomplish, was attained in very few. This, however, was mainly due—even more than to the owl cross—to help from an unexpected quarter, and we may claim to have been the first to introduce the cross which has most of all improved the important properties of the Turbit pigeon. This cross was with a Black Turbiteen hen imported by Mr. Caridia, which possessed not only a head and beak faultless in shape, but really wanted nothing except a little more frill to be a perfect model in all except the head-marks and shank-feather. We mated this hen to a Yellow Turbit cock better than ordinary, and the produce consisted of three birds: a red Strawberry cock and two pale Yellow hens. This Strawberry cock has been the progenitor of nearly all the most perfect Blacks of the present day. Another skilled fancier adopted our advice as regards crossing with the African Owl, and produced some wonderful specimens. Others also tried the Turbiteen cross, but with less success, on account of the great difficulty of finding birds with a good peaked crest; still, success did follow, and Reds and Yellows have been thus produced far in advance of the former average. Even Blues have been thus improved. The suitability of the cross is self-evident, since in all but markings the Eastern bird is practically the same, only bred to better head-points and colour by the wonderful patience and skill of the Eastern fanciers. Indeed, until the importation of the pair of Black Turbiteens by Mr. Caridia (of which the cock, portrayed further on, unfortunately died) neither we nor others could be said to have ever had really before us what a Turbit should be; and it is an emphatic proof of the wonderful skill in breeding of the Oriental fanciers, that *one cross* with their birds should at once have stamped such a marvellous improvement upon a whole race of British pigeons.

JUDGING TURBITS.—Turbits require careful scrutiny in judging as regards two points especially—colour and crest. The colour desired is so rich that dyeing is sometimes attempted, and other fraudulent means to deepen the tone. Most of the expedients used will betray their presence by "coming off" on a clean white handkerchief, being more of the nature of stains than dyes, which latter do not suit the plumage of birds. Crests are very generally trimmed, and

sometimes so artfully as to deceive many a judge. We do not think a feather or two can be detected, and a bird which has lost no more well deserves to pass; but in other cases, when more has been done, if the judge takes the peak in his fingers and presses it aside all four ways—up, down, and to each side—if gaps have been made by weeding he will detect it. In any case, as before hinted, if the bird seems to have a good peak-crest, but shows no mane, there is great room for suspicion, and an extra keen scrutiny may probably be rewarded by discoveries.

The scale of points we give below. Owing to the recent great improvement in Turbits, and the more general agreement among fanciers, this is now revised and altered considerably since the first edition of this work. If a Blue and Silver were both good in bars, and equally good in other points, we would decidedly contend for giving the Blue the preference. If the Silver were brown or yellow in bars, unless the other birds were very poor, it ought to have no chance at all; but if necessary on that account to bring it into the competition, we would deduct all the points for colour. After what we have said in the text, some surprise may be felt that we have not allotted more points for frill; but the reason is, that when this point is once obtained, there will be no difficulty in retaining it, while head properties are far more difficult to keep good even when once attained. Lastly, like all pigeons distinguished for carriage, the Turbit ought, if possible, to be compared with others in a large compartment or special judging pen.

VALUE OF POINTS IN JUDGING TURBITS.

Beak: shortness, 2; thickness, 3; shape of wattle, 1	6
Skull: shape, 4; size, 3	7
Gullet: depth and form of	4
Peak-crest	4
Mane (in peak-crested birds)	2
Frill: shape and quantity	6
Colour	4
„ extra for good *black* bars in Blues	2
Markings (accurate and free from foul feathers)	3
Size (smallness)	2
Shortness of flights and tail	2
Carriage	6
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AFRICAN OWLS.

BLUE, BLACK, AND WHITE.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE OWL.

THIS pigeon, there is not the slightest doubt, takes its name from the resemblance the downward curve of its beak gives it to the well-known bird of night. The true Owl beak in perfection is rare; but in some specimens the upper mandible appears to fill a complete quarter of a circle, and being longer than the lower one, turns over it like the beak of a parrot, giving the most extreme "down-face" exhibited by any of the pigeon race. The more this property is exaggerated the more the pigeon is fancied.

As to the origin of the Owl, there is hardly the shadow of doubt that it came to us from the East, and was either discovered or created—at all events perfected—by Mahommedan fanciers. Its ancient origin and descent are proved by the great number of toys which, as we shall see further on, have branched off from it and still show its most essential properties. Of these the Turbit mentioned in the last chapter is probably one, and ought perhaps in strictness to have come after the Owl, though placed before it by us on account of having acquired two additional properties in peak and marking; but the whole Satinette tribe must be pronounced of the same lineage; and these many sub-varieties prove at least the attractiveness of the type. A prettier type, indeed, it would be hard to conceive of, and we are surprised that more ladies have not discovered the delicate, fragile-looking beauty of this exquisite pigeon.

The Owl itself, besides its direct descendant the Turbit, has itself branched off into three varieties, namely, the so-called English Owl; the Foreign, better known as the African Owl; and the Whiskered Owl. We say it has branched off thus, though we know many fanciers consider there are three, or at least two, really distinct breeds. But size alone can hardly be granted to make a variety; and very few judges we have ever met with of the so-called English Owl, but wished the birds in all *but* size to resemble the Foreign or African. There is however no doubt that the English off-shoot came from the parent stem some time ago; and being bred for a long period without fresh importation, insensibly acquired a type of its own, larger and coarser than its progenitor, the prevailing English taste being then for larger pigeons, and even the Tumbler being a comparatively modern manufacture. Thus, there is little doubt, the specimens imported probably at least two centuries ago settled down into the English Owl; and when, only a very few years back, good specimens from the Eastern stem again came over to be compared with them, it is little wonder that after so long a separation the two types had somewhat diverged. Such is, we believe, the true relation of the English to the Foreign Owl.

If ever there was a class of fancy pigeon that *can* be said to be really "bred to perfection," it is the Small or African Owl. How rare "perfect" birds are, each fancier sighs to think, as he strives to recall his own past achievements: but we have both had, and seen in the hands of other fanciers, many birds of this beautiful variety, that really left *nothing* to wish for, except it perhaps might be—ah! the dissatisfaction of the fancier *will* come out—a little more frill. It is however a rare thing to get so much as this; and this at most very slight deficiency in one point is the sole

objection to scores and scores of these beautiful birds being justly described as perfect; whereas we have rarely seen a single specimen of the larger English bird, hardier as it is, easier to rear, and very far more prolific, which had not several faults. While therefore believing that all the Owls had one common origin, we do not mean that all three are now alike, or are equal in quality: so far from it, we know no single point in which the average English Owl can be compared with the Foreign or African. Taking even the most numerous variety, the Blue, it is a great rarity to find an English bird even with a blue rump; and still more so to find a correctly-shaped beak, with the proper thickness in both mandibles. In formation of skull, again, the English bird almost always requires several years to develope into what is desired, and even then we do not know that we can recollect more than a dozen really good, of which not one could compare with the heads of some scores of the small variety that we have had or seen at different times. There is but one point in which the large bird can be compared with the small, namely, the gullet; and even in this the Foreign Owl is superior, attaining its development at an early age, while the English Owl requires several years to develope, though the gullet in good specimens may then be found all that is wished for. We are fully aware some fanciers will question this statement, and affirm that they have English Owls which showed their full gullet at an early period: but this arises from want of fuller knowledge, as we never knew such cases in which it was not always found on inquiry that the stock had been crossed from the smaller sort, or that they were themselves, though called and considered English birds, bred from stock recently imported. To show the difficulty of making mere size a proof of distinctness, we may state that we have seen many times large consignments of Foreign Owls, sent from abroad to Messrs. Baily and Son and other dealers, and in these the sizes have so varied that every stage, from the full-sized English bird down to the smallest African, could be found amongst them. We have purchased both the largest and smallest, the one to exhibit or sell as the English, and the other as African; and several of the large specimens thus sold, which we knew to be imported with small Africans, have both been shown successfully in the other class, and bred even larger and coarser progeny than themselves, which have also been successful. Such facts as this, of which we could give many, fully warrant us in stating that there is but one real variety of the Owl pigeon.

Which is the original is not quite so certain; but we are inclined to think that, as regards this country, the smaller bird is the parent. We put it in this qualified way purposely, since few if any pigeons *really* are very small in the first place, but are bred down, as the short-faced Tumbler is bred, from the larger and coarser bird. But as regards *our* knowledge and acquisition of the pigeon, we think differently. Of the small Owls imported now, a very large proportion die, and these are usually the smallest and best. At an earlier age, when pigeons were less understood and far less kept, the probability is that even more died, thus leading to only the larger and coarser birds being preserved. In this way we think the older type easily accounted for.

One very strong reason for thinking that the larger Owl is a former offshoot from the small, is the fact that so far we scarcely ever see *hen* birds in the larger strain to compare in quality with the males. Such are so rare that we distinctly remember all we ever met with, and can say positively we have only yet seen four hens that fairly deserved to be termed good ones, even judged by the head-points of English cocks, such as we have seen several hundreds of; whereas we have seen many small hens far better, and in the small pigeon, in fact, as a rule, the hens show *more quality than the cocks*, as all experienced breeders know. This fact goes far to prove that the smaller breed is the older and better-established one, since nothing shows the *establishment* of any strain like the quality of the hens; while, on the other hand, in any branch or family let "run to seed," as we are

supposing our older offshoot to have been, every one knows how the better cocks will continue to show signs of the departed qualities long after the hens have ceased to do so.

As to which type should be bred for now, we confess to siding personally with the majority of fanciers, who place the Foreign far in advance. The small bird, we have already said, is much the most perfect at present in Owl points, though in this respect the English bird may be improved. But, on the score of size alone, the small bird is to most people the more attractive; and toy pigeons generally, excepting the Trumpeter, are all preferred and look better small. We hardly know a judge of toy pigeons but would give the preference to a small one of *any* variety, if really as good in properties as the larger, and we see no reason why the Owl should be an exception. There is just one argument on the other side, and this is of considerable weight. It is that the very small birds, as a rule, are bad breeders, besides being very delicate. On this account we have known many people, who began with a clearly-expressed preference for the Foreign Owl, get discouraged by their successive losses, and take to the larger bird, declaring *that* to be the real genuine breed. On this account few would wish to see the large or English Owl done away with; and as it is so far from perfection, we would mainly insist on the real identity of breed in order to induce fanciers of the hardier sort to seek to impart to their favourites all the fine points of the higher-caste rival.

There is, however, one real distinction as regards some English birds, and as it is the only one, it deserves particular notice. It was well put once in our own hearing by that old and much-respected fancier Mr. Esquilant, who remarked that the only certain way of seeing a really true-bred English Owl now was to see a "Powdered Blue"—this being a colour we never saw or heard of in any of the small variety. We have also inquired of Mr. Caridia, to whom we are indebted for the notes which will appear in the next chapter on Eastern Toys derived from the Owl stem, and who knows this class of pigeon better than probably any one else in this country; and he informs us that, though foreigners as a rule have far surpassed English breeders in the production of colour and marking, the "Powdered" variety appears to be unknown. Still stranger is the fact, that though many Foreign birds have been both imported and bred as large as the naturalised English stock, and repeatedly crossed with the latter in order to impart the better beak, gullet, and frill of the small to the larger bird, we never knew any of these crosses produce a Powdered Blue or Powdered Silver. The former remarkable colour, one of the most beautiful of any, consists of a very pale silvery blue on the body, with jet-black bars, nearly approaching the colour of a Silver, but without the least shade of Dun; while the head and part way down the neck is a pale but more distinct blue, delicately "frosted" with silver; or somewhat as if powdered with flour; or yet again, a little like very fine dew or hoar frost on the grass. Powdered Silver is a delicate silver similarly "powdered" on the head and upper part of the neck. This peculiar colour we believe to be the sole foundation for still keeping up the theory of a really English Owl, and but for it all would probably have merged ere this into one stock unquestioned. Yet, strange to say, we have no reason to think this variety of very high antiquity; for, to the best of our knowledge and belief, and as we have also been assured by several old fanciers who were in a position to be well-informed, the late Mr. Matthew Wicking—who well deserved to be called a king among toy pigeons, since no English fancier ever equalled him, either in the number he kept or the perfect mastery he seemed to possess of the art of breeding any colour and marking he wanted—was the first to invent, or produce, or introduce the colour known as Powdered Blue. Certainly we have never been able to trace any before him; and great was the surprise of many London fanciers when the new and startlingly beautiful colour came upon the stage. The first we ever ourselves saw was about the year 1854. The colour was produced—very likely partly by some lucky chance

—by crossing Blues and Silvers; and it is most singular that, so far, crossing it with any of the small Foreign specimens seems to overpower it, and it dies out. This being the case, those are not to be condemned who see in such a beautiful and peculiar colour, and in the greater size and hardihood, good reasons for keeping up what they call the English Owl.

It was about the year 1858 or 1860 that some of the African Owls were first shown at the Crystal Palace. If we remember rightly, they were shown under another name, and occasioned some dispute through being claimed by one of the judges before the public were admitted to the show. Soon after, more were obtained, and it was at once seen that they were so far superior to the older stock, that these latter had literally no chance against them, and even hardly any claim to the title of a fancy pigeon. Then came a celebrated pair, which afterwards belonged to Mr. Sandy, and were much admired. These were said at the time to be the first pair of pure *White* Africans in this country, or at least shown here; those shown at the Palace being Black-and-white, though we have been given to understand they afterwards bred some pure Whites; but we have reason to believe specimens of the pure White African were in the possession of Mr. George Ure, of Dundee, so far back as 1838; his brother, who was captain of a ship, having brought him four pairs, two of which he sent to Mr. James Huie, of Glasgow. These therefore were, so far as we can learn, really the first White African Owls imported; but they died without leaving successors, so the strain at that time died out. Lately there have been many importations, and it is singular that so far they have been confined to Blacks, Blues, and Whites; it is believed there are Reds and Yellows, but none have been positively reported, or reached this country. In marking, however, the Eastern fanciers have done a great deal. They have produced Blacks with white tails, Whites with black tails, Blues similarly varied, and we have also seen a few imported specimens marked like a Magpie, and so accurately and sharply as to look as if painted.

What we have called the third variety, or Whiskered Owl, is of a medium size, and perhaps hardly deserves the name of a separate variety, though all we ever met with came from one strain, which its original owner called by that name. It was probably in the first instance a mere "sport." There are few but Blues and Silvers, but they are really beautiful pigeons, showing in its fullest development that great point—the *frill*. How generally deficient frilled pigeons are in that characteristic point we have seen in the last chapter; but the frill, or, as some call it, the purle, is in many Owls beautifully formed. In the strain or variety we speak of, however, it is positively exaggerated, and, in a specimen from which we write this description, not only does the frill on the breast itself extend right up to the lower mandible, but further back, at the sides of the neck, is a *second* frill, nearly reaching round behind, and at first sight giving the idea of a cross with the Jacobin, only that the frill is different in character and turned the reverse way. If more bred and developed, this would make a very pretty and characteristic variety, and is well worth keeping up, if only for the sake of improving the deficient frill of other Owls.

Having said this much on the different varieties, a little must be added on their *status* at shows. The Whiskered Owl can take its chance among the English birds; but it is by no means easy to mark out any clear line of distinction between English and Foreign, at least whenever the English birds shall be bred as good as the Foreign, which we hope to see them. No fancier can wish to perpetuate the bird with its too long head and beak as at present, with so much higher a standard by which to appraise them. This leaves only the points of size and colour to distinguish them; and even the latter is doubtful, since no one can say that the beautiful Powdered Blue may not by-and-by be produced among the small birds. All that can be said is that the African bird should be as small as possible, and the English at least twice the size usually seen in Foreign Whites. If the two classes are to be maintained—and we have seen reasons why this is desirable—

it is necessary to maintain this distinction, but the difficulty is the great number of medium-sized birds. Yet there is really no other permanent distinction, and every one knows that size depends quite as much upon the feeding of the young as upon the parentage. We have already said we have seen large birds bred from recently-imported Foreign Owls by no means large, and all sizes between; and, on the other hand, any very small specimens, however purely bred from indubitable English specimens, would certainly, if really good in head, be suspected of a Foreign cross. We can see, therefore, only three possible courses—first, to merge all Owls into one class, and judge entirely by colour and general properties irrespective of size; or, secondly, to keep the distinction of size as marked as possible, fixing a limit beneath which birds may not be shown as English Owls (there is no similar need to fix a maximum for the Foreign, since too large a size would of itself count against such a bird in competition); or, thirdly, to keep a distinct class for Powdered Blues and Silvers of all sizes, and another class for all other colours, judging each class by properties. On the whole we are disposed to think the second plan preferable at present, and that perhaps the last is likely to be so by-and-by, should the fanciers of Powdered Blues succeed in making their pigeon more generally popular.

But we must now come to the description of the Owl, in which we shall ignore the present faults of the coarser birds, and presume that the fancier wishes at least to produce them equal in points to the others; while, on the other hand, it will be understood that, at the time we write, the head-points of the larger variety are many shades inferior to the small or African birds. First and most characteristic, the *beak* should be short, thick, and chubby (more so than in any *present* Turbits, though we have, in the last chapter, set out the Owl beak as an ideal standard for the Turbit too), much turned downwards, and the upper mandible hanging over the lower, like the beak of a parrot: the more these points are observable the better. When the bird is one year old, and rather less so when even two years, the lower mandible will and should appear as if nearly equal in thickness to the upper; and *really* good specimens, for the first six months of their lives, seem to show little or none of the upper mandible overhanging the lower; but as time elapses the upper mandible comes over more and more. When this happens, many fanciers cut off the projecting part in order to make the beak appear shorter and thicker, which it certainly does; and if only the horn is cut off, the operation is at least free from pain; still, treating the beak in this way shows that the fancier does not at all understand what an Owl should be. It literally destroys the *Owl* beak, from which the bird derives its name, and with it spoils the look of the head too, besides other disadvantages to be mentioned hereafter. We therefore urge all who possess good Owls not to meddle with the beaks in this way, unless in the case of an actually wry-beak, which should always be kept trimmed off as evenly as possible, for a reason stated when describing the Short-faced Tumbler, viz., that the bird may be able to preen its feathers, without which it is pestered with vermin. The fault of a wry-beak is, however, apt to be hereditary; and unless, therefore, we had special reasons for breeding with it, we would rather get rid of such a bird altogether. The colour of the beak in Blues, Powdered Blues, and Blacks, is black; of other varieties, flesh-colour, Powdered Silvers being rather darker, the same as Silvers, but if stained a little on the upper mandible it is no great matter. The beak-wattle should be smooth, but rather full, and even on each side, much like that of a *young* Barb or Short-faced Antwerp; and the higher it rises from the beak, if neatly made, the better, as its projection fills up and rounds off the even convex profile, free from any straight line or dent, which is desired. For this reason, a flat or square wattle makes a comparatively mean head. Of course, the wattle takes time to make its full growth, the cock usually requiring two, and the hen three years; so that an Owl, like a Short-faced Antwerp, somewhat improves with moderate age.

The skull should be short, broad, and globular, nicely rounded in *every* direction. For the head or skull to be long, or narrow behind the beak, or flat, or *any* way removed from the short, chubby, round, bullet form, is a great fault, and spoils a bird for exhibition in at least the Foreign class; for as the Owl really has but four characteristic properties, viz., beak, skull, gullet, and frill, none of them can be spared without its absence being unpleasantly noticeable, no one property being so *conspicuous* (as in the case of beak-wattle in a Carrier, for instance) as to hide the absence of another. Many of the small hens have a sort of protuberance at the back of the skull, which tends to give a sort of flatness to the top of the head, as in a good Barb. This we regard as a *great fault* in any size of Owl, particularly when exaggerated. It will be found that birds too long in the head very generally have too long and thin beaks. This will be clearly seen by comparing any average English with a good small African Owl, when the English bird's skull will appear in comparison little better in shape than that of a young Short-faced Antwerp.

The next point is the *gullet*, or dewlap. This should be, as in the Turbit, as full as possible, and, as in that pigeon, adds to apparent shortness of head and beak. We have only known one fancier who did not consider the gullet one of the best points of the Owl pigeon, and he so old a breeder of it as Mr. Harrison Weir; yet, strange to say, in one of the best of the coloured drawings which he has made for Mr. Tegetmeier's *Pigeon Book* he has represented a pair of Owls in fine attitudes, and with gullets beautifully developed; just as he has expressed his dislike to mane in a Jacobin, yet represented, in his large *drawing* of a Jack's head and neck, a mane which is all but perfection! Without further noting these inconsistencies, however, we may safely say that all present fanciers are agreed in regarding the gullet as an Owl property, and that it should reach down the throat to the spot where the next property, the *frill*, begins.

On this property we need add nothing in the way of description to what was said in the last chapter. Every bird is greatly wanting without it; and knowing how it is admired, and the great progress made as regards head-points of late in the English Owl, we wonder more has not been done to improve the frill, the more so as this is a property which can be seen even in the nest-pan, and is as good after the first moult as it ever will be. We know from our own experience that it only needs a little care in selecting the best frills to make considerable improvement; and this, being a feather-point, is seen at once, and thus gives the fancier an immediate pleasure; whereas, an improvement in skull, even when attained, takes say two years before it can be *seen* in perfection by the producer. The rose-frill is what is desired in the Owl,* and is sometimes seen wonderfully accurate. Some people call it the purle. The first thing, however, in nearly all birds, is to get *more* of it to work upon; but when once obtained in a pair of birds it is very easily kept up. As a proof of this we may state that we once purchased a pair of birds for their plentiful development of this one quality alone. We sold the old pair when they had only one young one alive, before we had seen what that young one was, and not discovering for several months what a beautiful bird they had bred. The purchaser, a well-known fancier, exhibited the pair several times successfully as English Owls; but when the progeny moulted out their development was so *extraordinary* that he actually suspected some cross with the Jacobin, and on that account we repurchased both the original birds and their young ones. No sign of any cross ever appeared, and indeed the peculiarity of the frill is quite distinct from the chain of the Jacobin; but several nests since have proved that the breeding of this pair was no chance matter, all coming with the rose-frill, but in some instances so large as to reach to the very butts of the wings.

* By "rose-frill" we do not mean merely a small tuft of feathers, which some fanciers dignify by the title of a "rose," because they breed no better; but a good frill, as long as may be from gullet to breast, only nicely parted from the centre.



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith

ENGLISH OWLS.

BLUE.
SILVER.

POWDERED BLUE.
YELLOW

The size of the English Owl should be *at least* equal to that of the common Tumbler, and if larger, so much the better. In Foreign classes, as we have already said, the smaller the better.

The general shape resembles that of the Turbit. The chest is broad; the neck rather short and thick, but symmetrically shaped and put on. The wing-butts, or shoulders, should be well tucked in, giving rather a rounded appearance, and avoiding the sharp corners of the Carrier or Dragoon. The flights and tail, as in the Turbit, are rather short, and the plumage very tight and close. The body stands rather low on the legs, showing little or no thigh; and in general compactness and *neatness* of shape no variety surpasses this pigeon. The carriage is upright, with the head rather back, somewhat resembling that of the Short-faced Tumbler. We think the small variety has a superiority over the larger in fulness of eye, in which quality perhaps no pigeon can equal the best African Owls.

As to the colours in the large variety, Blues and Silvers are generally of the best quality; other colours, such as Yellows, Powdered Blues and Silvers (*i.e.*, Powdered class), and Silvers, are generally deficient in head-points. Of the small birds, the best of all are generally Whites, and next the Blues; the rest, and those with coloured markings, such as the body one colour and tail another, being seldom equal. Mr. Peter Eden produced nearly all colours, some of his Blues having red bars on the wings; and some of his Blacks, as well as Blues and Whites, were grand specimens; but he had such a collection as has probably never been got together since.

The plate of Foreign Owls represents three birds we had in our own possession, only the Blue and Black being a little flattered, while the White bird fairly deserved to be called perfect. The Powdered Blue in the plate of English was drawn from a bird lent us by Mr. Esquilant, who has fancied this colour many years, the bird being, we believe, one of Mr. Wicking's old strain; and the Silver was from the grand collection of Mr. Robert Clay, of Manchester, the Blue being supplied by ourselves. All these latter birds, however, have been idealised as regards head-properties in order to serve as models.

In breeding the large or English Owl, the colour is a great point, and we must say very few Blues are a good colour, nearly all being white-rumped, and so soft in colour as to be almost like Silvers. The oftener these are bred together the worse they get, and as the colour desired is as sound as in the Blue Dragoon, the only way to procure it is to breed the darkest Blues together, instead of that matching of Blue with Silver which has been the rule, and has so destroyed the colour. If only one pair of dark Blues could be got, we would breed the progeny back to the parents in the way so often described in this work. Even the Silver suffers from the continual crossing of itself into the Blue, since the softer colour produces very often the objectionable brown or kite bar, which at last gets so into the strain as even to affect the Blue itself, for we have seen really fine Blues disfigured by brown bars. We believe the same system of matching is the reason of our now so seldom seeing Powdered Blues of good colour, since at one time the Powdered Silver was really much scarcer than Blue, and some of the latter shade were really almost too dark, and actually needed the Silver to improve the colour. How different it is now every one knows. Any breeder who happens to have a good Blue-chequered Owl, or even a dark Blue slightly chequered on the body-feathers, has a fine chance to improve the colour, since such birds are generally dark in the rump, and a cross with the Blue, as described in treating of Dragoons, will often produce beautifully-coloured specimens. A Dark Blue thus bred from a Blue-chequer may also be bred with a Blue not so dark with fine effect, provided the latter have a black beak and black bars; otherwise, if a Powdered Bird should be produced, it will probably be a Silver, which has a flesh-coloured beak like the ordinary Silver, while the Powdered Blue, like the Blue, has a black beak and dark eye-wattle like a Blue Dragoon. Not that the Silver is not an attractive colour; if

with good black bars it is very pretty, and we only caution against the too free use of it with Blue.

As to Reds, Yellows, and Mottles of these colours, they must be bred much as we have spoken of in treating of the Mottled Tumblers. We fancy some at least of these colours were produced by German fanciers, and they would probably be more popular but that their head-properties are generally far inferior to those of Blues and Silvers, which may not improbably be caused by the crosses employed to get colour, which is the strong point of the German breeders.

Other points besides colour must of course be got in the ordinary way by patience and care. All the colours in the large Owl are hardy, and good breeders, requiring no foster-parents for the young, and being little liable to disease.

With the small or African Owls it is different, and they must be considered as delicate birds. The reason of this is obvious. Each breeder who has had a nice small pair has sought to produce even smaller and better than the parents. Mr. Eden and the late Mr. Joshua Fielding were the most successful breeders we ever knew, and we attribute their success to two causes: the first being that they mostly employed moderate-sized, strong hens, trusting for diminutive size to small cocks, and it was wonderful the beautiful birds they thus obtained, especially towards the end of the season; the second reason, we believe, was that Mr. Eden kept his birds in a place not only free from draughts, but which was warmed by there being a room the other side of the wall which always had a large fire; for though Mr. Fielding kept his in his ordinary loft, and did far better than most others, still, so far as we could ascertain, Mr. Eden's success in *rearing* young birds was pretty nearly six to one even of his. We ourselves once purchased forty-two birds from Mr. Eden, the produce of only three pairs, and lost all but five through putting them into a house which, being built of iron and unlined, was too cold. We would, therefore, advise that first-rate specimens be kept in a place which can be warmed in cold weather, and is free from draught, applying the last condition to the aviary or open flight as well. The medium-sized birds, however, and especially those which are nearly as large as the Flying Tumbler, are fairly hardy. We should also advise nurses for the better class of birds; for though we know that both Mr. Eden and Mr. Fielding reared without them, we fancy they often gave a little assistance from the mouth, which will often save young birds that would otherwise die. The best nurses are common Fantails, Balds, Beards, smallish Magpies, or some of their own rather coarser brethren.

A second cause of many of the best birds dying we only discovered after a long time. In some of the shortest-beaked birds the tongue seems to be too long to lie properly between the mandibles, but gets crooked at the end and rubs against the upper one, causing at first a kind of low, but constant irritation, which at last becomes canker. We have thus lost specimens of great value; but have found that if the horny tip of the tongue be cut off, which seems to cause no pain, and certainly causes no bleeding unless cut in too far, the evil is stopped.

There are amongst the foreign Owls more good Blues, and of better colour, than among the large; and hence we believe it only needs the patience of some breeder to produce from these the same colours as in the English, viz., Silvers, Powdered Blues, and Powdered Silvers. The first step would be to breed together two Blues as light in colour as could be got, of which there are plenty; by which means, with perhaps breeding the progeny back to the parents, ere long Silvers would be obtained. Care, however, should be taken to keep up the pure uncrossed *dark* Blues, when we feel sure the Powdered Blue would soon be got by matching dark and blue-rumped Blues to Silvers, though it might have very likely to be waited for a while. The Powdered Silver would be also got in the same way, and we are sure such a result would be a pleasure and credit to the fancier.

The mixed-coloured birds—such as those with the body one colour and tail another—can only be got with much patience and care, unless the breeder has something near the mark to start from. The only way would be to cross the two whole colours together, till something like the desired result was obtained, though of course in the meantime many splashed and foul-marked birds will appear.

JUDGING OWLS.—Considering as we do that the properties of both English and Foreign Owls should be the same, while the Foreign is as a rule so greatly superior, we could only give a prize to the larger bird where there was but one open class, if the Foreign birds were inferior in quality. Where they are classed separately, we would *insist* on the main distinction of size being kept up, and small birds not being allowed to win in an "English" class; there is, as we have before explained, no inducement to enter large birds in a Foreign class, as the size would be so far against them. This premised, the following scale of points will suit both varieties, the points for size being reckoned for *largeness* in the English class, and smallness in the Foreign:—

POINTS IN JUDGING OWLS.

Beak: shortness, 2; thickness, 1; shape, 2; colour, 1	6
Skull: roundness of profile, 4; width, 3	7
Gullet: fulness and depth	6
Frill: quantity and regularity	8
Size: largeness or smallness	3
Shape and carriage of body	3
Colour of eyes	1
	34

Colour points—Blues, 3; Silvers, 2; Powdered Blue, 5; Powdered Silver, 4; Colour of Bars, 3.

CHAPTER XX.

ORIENTAL FRILLED PIGEONS.

As hinted in the last two chapters, the main stem represented by the Owl or Turbit type of pigeon has, in the hands of those Eastern fanciers who either formed it, or at least handed it down from immemorial antiquity, branched off still further into even more beautiful sub-varieties. These are broadly distinguished from the foregoing by the addition of what we may perhaps call "feather" properties, using here the word "feather" as distinguished from merely "colour," and as implying marking of a more or less detailed character; and in most cases, also, by the addition of grouse or leg-feather; but all retaining the short, Owl-like head, the shape of body, and the frill. Most of these varieties, if not all, are of exquisite beauty, and many can remember yet the *furore* when the first really good Satinettes arrived in England, shortly followed by other sub-types. All of such birds that could be obtained were eagerly purchased, but too often disappointment followed in breeding them, the progeny being found to vary considerably. Hence many have ignorantly come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as a fixed type, and that because, for instance, a pair of good Satinettes did not breed, as they often will not, similar Satinettes, the Satinette itself was but a mere "sport," and as such of no fixed value.

But this has all arisen from a total ignorance of the *real nature of the breeds;* and as we now, we believe for the first time, have opportunity to explain this, so we hope a better understanding on that point may extend the cultivation of these exquisite birds, which have all the properties of the Owls and Turbits, with added beauties of their own. To say nothing of the well-known fact, which surely ought to have been remembered, that even self-colours in pigeons are, to a great extent, variable and interchangeable, it must be clearly understood, as a simple embodiment of what will follow from an abler pen than ours, that the whole Satinette and Blondinette tribe, with their numerous offshoots, greatly resemble the Almond Tumbler, in being the result of the *mingling in one bird of three colours!* The precise process by which this was accomplished no one now knows, any more than we know the precise history of the Tumbler; but as in that case the black, white, and yellow or red, which usually are found each alone in some one pigeon, *have* somehow been infused into one breed, so have various colours, in still more beautiful, because more regular, forms, been mingled in the birds before us. In consequence, their breeding greatly resembles Tumbler-breeding; and two exhibition match specimens are rarely so good a match for breeding as various colours. As in the Tumbler, one colour will show preponderance, which has to be checked by the infusion of others in greater strength; and—still resembling the Tumbler—it is these accidental preponderances, now of one colour or marking, and now of another, which form sub-varieties answering to the Mottle, the Agate, or the Kite.

Such then being the more beautiful of these birds, and such the general principles upon which only they can be successfully bred, we have now to come to details. Here we should despair, but that we have the help of the gentleman who introduced these beautiful birds into England, and who still knows more about them, their method of breeding, and the Eastern fanciers who produced

them, than any one in this country. We refer to Mr. H. P. Caridia, late of Birmingham; and, as we can add nothing to the details he has given, and only desired to summarise, as it were, the methods he has explained, and to show briefly the *principle* on which they are founded, we will say no more than that the following full notes are all from his pen:—

"It is with some reluctance that I venture to express in the English language my knowledge of and experience with these birds, for being, as I am, a foreigner, there arise within me certain fears lest I may be unable to convey, as I could wish to do, an experience which I have gained by a long study of the breeds I am asked to describe. I, however, answer with pleasure to the call made upon me, though, were it not for an extensive personal experience with these birds from boyhood, together with a full knowledge of the views of ardent fanciers of their native land, I would have shrunk from the pleasant, though somewhat difficult task which is committed to my care.

"In order to classify and bring together into one family group the birds which these notes are designed to describe, it must not be supposed that it will include all the pigeons of Eastern origin. Certainly not! or I should of necessity have to bring into consideration various birds that are treated upon elsewhere. Nor do I propose to particularise all the, at present, known varieties which are inhabitants and natives of the Oriental regions, but I shall simply confine my remarks more especially to those sorts and varieties which are regarded as special favourites, as representing the birds of fashion of the present generation, and such as have been to some extent introduced into this country within the last sixteen years; several kinds of which derive their origin from crosses, many sub-varieties originating from one chief spring. Therefore it will be seen to be a matter almost of necessity to speak of the lot generally, while, at the same time, I purpose individualising and separating those sorts which have become to some extent disunited by reason of their striking individuality. The Eastern World, without doubt, has been the birthplace, the very cradle, in which has been nursed and nurtured and brought to perfection the very germ and essence of all the frilled varieties of pigeons, in which the British fancier now takes so much interest. Nor is the fancy for these beautiful gems of form and feather of which I shall shortly speak died out, or even on the decline. Certainly not: although with our Eastern brethren there are no shows to stimulate their efforts, or from time to time to prop up, as it were, the flagging fancies of their admirers. No! no! There is to a large extent apparent the *pure fancy*—and it is from that natural admiration, discernible in so large a number of Eastern fanciers, for the frilled varieties of pigeons, that the race is kept up now, and the specimens, if possible, still more beautified year by year as time rolls on.

"It is no fanciful idea, but a clear and apparent fact, the undoubted superiority, both in form and feather, of the Eastern Owl and Turbit (and other kinds too), over the British specimens. It must be clear to those who have beheld the various foreign frilled varieties which have been imported into this country through my instrumentality. The British fancier, if not the producer of these specialities, is too well skilled in judgment, and appreciates the beautiful too well, to ignore this truth, in spite of the hosts of other sorts which claim his attention, and which he may rightly claim as his own manufacture and as justly be proud of his own achievements. But the fancy for pigeons in the East has run so high, and so long been cherished in the hearts of Asiatic pigeon keepers, and there has been such an unison of ideas, and general love for frilled and tufted short-beaked pigeons, that ill-shaped common specimens are in a decided minority. The chief difference in points of formation is mainly nature's transition from youth to age, at which time the majority of the specimens attain pretty much the same model, viz., the finely-curved Roman head, arched neck, needle-pointed central crest, symmetrical yet compact form, graceful bearing, elastic tread, and dignified carriage, together with the vigour and agility of hardy and far less refined specimens.

"The varieties chosen for illustration and description are as follows:—'Satinettes,' 'Brunettes,' 'Bluettes,' 'Silverettes,' 'Blondinettes'—Satin, Browns, Sulphur, Blacks, Laced, Spangled, and Tipped, also 'Tri-coloured Barred,' Blues, and Silvers. Now all these sorts (excepting the Blues and Silvers) are of *tri-coloured* or variegated plumage, and have been produced by a skilful admixture of various coloured birds; in consequence of which they occasionally revert to, and display the characteristics of, their ancestors. This is seen to some extent in the Silvers and Blues, which only reveal the colour properties in the bar across the wing, which is generally composed of the three colours upon the web of each feather, otherwise they breed perfectly true to the tribe, yet not always exact to ground tint. Still, no matter what the colour may be, there will be found the feather markings thereon, and such markings or pencillings are indelibly fixed and made permanent features of the breed, and breed equally true to feather and far more reliable in form than any of the recognised established kinds of British pigeons I have mentioned this at the outset in order to dispel the very erroneous idea prevailing in the minds of a few fanciers and at least *one* eminent authority, who as a professed ornithologist should certainly be better qualified to discriminate between unaided nature and art, as seen in the working out and full accomplished perfection of these admirable specimens. The authority to whom I allude has thought fit in his wisdom to refer to some of these foreign varieties of pigeons in terms of disparagement. Fortunately for himself he has not said much directly against them, since having so little knowledge of them brevity was absolutely necessary: he has, however, sneeringly characterised them as neither more nor less than odd sports or freaks of the Owl species, and thus beneath the recognition of those skilled in the knowledge of refined British pigeons!

"But the time has come when these variegated feathered gems of pigeons have received a more cordial welcome and a more favourable reception, and when in these birds, upon the very surface of a most elegant form, there is clearly recognised a perfectly tri-coloured or variegated tracery of rich feathering, graduating in perfect order throughout the entire plumage. The names 'Satinette,' 'Bluette,' &c. &c., were given to them on their introduction into this country, by British fanciers. I have taken no part in the christening; therefore, whether appropriate or not, I am not at all responsible: but as they are now pretty well known by those names, I purpose accepting the terms by which they are here known, and shall speak of them accordingly, so that readers may not become confounded in their ideas of the different sorts under notice.

"First, then, come 'Satinettes,' as being the oldest pencilled variety which I have been enabled to trace; and although in my researches I have succeeded in tracing their history back to somewhere about 120 years as a special inhabitant of Asia Minor, still even then their origin is perfectly obscure; for, although I have sought in various directions to obtain a direct clue to their original birthplace, or origin, I cannot get beyond the information of an aged Presbyter in Smyrna, who is now upwards of eighty years old. He tells me that he has had the breed all his life, and that the identical variety were also bred and propagated by his father in a like manner, and by his grandfather too before them; that they were regarded as the highest type of pigeon beauty, and were described in native terms which, interpreted, would mean Royal or Imperial pigeon, as possessing the highest order of excellence, and thus worthy of the highest title which their owners could confer upon them. Now, there are not many varieties of pigeons of which fanciers of experience may have some knowledge, that one cannot trace pretty accurately their direct line of descent, and method and course by which they have been propagated. One generally has at least either history or experience as a guide in determining this, but not so with the Satinette; that they were produced and fully and fairly established as a variety, permanent and unmistakable, is a clear and certain fact; for they breed perfectly true to both form and feather properties, and whenever crossed



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BRUNETTE
BLUETTE

SATINETTE.
SILVERETTE.

even with alien blood, invariably leave unmistakable traces of their characteristics, which shows clearly enough to those who have had experience with them that their special points of excellence have been thoroughly well established, and that too upon a wise and systematic course of procedure. But the origin of these beautiful birds is not positively known, even by those who have persistently stuck to them and bred them for half a century or more. Not that it is a difficult matter to arrive at a reasonable hypothesis, in the face of many surrounding facts; however, I shall consider this point further on in these notes, but I have in some degree thus digressed, in order to assure those who regard the 'Satinette' or 'Blondinette' and their immediate offshoots as mere freaks of Nature, of the perfect establishment of these kinds of pigeons as a distinct and permanent variety. But we must remember that these pencilled varieties reveal the wonderful embodiment of *three or more colours*, arranged in perfect and marvellous order and regularity upon every feather which should be coloured. Therefore, in order to secure this remarkable variegation in regularity and unison, the colour must necessarily have been infused at the outset by a judicious and complete system of crossing and blending the various *coloured* specimens which bear the stamp and image in points of formation of one kind; and this being the case, variation of tint and beauty, or light and dark spangling or lacing, will naturally occur as a matter of course. Were it not so, from a breeder's point of view it would be rather deplorable than otherwise; for it is by the reversionary course of nature that we are permitted to see and to ascertain whether we have an equality of colour admixture, or what element, if any, is wanted for infusion, so that by its addition the perfect equalisation of the various shades may be embodied in the perfect bird. By reason of this unity of colours, and this tri-coloured variegated plumage, it follows, as a natural sequence, that however fitful any change may be, however strange and diversified may be the sports of Nature in these variegated gems, it is gratifying to know that *she always* sports in a pleasant fashion, and although (as with any other breed) we cannot positively foretell the marvellous inner workings of Nature, still we can generally pretty nearly predict about what we may get, and *always* rely upon something pretty arising out of a wise course of study with these most interesting birds.

General Formation of all the Frilled Varieties.

"Size, the same as English Owls. Form, plump and compact. Head, of good size and round, being of one continued curve from neck to the nostrils, and from eye to eye, no inequalities observable. The cheek or lower jaw full. The 'gullet' or 'dewlap' full and conspicuous, commencing as near as possible from the tip of under beak, and extending as low as possible down the fore part of neck, at which point the frill projects. The neck should be of good length, and well arched. The beak short, strong, and inclining downwards, and should also be within the same curve or sweep, of head and neck.

"The shoulders broad, and the body acutely tapered. The legs long, and completely covered with short feathers, which should also extend right to the nails, entirely hiding from view both legs and feet, presenting a perfectly grouse-feathered appearance. The carriage is erect, and the movements of a dignified yet conceited bearing.

"As I have said, the foregoing general remarks apply to each kind of the frilled varieties; any variation in size of the specimens is not a matter of much moment, but I may here state that the *larger* birds are preferred in their native country, as presenting a bolder appearance, and as having also a stronger and more vigorous constitution. As these birds are esteemed, in a measure, for their flying properties as well as their beauty, bodily vigour is an additional acquisition.

"I will now describe in detail the sub-varieties, commencing with the Satinette, which may be regarded as the foundation upon which many, nay, most of the other kinds, have been raised. The

direct or immediate descendants of the Satinettes are Brunettes, Bluettes, and Silverettes, which are, no doubt, parts of the *composition* of the breed, and therefore must be considered conjointly with them, and as embodying the coloured-shouldered, white-bodied kinds, all of which have coloured tails. I mention this point here, lest the Turbiteens, of which I shall hereafter speak, might be supposed to be included, when such in reality is not the case; for in the production of these variegated sorts, it is the never-varying rule to avoid crossing a dark with a white-tailed bird, with coloured shoulders.

THE SATINETTE.

"As the illustration admirably shows, the Satinette is of white body, with tri-coloured shoulders, the ground tint of which is pink-brown, graduating to a much lighter shade, then blending into white. On this the markings or pencillings of purple-black are formed, varying in shade according to the size of the feathers, being darkest at the upper part or butts of the wings. Some specimens show also markings of a blue mixture, but the less of this colour is seen the better.

"They should possess not less than seven and no more than ten white flights, as within that number no imperfection is perceivable; but the Oriental standard for pigeons generally, whether of white or coloured flights, is seven. The tail is of a dark purple-blue colour, and at the end of each feather there is a large white spot, which in the extra-pencilled specimens assumes the form of a band, and in either case the dark-coloured shaft of the feather runs through the white band also, creating a remarkable contrast. This white spot is one of the most valuable properties in these birds, as before their introduction there was no variety of pigeon known to possess this ornament.

"Originally these birds were plain-headed, but when they became plentiful the change of fashion produced them crested. In my opinion, when the bird is perfect in all points, it is immaterial whether it is crested or plain-headed, and as there are both in all the colours, fanciers can have their choice, but making it a rule that the crested birds possess a *needle-pointed* crest, perfectly central and compact, and not of the loose kind which some of the British 'maned' Turbits possess. In my opinion no 'maned' bird can possess a close-fitting, well-pointed crest; and though these birds possess no mane, whether crested or plain-headed, they well display the desired property of the arched neck without that irregularity so detrimental to other points.

"In my experience a cross of a plain-headed and a crested bird, occasionally, is necessary to perpetuate the perfection of all crested (peaked) varieties, as it checks the tendency to loose or shell crests.

"The frill is well developed, as it is certain to be, when you know that those venerable fanciers, as well as their predecessors, who originally manufactured the frilled varieties of the pigeons known, never adopted fanciful names for certain properties, such as 'rose' for a *deficient* frill. No, they contend, and I fully indorse it, that all frilled pigeons must have *as much frill as possible*, and that no frilled pigeon can have too much; and this being the case, it is indifferent which form the feathers take, provided they project well, mingle roughly, leave no bare space between, and extend very far up and low down to the full breast.

"The eye is of a dark brown colour, as in the Turbits or white Owls, encircled by an eyelid of a buff fleshy tint; occasionally there are some which display a red eye, as in the coloured Owls, but this arises from the crossing with a certain local breed of Black Turbits with black tails, and marked on the head like a Nun. The object of this cross was to obtain the Satinette with similar

head markings, their efforts for some years having been directed to this point, which they have to a great extent accomplished.

"Besides the four varieties of Satinettes represented in the plate, there are also Black Satinettes of similar pencillings, but only of black and white colour, which have been obtained by the above cross. The markings of the last-named birds can be better understood by reference to the Blondinette plate, as they are similarly marked to the shoulders and tail of the Black Blondinette.

"The Brunettes are similar to the Satinettes, from which they only differ in colour, which in the Brunette is a delicate silver-grey ground tint, with dark graduating grey markings mixed with a buff tint, and rarely with a beautiful sulphur tint. The markings of both the illustrated specimens are of the 'dart' shape, and lest it may be supposed that this is the rule, I refer to the plate of the Blondinettes, where they will see all the various wing pencillings, the same being applicable to the Satinettes and Brunettes. It is a question, even in their native land, which should have the preference; and I well remember, in the early days of my fancy there, being puzzled which to select.

"The Bluettes have clear, pale blue shoulders, and blue tails with the white spots or band. The bars of this variety are very beautiful, as they are composed of the *three colours of the Satinette*, being white on the upper part, graduating into pink-brown, and edged with black, forming a rainbow-like mixture. The white bar edged with black only is highly valued by their originators. In all other points they are exactly as the Satinettes.

"The Silverettes are of a very light silver-grey colour, with grey tails, still possessing the white spots. The bars are of a brown-grey-and-white colour; the whiter the bars are the better. In all other points as the former. All the above have dark thighs.

BREEDING OF THE SATINETTE VARIETIES.

"Be very particular to select the most perfectly-formed birds, with good frills and grouse muffs, but be sure that the birds selected are *not* both of the same identical shade and markings, as in such a case you are likely to breed too finely-pencilled birds, and eventually too light or faded. So far as I observe, the British fanciers desire to possess only perfect show specimens, forgetting that tri-coloured birds require special treatment. I am surprised they do not take this into consideration, while they have plainly before them, in another form, the very same thing in the mode of breeding the Almond Tumblers. Not only the pairing of finely-marked or lightly-tinted birds with heavily-pencilled and dark-coloured specimens is imperative, but necessarily they cross admirably with the Brunettes, and *always* with success, as they are sure to produce perfect birds of the one or the other colour, or one of each.

"The same method is applicable to the Bluettes and Silverettes, which should be crossed occasionally; and though the last two are barred varieties, I have seen and I have bred perfect specimens from crosses of these with the Satinettes and Brunettes. But in my opinion, though I will not hesitate to do the same again, if I had an odd bird of each kind, I consider the barred varieties should not be mixed with the others unnecessarily.

"As these birds are not very plentiful yet in this country, and on account of the constant exodus not much more so in their native land at present, I advise fanciers who happen to possess single specimens, and are compelled to resort to *some* cross, never to cross them with *white*-tailed dark-shouldered birds, such as Turbits. The best cross in such a case is either a white Owl with dark tail (black preferred) or a pure white Owl, as in neither case are the colour or pencillings interfered with; and though you cannot expect to produce young with the perfection of the birds in question, because you are sure to lose part, if not all the muffs, and part of the principal shade of colour, still you will have beautifully formed birds with good frill, and in most cases a

dark-tailed white Owl, with the remarkable white spots in the tail feathers. The last are freely produced and much admired in the East, though they have there the advantage of producing more perfect birds from such a cross than we can, as their Owl pigeons are grouse-muffed, as well as nearly all the birds they admire; and they originally propagated these grouse-muffs from the Satinettes by systematic crosses, of which I shall speak hereafter.

"Do not be led astray by the *colour* of these birds, and begin to think that you can cross them with birds approaching their colour, such as Hyacinths and others of the *German* toys. If so, in trying to keep the colour or markings, which is only one of their principal beauties, you lose *several* most important points, such as the frill, the shape of head and beak, the general outline and carriage, which, once lost, cannot easily be regained. When I first showed my stock of these birds to a friend in Birmingham, some fourteen years ago, he said he never had such a treat before, but he thought that he had, there and then, conceived the idea how they were bred; so he asked me to let him have even an imperfect specimen, be it only a crossed one, and eventually he had one, a white with a blue tail, possessing the white spots and grouse-muffed, being bred from a Satinette and a grouse-muffed, dark-tailed, Oriental Owl. He paired this bird to a Hyacinth, and persevered for years, crossing and recrossing, though I told him that he strove in vain; and, after all, one can perceive, to the present day, traces of the Satinette on several birds, but the head properties and the frill have suffered irretrievably, and the only property remaining is the colour. This is not an isolated case. Another fancier I know, who commenced by crossing pure-bred birds with the Hyacinths, but with the same results. Experience has proved to me that the maxim of the venerable Oriental fanciers, viz., 'Never cross a frilled and short-beaked with a non-frilled and thin-beaked tribe, if your intention is to retain and perpetuate those properties,' is the only basis upon which one can proceed with safety.

"The general appearance of the young I intend to describe collectively at the end of the description of the tri-coloured varieties.

"I now pass on to the varieties which owe their beauty of colour, markings, and muffs to these original Satinettes. These are Blondinettes, the manufacture of which commenced during my own presence in the East.

BLONDINETTES.

"About twenty-four years ago one of the principal Oriental fanciers conceived the idea of breeding, if possible, every variety they possessed with the grouse-muffs of the Satinettes. He commenced first with the Owl tribe, and he succeeded in breeding from a cross of a silver Owl and a Satinette a blue Owl with partially-feathered legs. He then mated this blue Owl with a Satinette hen, and this cross produced the first Blondinette, which I succeeded in obtaining from him. But you must understand that though this young bird was grouse-muffed, and of a similar body and shoulder-colour to the present birds, it only possessed *small* white spots on the tail feathers, and none on the flights.

"This proved a cock bird, and soon after I met with a similarly bred hen, as nearly like the cock as possible, bred by a Turkish fancier, which I procured, and mated to the cock I had; but before these birds began to breed, I departed for America, where, after a year, I received the information that my stock was in the hands of the old Presbyter I alluded to previously. Under his care their cultivation commenced, but very soon it spread, and it became the principal aim of every fancier; we shall now see with what result.

"The general formation of the Blondinettes are as in the Satinettes. They are bred crested and plain-headed, the former preferred, though the original were plain-headed; but as the fashion then became reversed, and the Owls were bred crested and the Turbits plain-headed, this variety



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BLONDINETTES.

BLUE
ARROW POINTED

LACED.

BLACK SPANGLED.
BROWN TIPD

came within the category of the former. I have proved a cross of a plain-headed and a crested bird occasionally necessary and advantageous to both. I must refer readers for description to the plate containing the specimens. Suffice it to say the reader may imagine all the different shapes, marking, and pencilling transformed from one to the other, whatever the colour may be, whether of the original Satin, the pale, or dark brown. The same is also applicable to the Barred varieties, as they both differ from the Satinettes only by the body-colour, which is dark.

"The Satin Blondinettes should possess the exact tri-coloured plumage of the Satinettes on the wings, and also the exact markings of the tail feathers, but all the body should be of a graduating purple-black colour, with the exception of the flights, which should possess white elongated markings in the middle of each feather, as is the case in the flights of the wild Magpie. This gives them a most beautiful and proportionate pencilling which harmonises well with the white spots or band of the tail feathers. In their native land these varieties are preferred with the pencilling extending to the upper part of the neck, which is the result of mating extra pencilled birds together; but I think, the dark purple-black neck displays a better contrast, and shows better the wing colour and pencillings. This is also applicable to all the colours of the Blondinettes. In all other points they are as the Satinettes.

"The Brown Blondinettes are in colour of wings and tail exactly as the Brunettes, in their various shades, but the same brown tint graduates through the entire body, being darkest on the head. In these I must include the sulphur-coloured birds, which are very rare, but most beautiful when perfect, because there is a clear sulphur tint strongly mixed with the markings of the wings, which in graduating to the neck becomes strong deep buff or golden colour, and they are called Golden-necked Sulphurs. The white markings on the long flights and tail must be clear and large, in all other respects they are as the Satinettes.

"The Black Blondinettes, being bi-coloured, are black with white pencillings. The white in the best birds extends very much on the lowest wing-feathers and tail, where it is only finely edged with black, though the shafts of the quills are black also. This variety is never found with the same fine pencilling right up to the shoulders, which is so characteristic of the perfect birds of the other shades. In other points as the former.

"The Barred Blondinettes include the Blues and Silvers. The Blues are of a uniform clear pale blue colour, with tri-coloured bars, composed of white, pinkish-brown, and black; the white markings of the flight feathers, with the white tail spots, make these birds very attractive. They meet with great favour, and perfect birds of this kind are very scarce. The Silvers also possess the same white flight and tail markings, but the bars of white and pinkish-brown colour, and when met with white bars they are highly esteemed by their native fanciers. On all other points they are as the former, viz., crested and plain-headed, grouse-muffed, well frilled, good carriage, round and down-faced head, with short and strong beak.

BREEDING BLONDINETTES.

"As in the breeding of the former, it is necessary to select the best formed vigorous birds, well muffed, well frilled, but *not* of the same shade of colour, and not of the same shape of markings. As a rule give preference to mating a lightly-coloured and pencilled bird to a richly-marked one, and you may depend that perfect specimens will be the result. At the same time it is advisable, and even imperative, to cross freely all the colours of the tri-coloured shouldered varieties; as experience has proved that, as a rule, from such crosses, you will breed one young of each colour, or both taking the colour of one parent, in each case with remarkable accuracy. In case of necessity, you may also cross them with the Barred varieties.

"The Blues and Silvers should also be similarly crossed, as it is beneficial to both; but be careful to select the best and strongest-looking birds. A singular observation is peculiar to these varieties. If you match a crested with a plain-headed bird, if crested, you may rely the crest of the young is *always* perfect, as lop-sided and shell-crested birds amongst them are extremely scarce. This is due to the periodical matching of plain-headed and crested birds.

"Often the appearance of the young when feathered, in all the tri-coloured varieties, are of a rich brown purple-black colour on the shoulders, with very little variegation, and in most cases without the white spots on the tail or flight feathers. An uninitiated breeder at first (and I have known such cases) may think that his beautiful Satinettes have bred a pair, or one of the two, of a kind of bronzed black Turbit with dark tail and muffs! or, from a pair of Bluettes, a pair of blue Turbits with bronzed bars and blue tails! But have patience, do not be uneasy, and do not condemn or part with such looking youngsters, because as nature grants them, in certain rotation, their first annual suit, you will gradually perceive a most pleasant and gratifying transformation on the wings, then on the flights or bars (as the variety may be), and lastly on the tail; all this, as a rule, provided no alien cross has taken place.

"In general, all the young which appear at first as described prove to be heavily pencilled and rather dark, rich in colour of markings, or in the bars (as I am including the barred varieties), and, as a rule, they have the white spots in the tail feathers of moderate size and not as a band. The white markings also in the flights of the Blondinettes are not so well defined, but still they possess all those points to a more or less degree. On the contrary, a good number—and generally the young birds produced by well-pencilled and perfectly-marked parents—are gifted with this variegation from birth, and, when fully feathered, appear as perfect and beautiful as the best moulted birds. These extra-gifted squeakers prove, after moulting, to be finely-pencilled, lightly but delicately coloured, and possessing the white tail band, and in the Blondinettes the white flight markings to perfection. The pencilling also in such birds extends to the upper part of the neck.

"The barred varieties are under the same category, as they often breed birds which may be mistaken in the Blondinettes for bronzed-barred Owls but for the muffs, as *only* from a pair possessing the white tail band with bars edged with fine black, and in the Blondinettes with conspicuous white markings in the flights and tail, you may rely to see perfectly-marked young before the first moult.

"Rarely, all the aforesaid varieties will breed a young one without, or with only very faint, white spots in tail or flights, or both, even after moulting. Such birds, if perfect in muffs, frill, and form (which they are sure to be) should be treasured for stock purposes, to be mated with the lightest and highly-pencilled birds, as they will not only impart strength of colour and markings, but also vigour of constitution.

"During my visit to the East, five years ago, of two years' duration (after an absence of fourteen years), I endeavoured to discover what improvement or alteration the present fanciers contemplated; but I failed to discover, and on inquiring I was asked to make a suggestion; but as my silence proved I had none to make, an old acquaintance said, 'Have you seen any better specimens in Europe or America than our favourites?' As I did not like to stimulate his vanity, I said, 'Wait till you see some varieties I am expecting from England;' though I knew then what they would appreciate, and I was not mistaken.

"These birds are excellent breeders and feeders, as all the frilled varieties are, and in their native land they commonly produce from eight to nine pairs annually, resting only during moulting-time. They are principally fed on hemp-seed, occasionally on dari and barley. They are flown



Emmett Brothers Day & Son Lith.

TURBITEENS.

BLUE & BLACK (CRESTED)

RED & YELLOW (PLAIN HEADED)

daily, as the flying fancy there is as strong as the Tumbler-flying in this country, though the appearance of an Oriental flock is indescribable, the fanciers studying the composition of the colours and the view they present during the flight. A perfect 'kit' is composed in part of the varieties in question, then of self-coloured birds, the coloured-shouldered varieties, the white with dark tails, white with dark flights, Nuns, also solid Blacks and Reds with white tails, &c. &c., making a compact illuminated flock, above which, in every case, two or three Oriental Rollers (see page 193) soar, and occasionally descend through in the execution of their long and rapid performance. Being good fliers, they are, in consequence, good homers, displaying occasionally this property to a remarkable degree. Of the several illustrations in my knowledge I will relate one. During my early fancy days I bred a white-crested Owl, partially muffed (on account of Satinette blood), which fascinated the best fancier of the place, and he succeeded in getting it—by exchange—when the bird was about five months old. This fancier kept it a distance of about three miles, with clipped flights, and it bred well, till moulting time, when it managed, in his presence, to get on the house, and then to another, and finally disappeared, but the next morning the bird was home; and soon after my friend also, begging to take it back. This he did, clipping the newly-grown feathers carefully; but this stubborn bird has repeated the same journey twice after, at the moulting period.

"These birds when well flown thrive on anything, even on hemp-seed, as in their native land; but as the general mode of keeping them in this country is confinement, I will endeavour to explain my mode of successful treatment, which I have experienced at considerable cost. When I first commenced to keep them in this country, being my first attempt at keeping pigeons in confinement, I began, as I thought logically, to follow as near as possible the treatment of their native country. First, I had erected in the yard a large wooden room, with a good space attached constructed of lattice-work, for my favourites to exercise in it in fine weather. This large pen I fitted with a stove, and by this method I kept the temperature comfortable, thinking they would feel at home. I have also supplied them with hoppers stocked with their favourite hemp-seed. The result was destruction! Nearly every day one or two deaths occurred; until shortly after, having to move to Birmingham, I contrived to bring with me two selected pairs, one of Satinettes and one of Brunettes. These birds I kept in an aviary well sheltered from the north winds, with a very small pen attached thereto. It was all paved with blue bricks. In this pen they commenced to breed under a really proper treatment. They were fed only on barley and a bit of bread occasionally, and from these two pairs of birds, and under this treatment, I succeeded, in time, in raising a good stock of nearly twenty pairs of perfect specimens of both colours, amongst them being some even superior to their imported parents.

"This is the method I now recommend, adding, that as a change to the barley and bread dari is the best. They also require plenty of crushed old morter. But if British fanciers can contrive to keep these birds at liberty and fly them, then they can treat them as any ordinary pigeons. It is only the *too kind* treatment they generally receive in this country which makes them delicate; and in my experience I discovered that the active varieties of pigeons, when deprived of their liberty, should be kept rather low, and not fed upon flesh-increasing and blood-heating corn, as in such a case the result will be fatal.

THE TURBITEENS.

"These are the present Oriental Turbits, which twenty-five years ago were marked as the present British Turbits. But at that time they had become so plentiful that an influential fancier started the fashion, and advocated the face-markings, which he succeeded in establishing by the introduction of a local variety of Turbits with black tails and heads marked as the Nuns, to which I have previously alluded, commencing by crossing these birds with white Owls, to

counteract and balance the colour of the black tail. Eventually he succeeded in breeding some head-marked Turbits with white tails. This fashion soon spread, and about the same period the conversion of the crest from the Turbits to the Owls came about, this remaining the Eastern style to the present day. All these changes of fashion were introduced only on account of the *abundance* of perfect ordinary birds of these species, which led the emulation of fanciers to seek something scarce. In my opinion the way this revolution commenced was not desirable, as the only object was to obtain head-marked birds, but with no *fixed* markings, such as the selected imported show birds; but a spot on the front of the head and one marking on the *one* side only was admired nearly as well as an evenly marked bird! So it yet continues, because the production of the Blondinettes soon after attracted all attention, and no one undertook the thorough perfection of the Turbiteens. They only imparted to them the muffs, which all the breeds they fancy must possess. One of their strange fashionable introductions at the same revolutionary time was the white flights upon all their Owls, as well as the crest! And you cannot meet now any of the old-fashioned wonderful birds in every respect as perfect in shape and colour as the present fashion.

"Can you imagine all *your* Turbits and English Owls as good in form and colour as the Turbiteens, and still be dissatisfied? However, such was the case, and hence now we have the greatly-admired Turbiteens, whose recent introduction has attracted even more attention than the tri-coloured varieties, which they will never equal.

"The Turbiteens are in head as good as the best English Owl should be, with round and even head, short thick beak, down face, and arched neck, whether crested or plain-headed, rather large in size, with excellent and dignified carriage, well-developed frill extending from the upper part of the neck down to the full breast, grouse-muffed, and longer muffed legs and feet, white body with coloured shoulders, and head markings. But not *water-colour!* No, whatever their colour may be, whether black, red, or yellow, which are the principal, it is a deep brilliant glossy colour, which, unlike the British products called Reds and Yellows, are fast and permanent colours, which neither this climate nor the Eastern sun will effect. The evenly head-marked birds are scarce.

"There are besides the above-named colours blue, blue-chequered, silver with black and brown bars, silver-chequered, yellow-chequered, red-chequered, red-barred, yellow-barred, and very light dun. All should possess the head-markings either in one single spot on the forehead, commencing from the beak, or with the additional side markings, equal in size whether they are large or small, starting from the sides of the beak. They should have no less than seven white flights, and no more than ten; the former is the standard of their originators. The birds possessing large head-markings generally have red eyes as in the coloured Owls, but often those with a spot only have the dark eye of the Turbit. The most important points amongst the native fanciers are form of beak, colour, frill, and muffs, but they entirely overlook *dark thighs*, which they consider of not the slightest detriment to a bird, so they are dark thighed.

BREEDING TURBITEENS.

"The venerable Oriental fanciers keep and treasure not only their perfect specimens, but also those which necessarily help to produce the perfect birds. In consequence of this a bronzed-black Turbiteen is considered a very valuable stock bird, and if British fanciers will study the matching of their coloured specimens, of whatever variety they may be, they are sure to arrive at the same result. Here is the system:—

"A bird produced from a cross of a black and red, whether it is black, bronzed-black, or red, will do to match either with black or red again. Also a bird bred from a cross of a red and yellow, whether red or yellow, will do admirably with either red or yellow again. But birds bred

from parents of one colour should be freely mated, as they ought to be, with birds of dissimilar colour, viz., a bird bred from a pair of Blacks should be crossed with a bird bred from a pair of Reds, and a bird bred from a pair of Reds should be crossed with one bred from a pair of Yellows, thus you have black mated to red, and red mated to yellow. As a rule, never breed from a black and a yellow, but if you want to improve black mate it with a black or red bred from a black and red; if you want to improve red, mate it with a black or red, bred from a black and red; if you want to improve the yellow, mate it with a red or yellow bred from a red and yellow. Pair also two reds bred from black and red, and two yellows bred from red and yellow, and continue to observe which colour requires strengthening, and by following the above plan your success is certain.

"The Barred varieties also should be crossed discriminately, Blues with Silvers, and red-barred with yellow-barred.

"I have enumerated all the colours I met in the east of Europe and Asia Minor; but now, besides the Blacks, Reds, Yellows, Light Duns, and Blues, no other colours are cultivated, and only occasionally you meet odd specimens of the other colours, which have nearly disappeared, especially the chequered varieties, which never fascinated the taste of those worthy judges of form and colour to whom we are indebted.

"So far as the head-markings go, I should think that fanciers can select and breed what they like best, but their aim must be either one spot on the forehead or this spot with *two equal* side markings, which in my opinion should include the entire cheeks, as the feathering therefrom converges in another direction. Evidently till now the British fanciers are eager to possess perfect show specimens for the 'Variety class,' and I am surprised that their principal value has been so far overlooked. Now, amongst the importations there are occasionally some with very little head-markings (the quantity and shape of these markings being of no great importance in their native land), but in colour and form equal to the best show specimens. I am therefore surprised that no British fancier has crossed these birds with the British Turbits. Are they frightened at their muffs and head-markings? If so, I trust they will now cease the fear, when they know that these properties were imparted into them, and are in consequence the easiest to eradicate. I hope therefore that within a short period we shall see all the British Turbits possessing the same form and colour.

"All the head-marked birds should possess (from the nest) a dark beak, in accordance with the lightness or depth of their respective colours.

"These birds being of the active flying varieties, should be treated as I have previously described.

"Having now given a complete description of the several varieties for consideration, together with hints as to their breeding and management, there remains but little more to be added. I have not kept a careful record of the actual number of birds which I have been the means of introducing into this country, but apart from the birds which I myself had from abroad, and the number I had sent to me during my residence in Manchester, I think I may say that upwards of 250 pairs have reached these shores through my instrumentality, some of which have passed into the hands of my friend, Mr. J. W. Ludlow, who is an ardent lover of pigeons generally, and of these beautiful creatures especially. He in his turn procured for me a fine collection of Almonds and Short-faced Tumblers for my own edification and amusement, and I may say that these mutual interchanges of stocks have not in the slightest degree been prompted by any pecuniary consideration, but simply and purely by a desire to extend and cause to flourish the love of *all* pigeons amongst the fanciers of both countries, where the

cultivation of pigeons has yielded so much truly enjoyable and innocent recreation. Yet, although I had the pleasure of presenting the most of these Short-faced Tumblers to a representative of the Sultan for additional adornment to his royal aviary, I must say that excepting for head and beak properties these beautiful little Tumblers were not so much esteemed as I hoped they would have been. Still, I had the satisfaction of placing them in the possession of the said agent, whose special mission was the collection of similar kinds as I myself was keeping. In order to meet our respective wants the native stocks have in consequence become considerably reduced in numbers, which has naturally greatly enhanced the value of those remaining; still, from the very favourable climate, this temporary scarcity is rapidly made up, and my old friend and fancier there has instructions to collect and retain in stock all the available worthy products for further importation.

"Many fanciers have had an opportunity of seeing some of the most beautiful specimens of their respective kinds which have been produced in this country by myself and a few other admirers, into whose hands some of the birds have passed. This should certainly be a sufficient proof (if need there be) of the stability or permanency of the breeds. In conclusion, I appeal to not only fanciers, but to all true lovers of the beautiful. Look at any of the birds enumerated in this chapter, reckon up their points as you like, read from time to time of their victories achieved, as they have been, in that most unsatisfactory yet most interesting of all classes, the *Variety class*, and say what verdict do you pronounce upon these Oriental pigeon products? Does it not at least teach us an unmistakable lesson, that even in this pigeon-loving land we must yield the palm to the worshippers of Mahomet as being the originators, the foremost fanciers, the almost idolisers of nearly *all* our fancy pigeons, and especially these beautiful short-faced, frill-breasted, compact, and beautiful birds?"



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith

BLACK CAPUCHINS.

DAMASCENES.

CHAPTER XXI.

DAMASCENES AND CAPUCHINS.

THESE birds are evidently to some extent allied to those mentioned in the preceding chapter, having the short and owl-like head, but not the feathered legs, or the same variegation of plumage. There is little to be said of them, being little known in this country; but they breed true, and present little difficulty in keeping up their characteristics. For the following remarks we are again indebted to Mr. Caridia :—

THE DAMASCENE.

"This variety, whether rightly named or not, was, as I am well informed, forty years ago so plentiful in the East, that in Smyrna they were frequently roasted in the Oriental style; yet in my early fancy days, there was not one single specimen left, or even a trace of the breed; but fanciers succeeded in procuring some of the same old style of birds. They not only soon multiplied them, but they have done so, in their way of admiration, by breeding them grouse-muffed, but as these birds are not equal in beauty to their tri-coloured favourites, only few fanciers keep them, and in consequence they are not numerous.

"The Damascene should present a bold and vigorous carriage, with the form of head and beak as in the English Owl, but a little larger in size, and without frill. Two principal points, peculiar to these birds, makes them very attractive, viz., the large blue eyelids or cere, which surrounds the eye, being of a damson colour, and the colour of their feathers, which is of a really clear silver or French white tint, on which the intensity of their black bars is a conspicuous feature. The tail also possesses the black band, but the flight and tail feathers are of a dark shade deepening at the outer extremity.

"Though the plumage of these birds is so clear on the surface, the under fluffy part of each feather, and especially those of the neck, are of a dark colour. The beak and nails are black, the eye pale orange.

"Damascenes being of the active, flying kind, and of a very determined nature, thrive best at liberty, and once let out safely, there is no fear of them being led astray; but if kept in confinement their treatment should be as in the last chapter.

"This variety, in my opinion, is one of the most useful for experimental purposes.

THE CAPUCHIN.

"The first imported pair of these birds I had consigned, with others, during my visit abroad, to my friend Mr. Ludlow, and he has named them as above, I suppose because they really possess an extensive shell crest. This variety, with which I was familiar from my early fancy days, is peculiar to one locality in Asia Minor, from whence we used to procure them principally for decoration to the flying 'kit,' because being of a raven black with white tail, they presented a good contrast. In size they are about as the Jacobins, to which some fanciers may consider them allied, though I must say that this breed of birds are now in every respect what I

have known them to be twenty-five years ago, and I am informed they were known the same by the oldest fanciers. Perfect Jacobins were also kept, but never crossed with this breed, because they already possessed the only property which these birds could be desired to impart, viz., the round head with short and proportionate beak, which characteristics are greatly wanted in the present *British* Jacobin, with which on this account I think they may be advantageously crossed. They have an excellent carriage, with rather drooping wings, full chest, and a most remarkable, really white eye, which contrasts admirably with their glossy raven black feathers. The cere of the eye is of a purple-black colour, the beak and nails also black. They are excellent breeders and feeders. There are also Blue Capuchins with black bars and white tails, and pure Whites."

From experience since the first edition of this work was published, we can fully corroborate Mr. Caridia's opinion as to the value of these pigeons for crossing. The late Mr. Wallace, of Glasgow, losing by death one of the best pair of Damascenes we ever saw, crossed the other with an English powdered-blue Owl, the progeny being scarcely distinguishable from the Damascene, even in the peculiar eye-cere. Even in the third cross the Damascene peculiarities were plainly observable. This seems to show that the Damascene is no mere sport from the Owl, but contains some very distinct blood; while on the other hand the colour of all the birds does seem to make it probable that this may be the source of the peculiar colour known as "powdered" blue or silver.

The cross of the Capuchin with the British Jacobin we have tried personally, selecting the Jacobin low-cut and clean-thighed, and with several of the short or inner flights white besides the orthodox ten a side. The one bird saved had four or five white flights a side; the head and beak put to shame all the true-bred Jacobins we possessed; and the hood and chain were well formed, but wanting in quantity. The bird was extra high-cut, and what is called "dirty" (rather than foul) thighed to the vent, and with the upper mandible black. This young bird—a cock—was matched back to the Jacobin, the result being three Blacks. These were five to seven a side, the hood and chain greatly improved, also the colour of the beak—the head was, in fact, all that could be desired, and the beak extremely short; the carriage also was all that could be desired. The third cross—still to the Jacobin—again resulted in three Blacks, one of which, a hen, won three second prizes, being good in all points except, strange to say, the very points of head and beak we wanted to improve; in which the bird had bred quite back to her mother. She had eight and nine a side. A brother (in same nest) had the true head and beak of the Capuchin, with six and seven flights, high-cut, and most perfect carriage. Both of these birds we are still breeding from, in hopes of improving the head properties and carriage of the Jacobin. So far we are satisfied, only having failed somewhat in mane, which we hope to obtain from the present cross.



SCOTCH FANTAILS OR BROAD-TAILED SHAKERS.

WHITE LACED.

WHITE. BLACK-SADDLE BACK.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FANTAIL.

THIS pigeon can be traced back farther in history than many others, and there can be but little doubt that it first came from India, whence many importations are still made; American fanciers, especially, frequently obtaining consignments from Calcutta. The old books upon pigeons also employ the term "Broad-tailed Shaker" to describe the breed; and the two names seem to us to afford strong presumptive proof that even in those days there were two schools of breeders, as there are now; one seeking chiefly for tail above all other properties, the other rather for that "carriage" and shaking "motion" which are the grand properties of the Northern fancier. To consider the Scotch and English Fantail distinct, as some seem to do, we think a great error; there being nothing to show that there is any further distinction between them than being differently selected, and bred from specimens which showed somewhat different points, as all fancy pigeons continually do. It is, however, undoubtedly true that very distinct types exist at present, and most of the present Scotch birds appear to have sprung from one strain, of which we are favoured with the following account from Mr. George Ure, of Dundee:--

"To some it may appear superfluous to have an article for this breed, thinking it might have been embraced under the general head of 'Fantail.' The bird, however, differs so widely from all others, that a separate notice is, I think, excusable, and I shall, therefore, state, as shortly as possible, what I know of it. A fancier in Dundee, about forty years ago, had a breed of Fantails—black Saddle-backs—of extraordinary style. After a time, not being a fancier of the right sort, he gave up keeping pigeons, and they were sold. I was then but a youth, without the means to buy the lot (there were other sorts as well), but I knew where they went to, and thought I would have them some day, and by keeping them in sight and 'biding my time,' I got them, I may say, entirely into my own hands, for a few birds, scattered here and there, and ill-managed, went for nothing. I never could learn where they came from, beyond the very vague information that they 'came in a ship' to Dundee. I have seen and often had the Indian Fantail, but these birds were different from all I ever saw from that quarter, so small, and close, and tight-feathered, and with such extraordinary action and style—the tails of the round, arched form, but fine and well-expanded. Some were so excessively 'nervous' that they were almost useless for breeding. One hen I had, in particular, was over two years old before she could breed, and up to that age she had no tail, as, from her excessive action, she so frequently rolled about on the floor, that the growing feathers were always broken off. This, with age, she got over, and bred, and I have her still stuffed, and the only really well-stuffed pigeon I ever saw, though done by an amateur.

"In body they were so short, or, rather, round, that if divested of tail, wings, and neck, a small orange or cricket-ball would give a good idea of it. After some time, the tails began to get contracted or 'spooney,' when I got hold of an Indian bird, a peak-headed hen, and the best one I ever saw of that breed; she was white, as most of them are. By this cross I got pure whites, which

have always been favourites. My oldest and most esteemed friend in the fancy, Mr. Huie, got a pair from this cross, and has stuck to them ever since, and has bred some of the finest I ever saw. Some years afterward I got a *red* Saddle-back cock, I think an Indian bird, though he had no peak. He was a bird of fine style, and I bred many fine ones of that colour and marking, and though it is over twenty years since, they still appear now and then, as well as the original black Saddle-back, and they are always first-rate in quality. Mr. Huie bred some of the red Saddle-backs that I never saw excelled, so small and close in feather, with good tails and perfection of style.

"By-and-by they got spread over Scotland, but they are all from the old Saddle-backs that 'came in a ship.' Their small size, fine neck, head, and beak, and close feathering, make them, in my opinion, superior to all other Fantails I have ever seen. They show such *breeding*, such an almost endless variety of attitudes and motions, that a fancier can look at them for hours, while for those with merely big or *fan* tails, a glance is sufficient; you will not see more though you look at them for a month; they are too large and coarse in body, head, and neck, though the tail is larger, so large that in a show-pen the bird is hid under it, and it requires stirring up to show that there is life under such a canopy of feathers. Our birds, as I have already said, must be very small, with fine head and necks, and the breast very prominent and round. The head and neck must be thrown back with ease till they quite fill up the back, the head resting against the root of the tail. The motion is not merely tremulous, as in most Fantails, but is more of a convulsive heaving of the neck and breast, and then keeping it quiet and running backwards. A good bird, when nearly on a level with the eye, and the breast towards the observer, shows only the round breast —the head is quite out of sight.

"The English fanciers' great objection to them is that they have not the flat tail. I admit that they have not, and will no doubt surprise and shock many when I say that I think they look fully as well without it, that is, when they have the best form of the arched tail large and well spread Some fanciers say, as it is the *Fantail*, the *tail* is above everything, and must be as like a *fan* as possible—this I think puerile; some fanciers I have heard say that the crop in Cropper or Pouter was the great property, from the *name*. The flat tail, when viewed in front, would look very well if the bird possessing them were well up in other points; but I contend that when looked at in a side view or profile, the arched tail is superior, even supposing the birds equal in other properties, which I have never yet seen the flat-tailed ones to be. There are all the signs of *high breeding* in the little birds, and so much *show*, that they must gain ground with all genuine fanciers. They have one provoking thing about them, though it is caused by their superiority; that is, the difficulty of keeping them in good order, from the excessive nervous action by which they spoil their tails through backing up against walls and the sides of their pens. They require no particular treatment, but one thing I have observed, that though hardy birds, and good as breeders and feeders, when they get ill they scarcely ever get over it; they seem to go down without an effort.

"The Fantail is, when fine, one of the best and most interesting of our fancy pigeons, in my opinion ranking next after the three *aristocratic* breeds of Pouters, Carriers, and Short-faces, though no doubt many will differ from me in this. India is generally supposed to be the home of the Fantail. I have had them direct from friends repeatedly, and seen hundreds besides from that part of the world, but none of them were like our Scotch birds. Many have good tails, and a few good style, but they all look big and loose-feathered, and nearly all have the peak head, which, in my opinion, destroys the fine head and neck so desirable in a Fantail, as, with the peak head, there is always a mane or ridge down the back of the neck, which makes it look thick—a great fault in a Fantail. Some fanciers say that Fantails cannot have too short legs; this I cannot quite agree

with, as a very short-legged bird has not the freedom of action that they ought to have; their wings get in the way and often trip them, or they get so dirty and broken as to detract very much from their appearance. For my own part I prefer moderately long legs, but not *stilty*, which would be even worse than the very short legs. I am quite sure that this style of bird is making its way to the front, and ere long will be the favourite with all who love to see *breeding* in a pigeon."

A little more detailed description of the Scotch style of bird is, however, desirable. The principal property as distinct from the English fancy is the trembling or shaking motion, which extends to the whole body, at nearly all times, except when sitting, and is often developed to such an extent, as described by Mr. Ure, as to cause the birds to fall back upon their tails. They are then said to have "too much motion." The movement is chiefly seen in the neck and breast. The neck is carried so far backward while in movement that the head rests nearly on the root of the tail, so that the breast is much higher than the head itself, while, at the same time, the pigeon struts upon tiptoe. The combination of these points is called "good carriage." The breast must also be broad compared with the body; the broader, in fact, the better, especially at the upper part; and when this is right, and the bird is of good carriage, the upper part of the breast will be about perpendicular over the sole of the foot when seen in profile. Hens, as a rule, have more carriage and motion than cocks. Next comes the tail, which most Scotch fanciers think of less importance. Here we consider them wrong, and reckon it certainly the first property. A perfect tail should present nearly an entire circle when viewed from the back, only a small gap being seen at the very bottom, which should not exceed two and a half inches across. Each feather should nicely overlap the next one at the edges, just like a lady's fan when opened to its full extent. Such a tail will *not* be that which contains the greatest number of feathers. Such resemble more a fan when half-closed; and here we think the old fanciers made a great mistake in seeking, as they seem to have done, for the highest *number* of feathers as a chief property. We have heard of forty and forty-two feathers in the tail, and we have ourselves had birds with as many as thirty-eight; but all we ever saw as yet with more than thirty entirely lacked the proper form and spread; too many causing the bird to show a heavy, hanging tail, not flat and upright, as shown in our plate. The best tails we have seen never exceeded twenty-eight feathers in the cock or twenty-six in the hen. Even laying aside the Scotch Fan, and speaking of the coarser English bird, we do not consider any pigeon can carry properly more than thirty-two feathers, and for the smaller Scotch bird twenty-six is about the limit, allowing the bottom feathers to come nearly together, and the top ones to appear nearly upright, light, and as if at the command of the bird. The root of the tail in a Scotch bird should appear as small as if a small ring had been kept round it; and then, when the head is thrown back to this spot, there is no back to be seen, and the tail stands up so far above the head as to seem much larger by comparison than it really is. There is a tendency in some birds to get the head through, and thus split the tail. We have known this stopped by tying the three centre ones together, so as to prevent this, by which, in time, the habit was cured. The last property in the Scotch Fantail is size, or rather want of it. The bird should be small, and this is where English breeders often misjudge the Scotch fancy; for the tail being relatively so large, the Scotch looks very much smaller than the English tail; whereas, if the size of the body also be taken into account, the Scotch tail is often relatively quite as large as the others, though in some strains there is a little deficiency in the length of the feathers, which, of course, governs the size of tail. Another fault in some birds (generally cocks) is a sort of notch in the tail, arising from

the middle feathers being shorter than the rest; or a curious split feather, or what is better known as a double feather, though with only one root. To remedy this, we have known the faulty ones cut off short, and other feathers slipped on to the stumps after being dipped in glue, the operation lasting, if not discovered, until the next moult. This fault is as often as not, however, caused by the owners themselves. The birds which are best in motion are very apt, as already explained, to fall back and get the ends of the feathers broken or damaged. This is, indeed, one sign of good motion, and few good birds but get more or less so soon after moult. Then the owner, to get a fresh tail for some show, plucks the feathers, and when this is done it is very seldom the centre feathers will come again the same length as the rest, or as they would have done if left to moult in due course. We have seen this so often, that we warn our readers it is *very rarely* a bird plucked to "get a fresh tail" for show, is not ruined as regards the centre, even the next moult not restoring it. So true is this, that even when the tail must be plucked as a remedial measure, as is so often needed with young pigeons, or in the moulting season, the four middle feathers should always be left, by which the centre will be preserved.

Some otherwise very good Fans have wry tails. If not a bad case we would advise cutting off the whole of one side pretty close to the root, and pasting a little card or something on those left on the other side. This, by leaving all the weight on one side till next moult, will often cure a slight case, but not severe ones. Such are generally hereditary, so that if possible they should never be bred from.

The beak should be fine, and with a neat curve at the tip like that of a dove. The legs and feet small and fine, the bird standing or walking as much as possible on tiptoe like the Tumbler, and the wings carried very low also, so as to display the tail to the best advantage. If the wings are carried up like those of other pigeons they project through the sides of the tail, and completely spoil its beauty and value; but if of very good carriage the bird may be preserved for breeding by shortening the flights just sufficiently to be clear of the tail. Some prefer to shorten a few of the tail-feathers at each side. Of course these things are only done with young birds in their nest-feathers or during the breeding season. Some hens are indeed unfertile unless the whole of the tail be cut quite short whilst breeding.

Such is the Scotch Fantail, and such birds are truly represented in our plates, the White being one of Mr. Ure's strain, belonging to Mr. J. E. Spence, which has often been shown with success. The coloured birds are marked exactly like Turbits, viz., on the shoulders of the wings only, but in Fantails this marking is known as Saddle-backed, and the plate shows a real portrait of one bred by the late Mr. Huie, of Glasgow. It was so good that many of even the Whites owe their origin to this bird, Mr. Huie distributing his specimens as widely as many dealers do theirs, though by gift rather than sale. The Saddle-backed Fantail is a particularly handsome bird, and we prefer it to all others, but it is very difficult to breed both good and true to markings. The third bird is what is called a "Laced" Fantail, which belonged to the late Mr. James Wallace, of Glasgow, a fancier for over fifty years, during the whole of which time, we think, he was never without a good collection. This variety has the feathers loose or deficient in webbing, the filaments being separate as in the Silky Fowl, though hardly so much so. The peculiarity of plumage is strongly hereditary, this bird being far better than the original stock imported by Mr. Wallace, from which it was descended, and which was thus improved by crossing with better, but ordinary-plumaged Scotch Fans. This fact is interesting as showing that a *pair* is never needed to found a variety or improve the strain; if the peculiarity be real and well marked, one bird will do it, should it live and be judiciously managed.

Turning from the Scotch Fantail to the English or coarser bird, however, we must state that

our plates are not portraits, but very considerably idealised, a portion of the better Scotch properties being imparted to or grafted on the former English ideal. This was to develop and exaggerate the tail at the expense of everything else, whence the English birds came to possess very little carriage, the head being carried higher than the breast, near the top of the tail when erect, and with very little motion. On the other hand the tail was developed both in size and *position*, the upright and spread character being carried to the extent of having it lie like the lid of a saucepan, nearly *flat over the back*. We say this was so formerly,* but now it is conceded that such a tail is no æsthetic or even fancy beauty, and we not unfrequently see birds with all that can be desired in point of tail only, but still with little carriage or motion. Without doubt there is something to be said on both sides, though *on the whole* we consider the Scotch Fan, as seen at its best, to be far the highest class of pigeon, having so many more pleasing properties, with all the tail, too, that its size will carry. The whole question is well argued by that well-known Fantail fancier, the Rev. W. Serjeantson, whose efforts in the direction he states have certainly resulted in one of the finest collections of really improved Fantails we have ever seen in one fancier's possession.

"The feud between English and Scotch breeders of the Fantail is of long standing, and judging from present appearances, 'the battle of the styles' seems as little likely to come to an end as ever, neither side being willing to abate one jot of their prejudices. I think, however, that if each side were requested to write down their ideas of what a perfect Fantail should be, their theories would not be found so very dissimilar. But in practice, the perfect bird not being, at all events as yet, attainable, each party is content to keep on working on its own lines; the Englishman being satisfied with moderate carriage if he can get a perfect tail, and the Scotchman with a moderate tail if he can get perfection of carriage. Consequently, the attempt to combine the beauties of both breeds is not made nearly so often, or so perseveringly, as it deserves to be. One reason for this doubtless lies in the fact that the attempt *in the first instance* is too often a failure. The Englishman finds that his birds are losing the fine large flat tail on which he has prided himself; the Scotchman sees his birds growing, as he considers, large and coarse, and so both throw up the game at once; whereas if either had gone on patiently and systematically for several generations, without expecting too much all at once, no doubt the result would have been more satisfactory.

"Speaking for myself, I am thankful to be able to say, like the independent elector, that I am no party man. I can see much to admire in both breeds. I have both pure in my loft, and also the results of several attempts to amalgamate the two, and with the latter, so far, I am not altogether dissatisfied. And here may I venture most deferentially to express my opinion that judges are partly answerable for the present state of things. What I mean is this. I have often seen the prizes awarded in this sort of way:—First prize, say, to a big English bird with large tail but little style; second, to a small Scotch bird with amazing style but no tail to speak of; and third, again, to one similar to the recipient of the first prize. Now, surely this wavering between two opinions cannot be right. I think if judges would let it be seen by their decisions that they will not countenance large tails without style, nor yet great style with no tail, exhibitors would soon find it to their interest to get the coach out of the old ruts in which it has been so long labouring.

"Let me, however, get to my business, and give the description of such a Fantail as we in England strive to produce. First, as to size—it should undoubtedly be small. Large Fantails are nearly always wanting in style and carriage; though, at the same time, if you want the largest possible tail you must not expect to find it on a small bird, and therefore large birds with very

* We have, years ago, seen such birds repeatedly given prizes by Mr. Harrison Weir, and others who then judged pigeon shows. The fashion has now changed.—Ed

large tails are not only very valuable, but necessary at times in the breeding-loft. On the other hand, I dislike *very* small Fantails, first, because they are always deficient in tail; secondly, because they are, as a rule, utterly devoid of stamina and constitution, the least attack of illness proving fatal; and, thirdly, because almost as often they are useless as breeders. I therefore prefer a *moderately* small Fantail, small enough to show off the gracefully curving outlines of the '*Shaker*' (as the old fanciers called this pigeon) to the best advantage, but large enough to carry a tail sufficiently wide and flat to deserve its other name of 'The *Fantail*.'

"In describing the shape let us begin with the foundation—the feet. They should be small and neat. Large feet are nearly always correlative with a large head and long beak. The legs should be moderately short; if too short they cause their possessor to waddle rather than walk, and the mincing tip-toe strut peculiar to the high-bred Fantail is lost. On the other hand, nothing can be worse or more ugly than long spindly shanks. They almost invariably accompany a long *tall* body and long back; and even when they do not, they are out of character with the general shape of the Fantail, which should be round and compact. They should also be bright red, clean, and free from feather. Though here again we should remember that the Indian Fantails, with which I fancy all our best English strains (and I believe the Scotch as well) have been crossed, often had feathered legs, as well as the turn-crown. Feather on the legs, as a consequence, will appear at times even in the best strains; and, knowing whence it comes, and that it does not point to any bad blood, if it does not amount to more than a few small downy feathers on the shanks, I do not think any the worse of the bird.

"The body should be very short and very compact; the breast very wide, thrown up as high as the bird can raise it, and therefore very prominent—in fact, a good bird, when looked at from the front, seems to be all breast, the head being quite out of sight. The back should be short. In some of the flattest-tailed English Fans it seems to have vanished altogether, the tail appearing to spring from the base of the hackle. Such birds, however, often pitch the tail too forward—too much in the 'pot-lid style,' which our Scotch friends laugh at so often, and accuse us, though unjustly, of considering to be the right thing. I therefore think that a *little* more length than this is desirable. I do not mean a *long* back, for that is one of the worst faults a Fantail can have—in fact, it quite destroys the character of the bird. In the English breed the back is of fair width at the setting on of the tail, which, in my opinion, allows of a larger tail, and also gives more power of carrying it properly. In the Scotch bird, however, the back runs off very fine and narrow, like that of a Game cock, which I cannot help thinking is one cause not only of the want of size in the tail, but also of its being so often carried crooked.

"The neck should be swan-like—long, thin, especially at the setting on of the head, and nicely arched at the same point; the head, remarkably small and fine; the beak, short and neat; the beak-wattle, very small, and covered with a white powder; the eye, dark hazel, with a peculiarly soft, trustful expression, very different from the wild look of the Owl or Antwerp.

"The Crested Fantails (the result of some previous cross with the Indian) have quite gone out of fashion, and, I think, rightly so, for the turn-crown certainly detracts from the elegance and slimness of the head and neck; but still they are usually good in other points, especially in tail, and therefore, though not often seen now in the show-pen, they may be very valuable in the breeding-loft.

"The carriage of the head and neck is of the greatest importance. The head should be thrown completely back, and dropped *well down*, so much so that the back of the head rests upon the bird's back just at the base of the tail. This is where English Fans almost always fail. No matter how long and fine the neck is, if it is stuck aloft, like a Peacock's, all the grace and elegance



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith

ENGLISH FANTAILS.

BLACK. WHITE. BLUE.

proper to the Fantail is lost at once; and if it is carried too high *and* thrust back, it must be passed through the tail, and so "split" it—that is, if the tail is as flat and well carried as it ought to be. If the neck is not long enough to enable the bird to throw its head as far back as I have described, at all events, the head should be dropped well down, so that the lower mandible seems to be buried in the feathers of the breast. It is then also out of the way of the tail.

"When a Fantail is excited, or its attention is attracted by anything unusual, the head and neck are shaken violently, jerked backwards and forwards with a sort of convulsive movement, continued often for a long time. The Scotch are much more remarkable in this way than the English. Some of them, indeed, are scarcely ever at rest.

"The tail is the other chief point in the English breed, and to be perfect it should be large, the larger the better, spread out quite flat like a fan, circular—*i.e.*, the two sides almost meeting at the bottom; the centre well filled up—*i.e.*, not split, either naturally or by the awkward carriage of the head. The feathers individually should be long, broad, strong, and sound in the fibre—*i.e.*, not showing any inclination to resemble the Laced Fantail. I rather like a little "pattern" on the tail—*i.e.*, the extreme ends of the tail-feathers rather frayed or fringed. Such birds are generally of the best quality. The feathers should lie flat and evenly over one another (none of them being set edgeways), so as to form a neat double row. In number they should not be less than twenty-eight, but as many more as the bird can carry nicely. The Birmingham Columbarian Society, in an article published by them some years ago, laid down forty, arranged in *three* rows, as the proper number; but though I have heard of such birds I have never seen one. I once had a hen with thirty-eight tail-feathers. I purchased her from Mr. Fulton, and I believe she had been imported from India; and I have often bred birds with tails of thirty-six or thirty-seven feathers carried in most orthodox fashion. In an exhibition pen the number is of no consequence, provided that the tail is well spread and circular, and well filled up all round; but in the breeding pen a thickly-feathered tail is of great value. In the breeding of any animal for any fancy point, if you can get that point in excess in either of the parents so much the easier is your task. You have then something to *spare*, instead of something to breed up to, which is a very different matter.

"Well, then, having obtained a correctly-formed tail, you must see also that it is correctly carried, viz., perpendicularly, or inclined a *little* forwards; but never to such an extent as to resemble the much-derided pot-lid or an umbrella. A Fantail crawling about with its tail over its head, and the fore-part of the breast just touching the ground, is an object scarcely more appreciated in England than in Scotland.*

"The wings should be carried low; the flights dropped neatly below the tail, their points just clear of the ground. A young bird, with a large flat tail, often has great difficulty in keeping its flights out of its tail. On alighting, the flights catch in the sides of the tail, and it does not seem to know how to extricate them. After wriggling about and turning round and round for a few times, it gives it up in despair, and lets them remain as they are. It is a very bad habit, for it often spoils the carriage of the bird, causing it to stoop and creep about in an awkward helpless way, and it also spoils the tail, the weight of the wings bending the young tail-feathers, as they grow, out of their proper place, so that they never afterwards lie evenly. Sometimes however, as the young bird grows older it grows wiser, and abandons the trick. It is as well, therefore, not to condemn a young one too soon for this fault.†

* As before stated, we have, years ago, repeatedly seen just such birds with prize cards on their pens; but at that time the Scotch bird was scarcely known out of its own district.—Ed.

† We have already hinted that the flights should be shortened in such a case.

"Fantails are healthy, hardy pigeons, unless they are bred unnaturally small. Then, as I have already mentioned, they seem to have no constitution; and their offspring (if they ever produce any) are worse than themselves. It is very disheartening, after rearing a nestling of great promise, to see that it has almost all the points you want except one, and that is sufficient strength and vitality to keep itself alive. They are also very prolific, though many young cocks, if they are of very high carriage, are of little use for breeding purposes until they are two or often three years old. They are also long-lived. I had a favourite old cock which bred wonderfully for fourteen years, and looked then as hearty as ever, but unfortunately his life was cut short by a mischievous cat. They require looking after in windy or very wet weather, for their large tails, when thoroughly wet, hold so much water, and become so heavy, as to prevent their flying more than a few feet.

"I draft all my young ones, as soon as they can feed themselves, into a wooden house erected for them in a corner of my flower-garden. A hopper of food and a bath stand always ready for them on the lawn in front of my dining-room windows, and there they grow and thrive and give no trouble. They do no appreciable damage to the garden. They are indeed fond of pecking at succulent-leaved plants, such as Mesembryanthemums, Echeverias, Sedums, &c., but they never touch anything else, and the little injury they do to these is amply atoned for by the amusement they afford as they strut about the lawn. Nothing can be more laughable than to watch a merry young cock paying his addresses to the lady of his heart. He trips up to her with dainty steps, and, with many a courtly bow and many a sweet-sounding coo, he tells his tale of love; then, drawing himself up to his fullest height, he balances himself upon the extreme tips of his toes; his head and neck, quivering and shaking, are jerked so far backwards that he can see nothing in front of him, until by gracefully curving his long neck he gets a sly peep at her over his shoulder. The sight is apparently too much for his nerves, for he shakes and trembles again in his excitement, throws himself backwards until the points of his wings rest on the ground and bend beneath his weight, and though he would fain go forwards, he is compelled to take a step or two backwards, to save himself from falling over completely. As soon as he can recover himself he advances again, and repeats the performance, until he can induce the lady to go with him and inspect for herself the abode which he has already chosen for her.

"I have said nothing about colour, for I think that the white are infinitely the prettiest, and I have not had much experience of the other colours. The white birds ought, of course, to be pure white, as white as the driven snow; and they will keep themselves so throughout the year, if they are kept in a clean house, and in a clear atmosphere."

The prevailing faults in English Fantails, next to want of carriage and motion, are a too large head, coarse beak, and thick neck, without the elegant curve of the Scotch birds. Again, the head is usually carried too high, so that a space can be seen between it and the back, though we have in our plate shown birds nearly free from this fault, and, in fact, improved somewhat in the direction above suggested. In others the tail, as already said, is carried over the head, almost flat on the back; and such birds, as regards breeding to English style, are a proper match for those which show too much of the back, as first described.

With all the improvement we have mentioned, however, there remains a great difference which cannot be altogether shown in plates, since it greatly lies in the tremulous *motion*, which the English bird has little of. Beyond that, however, there are great differences. The Scotch bird is small and tight-feathered; the English nearly half as large again, and much more loose-feathered. The Scotch tail is not *more* than upright; the English often is. The Scotch head is

carried low back, at the root of the tail, lower than the breast; the English head much higher than the breast, and nearer the top of the tail. The balance of the body also is different, the eye of the English bird being nearly perpendicular to the feet, whereas the breast of the Scotch is more nearly in that position. But still the most characteristic difference is in the amount of "motion."

There are more varieties of colour in the English bird, on account of its being stronger and easier to breed. Whole-coloured Blacks, Blues, Reds, and Yellows are seen, besides Saddle-backs; but accurately marked birds of the latter class are rare of good quality in either style, and should always be allowed some points for marking in competition. There are also black bodies with white tails, and *vice versâ*, but, as a rule, all "marked" birds are greatly behind the others in Fantail properties. These markings are all produced by crossing Fantails with other varieties which possess them; and the facility with which these crosses preserve the Fantail character, rarely reverting to the other side, is a clear proof of the extreme distinctness and antiquity of this variety. This is also borne out by the ancient opinion that Barbs would not breed with Fantails; but this has been contradicted from experience by both Mr. Darwin and Mr. Tegetmeier. Still, though we cannot question their statements, there is *something* in the notion, since we can affirm that we have repeatedly attempted the cross of both Carrier and Barb with the Fantail, but never yet succeeded in producing progeny; and we know that others have had the same want of success.

Many of the larger, or English Fantails, are peak-crested like Turbits, and it is wonderful to see the size of the tails in some of these birds, but they are almost always coarse and loose-feathered. Peculiar colour or marking, with the exception of the Saddle-back, we have never yet seen in a good small or Scotch bird, the quality being lost in the cross which produces them. Saddle-backs can be found black, blue, and red; but even these are seldom quite equal to the Whites, being, no doubt, originated from crosses. Peculiar markings, as regards tail and body, are usually produced by crossing with Turbits. These coloured Fantails are most apt to fail in tail, which is hollow rather than flat, and barely two-thirds of a circle, instead of nearly complete.

The common Fantail is of vigorous constitution, and lives usually to a good age, on which account it will bear in-breeding to any reasonable degree. We have known many twelve or fifteen years old; and even the small Scotch birds are, as a rule, also hardy and good nurses. But they have, as Mr. Ure says, the peculiarity that when they *do* go wrong, they generally go off all at once; and it is another singular thing that their "motion" seems to cease as suddenly.

The Scotch style of bird, in whole or part, is now superseding the coarser bird; even those who used to show the English style with most success having crossed their strains with the smaller, and thus greatly improved them. We think, with Mr. Serjeantson, that much can be done in this way by crossing the best and *smallest* English Fans, with good and large tails, from good Scotch stock that has form and motion. Besides Mr. Serjeantson, Mr. Maynard and others have adopted this plan with great success. Many Scotch birds have, undoubtedly, too little tail, and others too much motion, but by their crossing they impart valuable properties to coarser stock. Each variety, in fact, except unusual specimens of Scotch Fantails, does need a cross from the other, to give the one more tail and the other form and motion. It is thus the best birds are produced, and, no doubt, we shall ere long see the whole amalgamated into one race, of the Scotch type, but with a little more tail (speaking as compared with the bulk of Scotch Fans), derived from the English bird.

Fantails with so much motion that they cannot breed, can often be got to do so by keeping them in very small pens. The excessive nervousness wears off after two or three years.

In fine, so long as a true-bred Scotch Fantail has tail *enough* we would let well alone, for such is our idea of a perfect bird. But such, though to be found, are rare; the more so that the smallest and best birds are generally bred late in the season, which we have seen has a tendency to shorten the feather. When this begins to fail, then we would cross, breeding back to the highest type, of course. The hens should be chosen of moderate size, the very smallest being rarely good breeders. Some small hens do breed well; but such are rare, and it is best to take a fair-sized hen with a small and handsome cock.

We have seen some curious tricks in exhibiting Fantails, against which it may be well to warn judges—our only reason for describing such matters, since prizes fraudulently won not unfrequently drive honest exhibitors out of the fancy. When there has been a gap in the tail we have found the feathers sewn or tied together. When more feathers have seemed wanting, the small feathers at the root of the tail have been cut short, so as to allow the tail to fall lower to the head, thus apparently shortening the back and increasing the tail by the changed proportion. Tails have also been crimped or stumped, so as to cause them to stand flatter or more erect. But the most ingenious system we ever came across was that of a man who applied some adhesive plaster to a round soft ring, by which every feather was fixed in the desired position for a considerable time. On the ring being removed for exhibition, the feathers would remain nearly in the set position, the bottom feathers very nearly meeting. The time and trouble thus spent must have been great indeed, and such ingenuity was worthy of a better cause.

JUDGING FANTAILS.—A coloured or marked bird, if of equal quality, should have the preference over white, as more difficult to breed. For the rest we need only give our

POINTS IN JUDGING FANTAILS.

Head and Beak: fineness	3
Body: smallness, 3; shape and carriage, 9	12
Motion: continual, nervous, tremulous	6
Tail: size, 6; shape (flatness, uprightness, and completeness of circle), 6	12
Flights: position of, free from tail	2
	35



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith.

TRUMPETERS.

RUSSIAN OR NEW TYPE.

WHITE.

BLACK-MOTTLED.

BLACK.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TRUMPETER.

THE pigeon generally known by this name, and sometimes also the Laughing Pigeon, though this seems an old term now almost died out, is chiefly a native of Russia, and seems indeed, by its abundant feather, particularly suited to withstand the climate. We speak of the most perfect type of Trumpeter specially, which has only lately been imported, and is sometimes called the "new type," to distinguish it from inferior birds formerly in England, and known as "old type." These we believe to have also come in the first place from Russia; but they appear to have reached England through Germany; at all events we have known many birds thus imported, and some which are specifically known as "German Letz" pigeons only differ in having less still of Trumpeter properties, with light-coloured bars, and are evidently formed by a cross with some variety to impart these bars, what is obtained in one point being lost in the others. The classification of Trumpeters into "old" and "new" types still adopted at some shows is in our opinion an entire farce, adopted solely to increase entries; and we have noticed that in many cases the winners have been—not English-bred birds—but simply inferior Russians, while in all cases it is the birds which come *nearest* to the new type which win the prizes.

The main properties of the Trumpeter are three, viz., rose, crest, and foot-feather. These we value in the order named, and will describe them accordingly.

The rose is a sort of helmet or crest (only that the *word* "crest" is applied to another property) on the top of the head. It should form a perfect cap, all the feathers diverging from the centre, and covering the skull from the base of the beak in front, to the back of the head near the crest, and overhanging the eyes at the sides so that the bird can only see in a downward direction. The size should be as stated, the rose of first-rate specimens being as large as a crown-piece; but form is of no less importance. Each feather must lie smoothly, without raggedness, and be of such a length that the whole looks even at the edges, and grow out from the centre of the circle like the petals of a small flower. There are many birds with a large rose, but the feathers so irregular in build as to disfigure them, some appearing as if twisted, others standing up from the surface, &c. The rose as represented in our plate is not the least exaggerated, as we have seen and had various birds with the property quite as much developed and as evenly formed.

The crest is at the back of the head, and somewhat like the shell-crest of a Turbit, but very far more developed. The feathers should rise all round the back of the head, very nearly *from eye to eye*, with a little extra at the back of each eye, where it will be seen to finish like a small rosette. The crest should project, like a coronet, clearly above the level of the top of the skull, and on the whole present somewhat the appearance of a half cockle-shell. The great beauty of this property, as in the rose, lies equally in regularity and evenness of build as in size, though size is important. In the majority of specimens the crest is so irregular and loosely formed that it appears as if the bird was in moult, or part of the feathers plucked, but it should and sometimes does appear as we have represented it, and the feathers should have, when touched, a strength or elastic "spring" like the hood of a Jacobin.

The third property is the leg or foot-feathering. This commences with long feathers on the hocks themselves, followed by similar feathers all down the leg or shank, and which at the feet are very long indeed, the feathers growing also from the toes, and smaller ones covering the inside of the shanks. The more and longer feathers on the feet especially, the better.

In size the Trumpeter appears very large, considerably larger than the Carrier, but this is chiefly owing to the very abundant and somewhat loose feather which covers the body, and which, with its short legs and length of flights, make it look larger than it really is. It is really about the same as a good-sized Carrier when plucked. It walks with a slow, deliberate gait; and the stateliness of a cock playing up to his hen is something remarkable, and very pretty to see. No pigeon, in fact, so well deserves that title of "grand" which fanciers are so fond of applying to a good bird of any variety. The feathers of imported specimens are of finer texture than those of the "old type" birds; and whether it is the climate or not it is hard to say, but the progeny of good Russian specimens appear to fall off somewhat in this particular.

Foot-feathering is the only point in which the old, English, or German birds can compare with the Russians; but this is a quality so very easy to keep up, that while we would never consider a bird really first-class without very good foot-feather, we must protest against placing this property on anything like a level with rose and crest, any improvement in which is only made with immense patience and difficulty. Even the best-footed birds are often seen with the feathers broken off, so as to show only stumps for much of the season, while birds with a little less will last better, owing to the quills being smaller and having more elasticity. We mention this because, *as a rule*, the birds with best foot-feather are most deficient in rose and crest; and hence, while we desire all properties, whenever it comes to weighing one against the other, a property which gives absolutely no difficulty should not be ranked with one that does give a great deal.

We believe the first pair of Russians introduced came over in 1863, and were imported by Mr. John Baily, of London. They threw all the English birds completely into the shade, and were purchased first by Mr. Hedley, but eventually passed into the possession of Mr. James Montgomery, of Belfast. Even the professedly *ideal* portraits of Trumpeters, which had been published in various works, were left far behind by these birds, except as regards foot-feather. The birds hitherto known scarcely ever possessed a rose larger than a shilling, and that often so irregular as to require a great deal of trimming, while the crests were little better than those of Turbits. The best of this type we can recollect were the strain of Mr. Mewburn, of Darlington, whose breed, before the arrival of the Russians, was far a-head for many years; but the best single specimen we ever saw was the property of Mr. Oates, of Newark, and was a white hen. There were some very well-marked English Mottles at that time; but, as we have observed, the marking and the foot-feather were the only points in which they could compete. The latter was to be had even better, on which account we have known people who professed to prefer the "old type," but we cannot agree for the reason stated, and also because, no doubt, the "new type" will ere long be bred, as several specimens already have been, equal or nearly so in this point too.

The first Black cock imported, as above described, was, we believe, never beaten whenever shown, and died in our own possession; but the *second* importation, also by Mr. Baily, and which comprised both Blacks, Black-Mottles, Duns, Dun-Mottles, &c., were so much better even than the first, that Mr. Montgomery, in disposing of his whole stock, could not obtain—we were going to say a tenth part of what they would have realised before the arrival of this superb collection. The rose on most of these birds was not only enormous, but perfect in form, and required absolutely no trimming. Their worst fault was that the crest in some was so very large as to show a little

flabbiness, or looseness. We must, therefore, refer to our plate for what is desired, and beg to repeat that the Black and Black-Mottle are not at all idealised, or better than we have had or seen. The White is; but though we never yet saw one as good, as we have the quality in Blacks, we hope to do so before long.

In Mottles, the marking should be as nearly as possible the same as in the Mottled Tumbler on the shoulder, but the bird is also mottled on the head and foot feathering; and it is so hard to procure this with good head-properties, that we would regard even good mottling as of more value than mere foot-feather. It is curious that most of the "old" English birds had red or orange eyes,* and all except the Whites, black beaks; whereas the Russians have, with scarcely an exception, pearl eyes, and the beaks white in all but the Black birds, which are mostly dark on the upper mandible and white on the under. Some of the Blacks are all white on the beak, but such almost always have a very few white feathers on the body, tending to show that they are Mottle-bred; and such a bird would be a proper cross for a Mottle with too much marking. The changes of Mottled Trumpeters are very curious. Many of the young, when in the nest-pan, appear *all white* except the flights and tail, or rather a sort of grizzly white; and those who have not bred them before are apt to think their chances are very small; but the first moult puts matters right, all the grizzled feathers moulting black. The mottling can however be foretold, with patience; since on examination some feathers will be found all white down to the root. These remain so, while those that are grizzled or grey will moult dark. We have heard some fanciers affirm that no one can tell what colour a Mottled Trumpeter will be; that they will moult lighter and lighter; and even that Blacks will moult into Mottles. We have never found anything to give us such an impression; but think it very probably arose from Mottles which were too gay having been weeded to obtain the proper marking. If the feathers were cut off, the trimming would of course remain till moult, when the bird would come out so much lighter as to give rise to the impression mentioned. We have had many Mottles for many years, and never saw any reason to think they changed after the first moult, except that all birds, bred and moulting late, will sometimes moult rather whiter. But even such changes are few, and we fear most of the cases have arisen in the manner just alluded to.

We consider the Mottle the most valuable of all Trumpeters, but are sorry to say we can give no directions, from experience, how to match for producing the marking. It may be presumed that the mode of procedure should be the same as in breeding the Mottled Tumbler, but we believe no one except Mr. Montgomery has really had any actual experience for any time as regards Trumpeter breeding—that is, as regards the Russian birds. We do, however, know that Mr. Montgomery, like ourselves, always regarded the foot-feathering as a very secondary point, and directed his attention chiefly to the more difficult ones of rose, crest, and marking; as he considered that foot-feather could be increased at any time in a season or two by the simple expedient of breeding early from early-bred parents, which we have repeatedly seen developes that property. And while we regard a Mottled Trumpeter as the highest type of the bird, no one must suppose we would prefer markings to the real Trumpeter properties; they are to be regarded much as in a Pouter, and as a final finish and set-off to the bird.

Our chief reason for preferring the pearl eye and white beak of the Russian bird is, that they are almost invariably accompanied by far more lustre and tightness of feather, which is a considerable beauty. The great drawback of the imported Russians is that they are so liable to die soon after reaching this country; they seem to go off in a kind of wasting or consumption, for which as yet the usual remedies have failed. Some have said they will not even breed, but

* This, however, shows a modern change. Moore describes them as pearl-eyed.—Ed.

this is a great error, as progeny have been to our own knowledge produced by several fanciers from some of the best of the imported specimens. As a rule, in fact, those birds which do survive any reasonable time prove very good breeders and nurses; and as the young bred in England do not seem specially delicate or liable to disease, we may consider this simply a consequence of the sudden change to a warmer climate, and expect to see the race thoroughly acclimatised. All who have seen the specimens bred from imported birds by Mr. Hutchinson, of Dublin, or by Mr. Ure, of Dundee, will acknowledge that they surpass all which have at any time been imported direct, in every point except mottle markings, which still need improvement.

We have said nothing of the peculiar voice from which the bird takes its name. It is very loud and abrupt in comparison to the coo of other pigeons, and has been compared by some to laughing. The voice depends much on the season, being loudest in breeding-time, and also varies according to the health of the bird. It is not taken into account in the slightest degree in estimating the value of a bird.

JUDGING TRUMPETERS.—This is a comparatively easy task, the properties being exceedingly well marked and simple.

POINTS IN JUDGING TRUMPETERS.

Rose: size, regularity, and shape	10
Crest: ditto ditto	8
Foot-feather: length and abundance	6
Size	2
Colour of body	2
Eye: colour of	1
Beak: colour of	1
Tightness of feather	2
Accurate markings in a Mottle, extra	5
	37

CHAPTER XXIV.

SWIFTS, LAHORES, BURMESE, SCANDAROONS.

THE above four varieties, being all of Eastern origin, can best be collected in one chapter, though differing very widely in character. They are perhaps as distinct in characteristics as any pigeons, and deserve to be better known. We are therefore much indebted to Mr. J. W. Ludlow, of Birmingham, who has supplied the following full notes on these interesting breeds :—

SWIFTS.

"These are so named by reason of the strong general resemblance in formation to the variety of Martin or Swallow tribe which bears that name. They are Asiatics, or, as I believe, more particularly speaking, of Indian origin, although it is known for certain that they have also been pretty well appreciated and cultivated in Cairo and Alexandria, and it is from this latter place, in fact, that the largest number and the best of specimens have been imported into Great Britain—hence the name '*Egyptian*' Swift.

"The first birds of this kind which I remember to have seen in this country was a pair of bronzy birds exhibited at Bingley Hall, Birmingham, in, I think, the year 1862; but two years subsequently a good number of them were brought from Egypt direct to Birmingham by a coloured sailor, steward of one of the Mediterranean line of steamers, who procured them for a Mr. John Morris, of Birmingham, who, not being a pigeon fancier, shortly afterwards disposed of them to Mr. H. P. Caridia, also of Birmingham, in whose cote I saw them. The lot were shortly afterwards sold for small sums, distributed about, and soon became occupants of the show-pen, created a temporary sensation, scored many victories, increased greatly in value, had their day, and departed; leaving but very few *thoroughbred* issue behind them.

"There are Swifts of various colours and markings—Blues, Chequers, Almond-feathered, light and dark, and as our Almond Splash. Mottles there are, and also such as are seen in the illustrations—a sort of chocolate body-colour, with yellowish cast thereon, the head being dark, with neck of yellowish buff tint; and amongst the imported lot of which I have spoken there was an old cock and young hen of this peculiar and uncommon colour a perfect match. This pair was successfully shown by Mr. Yardley of Birmingham, Mr. Sturgess of Leicester, and F. H. Paget, Esq., of Birstall, from whom I purchased them in their declining years; and at my place they succumbed to the last trying winter ordeal at a good ripe old age; the cock being an old stager upon reaching these shores in 1864: both died in the early part of last year (1875). This pair had become sterile long before coming into my possession, but previously the hen, I believe, bred pretty freely with any mate with which she was placed; unfortunately the majority of issue from these imported ones were cross-breds, the peculiar wing characteristics of which may be clearly traced in the lofts of former owners of some of these birds.

"In formation they are as follows:—Head, small and round. Eye, large, and of a cloudy or rusty yellowish admixture, conspicuous by its dinginess. Eyelash, small, fleshy-coloured, and circular.

Beak, short and thick, and the wart thereon of moderate size. Body, long and low, feathers loose and very long, and inclining downwards. Legs short, and feet small. The flights and tail extremely long; in fact, my hen (as represented in plate) measured in flights the enormous length of thirty-two and a half inches from tip to tip of outstretched wings; the tail primaries measuring seven inches and seven-eighths from quill tip to fibre point. The wings are generally crossed over the tail, and although of such extraordinary length are carried well up, and not mere trailing appendages, when the birds are in health. The most conspicuous features of the breed are the elongated or drawn-out body, and the extraordinary growth of all the body-feathers, and excessive length of flights and tail.

"Now, although the Swift appears a large bird, he is much smaller in actual body-weight than he seems to be, the superabundance of feather with which he is clothed creates a wrong impression as to the size.

"Although they are termed 'Swifts,' they are *very slow* birds in their movements, and, in flight, their great wings are rather an impediment than, as might be supposed, an additional aid to either speed or even easy aerial locomotion; but although the feathers are long, they are loose and open, thin and weak in the quill, and therefore it is with great difficulty they rise, and almost as much trouble to sustain a fly of short distance or duration, even when fairly in mid-air, the atmosphere acting upon their pliable feathers as ribbons in a breeze, so as to greatly thwart their progress. Besides my own birds, I have had an opportunity of witnessing several pairs of this kind at large, and, without exception, the same awkward attempt at flying was apparent in all. I have seen crosses with the Antwerp (Swift and Antwerp) which have fairly well sustained a few circles with a flight of Antwerps, but invariably seemed labouring, as it were, in the rear of the circling group.

"Swifts are hardy birds, will stand rough usage, thrive in close quarters, and live on any grain, no special food being needed to supply their wants; but, to use the term of a fancier who was pretty familiar with them, 'they are as hard as nails,' and judging from all which have come under my notice, they seem to be birds of unusual longevity.

BURMESE, OR FLORENTINES.

"These are terms by which a very singular kind of pigeon has become known in England; but I think I shall be able to show that they are simply an old variety under new titles. I will, however, first describe them as above, and then point out the strong resemblance to the original to which I refer, and from which I believe 'Burmese,' or 'Florentines,' to have sprung, if not exactly identical with them. Burmese, or Florentines, then, are large birds (see illustration), runtish head, crooked or S shaped neck, very full and prominent breast, short back, stick-up or cock-tail, which should be very short and seemingly cut off, perfectly upright, close-fitting, and not outspread; and in the males, when salacious, the neck and tail come in contact; the flights are short, the tips pointing upwards and meeting together immediately behind the tail render support to that erect appendage; the legs are long; and the feet (for so large a bird) rather small, the bearing ofttimes being entirely upon the toes, as seen in 'Fans' and Short-faced Tumblers.

"The carriage and form of these birds is very peculiar under ordinary circumstances, but when the male is following his mate to nest the general *contour* of the pair is most strange, for, with upturned breasts, acutely-curved neck, and erect tail, they stride along with an elastic tread and jerking motion, by reason of which head and tail often come in contact, and thus, upon the whole, present a remarkable appearance, trotting along by the hour like ducks to a pond, and



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith

BURMESE OR FLORENTINE.

STARLING. SPOT FAIRY.

apparently hoisting breast, tail, and flights as if wading through mud, at the same time trying to avoid getting besmeared with the mire.

"There are of this variety various colours and numerous kinds of markings—self-coloured Blacks, Reds, Yellows, and Whites, Mottles or Pied in various eccentric manners. The plate represents a Black-mottled hen bird, one of a pair I bought of Mr. Matthew Martin, of Canterbury, and which I was told at the time of purchase were 'imported from India as youngsters;' this pair I have now had some years, and of all the birds I have had or still possess, this pair (for their singularity) were *most* conspicuous, and caused the first remark (not always favourable) from any one viewing my stock, as they would sure to be the foremost to descend and parade their ugliness amongst their beautiful associates; indeed, although I have seen numerous birds of this kind, I never beheld a pair with points developed to such an extraordinary degree as my pair of Mottles. The cock bird (a very old one) would strut about my yard at full liberty, a *perfect caricature*, and, poor fellow! was a laughing-stock to all who saw him; he is now dead, so that I keep the hen in confinement until I find another suitable mate for her. Well now, having briefly shown the points and peculiarities of the so-called 'Burmese,' or 'Florentines,' whose direct descent I could never trace nor ascertain under either of those titles, I therefore arrive at the conclusion that they are off-shoots of the *Leghorn Runt*, and this idea has been materially strengthened on reference to the Pigeon 'Treatise' of the last century, wherein I find a description of 'The Leghorn Runt,' which runs thus:—'The Leghorn Runt was originally bred in Pisa, in the Duke of Tuscany's dominions, or at Pisa, in Peloponesus, and from thence brought to Leghorn, and so transmitted hither; but the latter seems the most probable, because it answers the description which Willoughby in his ornithology calls 'Columba Tursica seu Persica' (the Turkish or Persian Pigeon). It is a stately, large pigeon, some of them seven inches or better in legs, close feathered, and firm in flesh, extremely broad-chested, and very short in back; *he carries his tail, when he walks, somewhat turned up like a duck*, but when he plays, he tucks it down; *his neck is longer than any other pigeon, which he carries bending like a goose or a swan;*' and further on it is said 'in feather they are various, but the best I have seen were either *white, black*, or *red-mottled*.' So that if the reader only compares notes, I think it must be agreed that they are one and the same breed, identical in every point, excepting, perhaps, a more perfect development of the chief peculiarity, viz., the tail of birds of the present day.

"These birds will breed freely in this country, and rear their progeny remarkably well. They do not always breed true to feather or marking, because a re-production of their singular shape has been the chief desideratum, therefore in colour or markings they sport in various ways.

"All the coloured specimens should have orange eyes, the self-feathered whites have dark eyes. They are active birds (considering their bulk), and get about from place to place pretty well upon the wing. They are hardy birds, and thrive well in this country either at liberty or in captivity, and agree very well with any other kind of pigeon, and are not at all pugnacious, but seem a contented kind, and at peace with others. They are no beauties, it is true, but they formed a remarkable contrast to the others in my pen of curiosities, and created as much fun at home as the others aroused admiration.

LAHORES.

"These are Indian Pigeons—large, fine birds, and of quite eccentric markings. In size of body they are about the weight of a good-sized Dragoon. I dare say there are various coloured birds of this kind, but all the birds which I have seen have been the black-and-white ones. I have seen many such at shows, have kept them myself, and have seen some unshipped at the Liverpool

Docks, but all the lot have been black-and-white marked—as per coloured plate—therefore if (as it may be) there are others, I infer that at least the *majority* would be Blacks. In general formation they are large and plump, but are heavy, sleepy-looking birds. The beak is thick, the nostrils expansive and rather flattened, not rough, raised, or wrinkled; the forehead is high, the skull widish; the eye dark, with slight cere around, and that of a reddish tinge; the neck is rather short; the shoulders very wide, and apparently powerful; the back broad; the body of an acute thick wedge shape, or Barb-like in form and pose; the legs are short, and the feet look strong. In markings they are peculiar; the upper mandible of beak is dark, the lower white, or rather pale flesh-coloured; the whole of upper part of head is black, running in continuation of line of mouth, at the back of ear, and extending right down the back of neck, the division line of black and white being about midway of neck when the bird is viewed in profile; when seen from behind, *black*, and in front, *white*. The entire lower jaw right round the ear is white; front of neck, entire breast, belly, thighs, vent-covering, tail, and back also *pure white*, thus leaving the entire wing and back-coverts, or 'saddle,' jet black. One would at a glance be almost disposed to believe that this breed (from the very remarkable division line down the neck) was of too singular a character to expect to be perpetuated, because, contrary to the markings of most pigeons, it forms no part of their anatomical construction, there being no definite line to work to; but still Lahores are a distinct and permanently established variety, and breed as true to *their* peculiarities as any other kind. They are hardy and prolific, quiet and domesticated, and capital feeders, as a rule, I believe, but having kept two pairs only, and those only for one season, I cannot speak positively for them as a body; but my own were estimable nurses—the oldest cock would, without much solicitation, at all times befriend any neglected squeaker that would wag its little wings before him. Judging from their flying capacity within bounds, I should imagine them to be easy in action and of enduring powers. There are not many Lahores in this country, for although they are birds of good size, of decent shape, and strongly contrasted and well defined in markings, they are not particularly striking in any particular; consequently, among the countless gems of form and feather, the poor Lahore is not often chosen.

SCANDAROONS.

"These are large, Roman-nosed birds of symmetrical outline, yet, withal, conspicuously strange and ugly. They are about the size of a good-sized Carrier, and in general characteristics much resemble those birds. They are big, fine, upstanding birds, having thin and gracefully-curved necks, wide and prominent shoulders, well separated from the chest; body rather long; legs also long, and feet large; indeed, as I have said, in many points they feature Carriers, appearing, at a glance, as big, down-faced, inferior birds of that tribe. The head, however, is the chief peculiarity in the Scandaroon. A good bird of this kind should measure nearly two inches from the centre of eye to the tip of beak. The entire head and beak should be of a hooked character, from back to front, in one clear sharp curve; in fact, the longer the beak, and the more bent, crooked, or 'down-faced,' the better the specimen is esteemed. The beak, although considerably curved, must be thick and close-fitting. The nostrils are, as in the Carrier, long and loose, and with age grow and often assume the rough, corrugated, warty excrescence of Carriers; but it rarely ever develops upon lower jaw, nor is it desirable that it should do so, because if it grew thereon it would tend to straighten the appearance of beak, and thus destroy the desirable, singular, yet main feature of the tribe. The head is narrow across from eye to eye, and the profile should present a clear, unbroken, downward curve from occiput to beak-tip; in the cock birds, the wart, of course rises ofttimes considerably with increased years; but still the first grand sweep of head remains, and



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FRILL-BACKS,
PLAIN-HEADED AND CRESTED.
SCANDAROONS,
RED AND BLACK PIED.

to this is an additional curve, springing from the bill's point to the highest rise of nose-wart, and this, too, must be clear and well defined. The neck is narrow and gracefully curved, the front being neatly scalloped out in a clear course, neck, jaw, and beak running in one continuous sweep; and the back of neck, too, is formed of a nice curve, in which the line of head also is included, in one unbroken course, without lumps, bumps, or any inequalities whatever. The eye is large and bold, and surrounded with a series of bright, red-coloured, fleshy circles; and this feature is a great point in the breed—the more intense and bright the colour of eyelash the better; and this redness, too, should run along the line of mouth, and more or less pervade beak and wart throughout; this is more especially noticeable in all young birds of this variety, and should remain traceable to the greatest age.

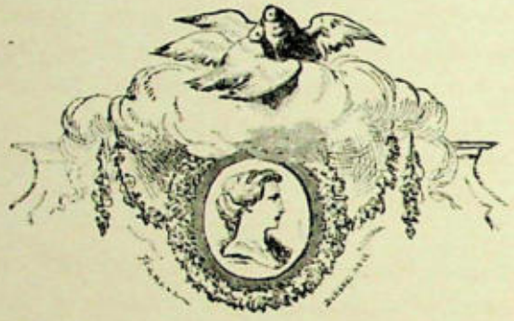
"Of Scandaroons there are various colours—self-coloured Reds, Yellows, Whites, Blacks, Blues, Silvers, and Pieds, or party-coloured ones. These latter I think the more preferable, providing they are perfectly marked, as in them a double novelty is observable; for, independent of the head and beak properties of the self-coloured ones, the pied markings of themselves are singular.

"In the Pied varieties there are Blacks, Reds, Yellows, Blues, and Silvers; in all these marked ones the eye is dark, and the beak pale flesh-coloured. The head and upper part of neck finish off in a narrow pointed strip of white in front and centre of the neck. The entire wings, from shoulder to flight-tips, are white; from a clear line across the lower part of breast, belly, thighs, and to vent also, is white. All else is black; thus, upon these Pied birds, from the shoulders, or scapularies, should be a well-defined coloured 'saddle' as in Magpies. The Blacks and all the coloured birds of this type are remarkable for the depth, richness, purity, and uniformity of their colour. In the Blacks it is intense; the Reds, deep rich chestnut; the Yellows, rich and pure; and the Blues, clear and free from mossy markings or specks of black; and, as a rule, the various colours, whether pied or self-colours, answer fully to the colour requisites. The best *pied* specimens of Scandaroons which I have seen were the property of F. H. Paget, Esq., of Birstall, near Leicester, whose Red hen, being (with her mate) many times victorious at shows, was chosen for portraiture in this volume. The self or solid-coloured ones are more numerous, and have fallen into the hands of many fanciers, and have likewise been shown successfully; but, beyond their novel appearance, they are not taking birds, I suppose simply because they are not beauties, which fact certainly cannot be denied; still they are worthy and remarkable Pigeons. The Whites have dark eyes. All the self-coloured ones have orange eyes, are of superb feather colours, rich, pure, and bright as varnish, and, amongst a group of others, stand in bold relief as singular specimens. Aye, beautiful even in their ugliness!

"These birds I believe to be of Persian origin. They are strong and vigorous, breed well at liberty or in confinement, and raise their own young very well; are strong on the wing, fraternise comfortably, and cross well with other sorts, and thrive well with no more than ordinary attention. I delight in novelties in the shape of Pigeons, and I should like to see spring up a better appreciation of such amongst others of the fancy. According to the light and knowledge within us, we are permitted to do much in practising with our pets; much has been done, much more can be accomplished. We have but to conceive certain peculiarities of form or feather, assure ourselves they are in strict conformity with the laws of reason and nature, and in harmony with the colour combination, or with the anatomical construction of the *genus*, lay down our plans, and, above all, plod on and persevere until the ideal is gradually developing into the real and desired object. In this work there are various processes, many tools, and, it may be, numerous ingredients; look well to each process, dispense not with any of the tools, nor dispose of any of the rough composition; for although in the course of manufacture the produce at each stage exteriorly may be mere wasters,

yet they contain within the germ of one's work; and in the end, although the subject is *Pigeons*, and the object their advancement and their culture (which to thousands is of no moment nor worth consideration), still, be assured, as the beauties of creation do not come by chance, some one must work and plead on their behalf, and depend upon it those who do give a lift along to this most interesting and harmless pursuit contribute a moiety, small though it be, towards the pleasure and enlightenment of their fellow-creatures, and assist in the development of the wonders of Creation."

None of the foregoing birds have been shown sufficiently often to frame any settled standards for judging. They must therefore be estimated simply as they show the characteristic properties as described in the preceding paragraphs, with good general condition.



CHAPTER XXV.

GERMAN TOYS.

We have often been asked what is meant by a "Toy" pigeon, and as the birds treated of in this chapter are perhaps the best representatives of the class, it may be well to take this opportunity of answering the question. We have heard the character attributed to birds which attain all their properties at an early age; and this definition does include a great deal of what is meant, but would, on the other hand, make the *Pouter* a Toy, which is not the case. The best simple definition of a Toy is, perhaps, a bird possessing properties only of feather and colour; but even this is not quite correct, since the Owl family, for instance, have important properties of skull, as well as those belonging to feather. Perhaps, on the whole, we can best explain what is meant by saying that a Toy is a bird whose properties interpose *no natural difficulty* to obtaining in the desired combination, beyond the simple one of getting some desired marking. Thus, the short head of the Owl causes no particular delicacy or difficulty in rearing, and it is therefore a Toy; but the short face of the Barb both makes the young difficult to feed, and is particularly difficult to obtain in connection with a "big" wide head and good eye-wattle; this is, therefore, a "high-class" pigeon. In some "Toys" there is a great deal of difficulty in obtaining the desired combination—as, for instance, the mane of a Jacobin with the small size; such are accordingly termed "high-class" Toys.

We confess we think the term in some respects an unhappy one, as calculated to cause a feeling somewhat akin to contempt for a large class of birds which perhaps include in their ranks a greater amount than any other of real artistic *beauty*, and are peculiarly apt to fascinate strangers, and lead them into a most pleasant and profitable pursuit. Without, however, further discussing this point, we give without further comment the full notes of Mr. J. W. Ludlow on what are usually grouped as the *German* Toys, reserving for separate description three varieties—the Magpie, the Nun, and the Archangel, which, though originally of the same class and from the same locality, have become so naturalised now as almost to be regarded as English pigeons, and have at least usually separate classes at all good shows. These latter, with the Runt, will conclude our survey of the pigeon family.

"It is with pleasure that I contribute a little information relating to the large number of pigeons which have hitherto been carelessly, and perhaps unjustly, bundled as it were together under the above heading. The whole, as a group, form a vast and most important section of show pigeons, yet what little attention has been bestowed by British fanciers on their culture, and what an inadequate share of attention also has been directed towards the class into which these 'German Toys' (if exhibited at all) are compelled to be drafted! I allude, of course, to that most interesting and most instructive of all classes, the 'Variety Class,' which hath its own charm and special allurements to all true and experimental fanciers, whose aim is not merely confined to improving old and established breeds (where needful and possible), but also to propagate *new* beauties, or aid

in fashioning out strange or peculiar properties, some of which, it may be, in their developed state, amount to positive ugliness, yet still possess distinctive and meritorious features, and thus serve to make more complete the assortment out of which fanciers of all tastes and styles may find birds suitable to their varied preferences. We know that it is by these wondrous extremes of contrast that one is enabled to realise the highest type of perfection. Even the splendour of the Bird of Paradise or the gorgeous raiment of the Peacock would gradually but surely become less attractive and lose its charm if constantly beheld; but by the contrast of less attractive and less pretentious birds, the beauties become at once more conspicuous and their splendour more intensified. So it is with our numerous breeds of pigeons: *all* possess their merits, all command our attention, and should enlist our admiration.

"The points of excellence of the so-called 'high class' varieties are now stereotyped in the minds of most fanciers, and there is little doubt or difference of opinion as to *their* merits; the chief difficulty nowadays with them is in having patience during their gradual growth and development; but I confess I would like to see some of the neglected fully-established breeds extricated from the 'Variety Class,' and brought a little nearer to the front at our shows, and also a little more appreciated by the fancy at large. I think efforts should now and then be made, and more of a stimulus given, to encourage the development and perfection of new varieties; and to do this, no revolution of the fancy is needed, but simply more encouragement shown to those fanciers who endeavour to propagate and perpetuate new kinds. This may be done by additional classes from time to time, to be filled by the several sorts as their special characteristics become permanently fixed and established; each kind thus competing upon its merits, instead of the present most unsatisfactory system of selection out of numbers of shapes, colours, and styles, wherein the individual taste or preference only of the adjudicator is called into requisition.

"I am an ardent admirer of every kind of pigeon, and desirous of giving its due position to each variety, and have not undertaken to contribute notes on the German breeds as being *my* particular favourites. Whilst I have at different times possessed all sorts of pigeons, I have perhaps rather a preference more especially for the Short-faced Eastern Frilled varieties, described by my friend Mr. Caridia, hundreds of which sort alone I have kept and much admired. Nevertheless, I can see merit in all kinds, and therefore, as I happen to have some acquaintance with them, I am rather pleased to give a lift along to those varieties which are comparatively neglected. Surely the composition of the 'Variety Class' furnishes abundant ground for consideration, for in the medley of styles therein is the very essence of the fancy and the embryos of future progress.

"It is some years ago since I first heard of the pigeon fancy having attained or about to reach its zenith, so far as concerned both number of entries and quality of the specimens; but how utterly fallacious such notions must now appear! No such fear need exist so long as such complete ignorance prevails respecting those kinds which fill the 'Variety Class.' True it is that this class is at the tail end of the schedule, the catalogue, and the show report. The show critic rarely says too much about it; he too often is more particularly devoted to the interests of the 'high class' varieties which head the list, and ere he arrives at the 'Varieties' he grows weary of his work, his superlatives are pretty well exhausted, and this unfortunate yet instructive class and fruitful source of study is too often hastily wound up thus:—'An interesting class: one of the German Toys well first; a funny, short-faced, frilled bird second; and a peculiar, long-faced bird third.' This is a fair sample of how upwards of thirty different sorts of German pigeons alone, with their numerous sub-varieties, are briefly disposed of; such a lot, indeed, as would of themselves constitute a truly grand display of beautiful birds.

"If we look further into the matter, and seek for the *stimulus*, we find it a hopeless search.

Here is an extract of a schedule which for liberality is about an average:—'Any Variety: 1st, £1; 2nd, 10s.; 3rd, 5s.' We see the gigantic sum of £1 15s. is left at the dispensation of the exhausted judge, who, worn and weary, finds himself in front of the miscellaneous collection of 'Varieties' in perfect bewilderment, just at the very time too when the utmost care and thought, and the full exercise of refined taste is most essential. I could say a great deal upon this head, but I refrain from further comment than such as seems absolutely necessary for the benefit of the fancy, and in support and recognition of all the gems of 'Any Variety,' without which it would be difficult to trace out the source from which any progressive movement in pigeons would be practicable or possible.

"Under the broad title of 'German Toys' there are from seventeen to twenty recognised varieties which are now permanently fixed as true and distinct breeds, and which may be relied upon for the produce of young in accurate resemblance to themselves; and to most of these seventeen kinds there are sub-varieties, the differences of which, for the most part, consist of *colour* properties, 'crested' or plain heads, and feathered or 'clear legs;' so that by these additions the family group becomes multiplied to about fifty-two sorts, as we shall see further on. At present I will simply enumerate the seventeen varieties, which are as follows:—

1. Hyacinth.
2. Victoria.
3. Suabian.
4. Porcelain.
5. Starling.
6. Fire.
7. Ice.
8. Priest.
9. Brunswick.
10. Letz.
11. Shield.
12. Crescent.
13. Swallow.
14. Spot.
15. Fairies.
16. Helmet.
17. Frillback.

"All these pigeons are what are generally known as 'German Toys,' from the fact of their being bred, perfected, and highly esteemed in Germany, and transported to Great Britain, France, and other places from time to time in large numbers and at frequent intervals during the last seventeen years, some of them at an earlier period. As to the derivation or appropriateness of their names I shall not attempt to argue; some of their titles bear upon the surface a clear evidence of origin, whereas others are known to be inappropriate. I propose to deal with them simply as we find them. Therefore I intend to dispense with the various *foreign* titles, which would rather tend to complicate than make clear the knowledge of each kind, which I think may be better achieved by the simple acknowledgment of the single title, which, together with the illustrations as the main guide, should be fully explanatory to fanciers of any nationality.

"All the birds herein enumerated are about of an equal size and general formation, excepting only Hyacinths, Victorias, Helmets, and Spots, which, as we will show further on, somewhat differ. Omitting, then, these four from present consideration, I will describe the general configuration of the others. They are about the size of our ordinary dove-house pigeon, and in many points greatly resemble such. The forehead is high, the beak long and of the dove-shape or spindle character—long, thin, horny, and hard. The nostrils are small and devoid of warting. The eye, too, whether dark or coloured, is comparatively free of any fleshy cere, the single ring of eyelash only being observable. The head in all cases, although not rounded, still is of a nice curve, no matter whether 'crested' or 'plain;' the neck invariably is short and acutely tapering; the shoulders and back broad; the entire form of medium length; the body plump; the legs short; the posture invariably is of a stooping, crouching forward, or horizontal bearing, and this point is a peculiar and marked feature in the majority, with one or two exceptions. The temperament is (for domesticated pigeons) extremely wild and nervous; they eschew interference of any kind, and if disturbed within confined limits will bang about hither and thither in the wildest confusion;

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they are also of very keen vision, ever on the alert, sly and watchful. When captured, their stubborn determined nature prompts the most desperate efforts for release, and if not handled by somewhat of an expert, tail and flights will be the only objects retained within the grasp, whilst the escaped bird, bereft almost entirely of the means of locomotion, whizzes away upon nearly featherless stumps. The whole tribe are extremely shy. I have known some of them to be without food for five days in strange quarters, rather than venture down to the broadcast meal supplied daily to their other associates, and then only through the cravings of nature descending now and then, and making innumerable hasty snatches at a grain. Such is their wild, nervous disposition when in confinement, that it operates greatly against them through the breeding season, for although they are, if at large, free breeders, yet if disturbed, they will often forsake eggs, neglect or entirely desert their young, and be so thoroughly discomforted as to remain dormant or comparatively useless.

HYACINTHS AND VICTORIAS.

"These are of German origin, and I have drawn them a little asunder from the aforenamed kinds merely because they are larger birds, and somewhat different in formation. Still they partake very much of the same wild uneasy character as the other sorts, with which they have been extensively crossed.

"Hyacinths are large, bold birds, strong and hardy, plain in head and breast, and tight in feather; the beak is a little stronger and straighter in formation than most of the other sorts, neck a little longer, breast more prominent, legs longer, and carriage more erect and commanding. The feather properties in the Hyacinth, as with all the others, are the chief recommendation. In this particular they are indeed very beautiful and attractive, but in points of configuration they are not prepossessing, and do not favourably compare with the Eastern frilled birds, which are gems *of form as well as feather*. The Hyacinth is of a very deep purple-blue colour; the breast, thighs, vent, rump, and tail are of similar but lighter shade; the flights or primaries are blue-black, and a band of black near to extremity of tail; the entire sides up to and around the shoulders and across the saddle are beautifully variegated with a tri-coloured plumage, the ground tint being of a pale brownish colour; the figuring thereon consists of a perfect and regular gradation of elongated, triangular, or dart-shaped black markings at the outer extremity and centre of every feather in continuation of the shaft, which also is dark-coloured. Within each triangular marking, too, is distinctly discernible a filling-up of light grey or bluish colour, which completes the entire plumage of these birds. The eye is orange-coloured, the beak black, the legs clear and free from feather. By reason of the depth of colour of head and neck, the lustre thereon is very conspicuous and beautiful.

"Victorias are birds of good size, perhaps even a little larger than Hyacinth; in fact, at nearly every point resemble the Hyacinth, variation of colour only being the chief difference I could ever trace, and in my opinion they might just as well be classed under the same name. In comparison, the Hyacinth is dark, and Victorias of a lighter shade, sulphur or yellowish ground tint usually, which is simply a common variation such as is always discernible in birds of variegated plumage. Eye, orange red; the head and breast free from 'crest' or 'frill;' beak and nails black; legs and feet featherless; sides, shoulders, and saddle fine dart-shape markings, without any trace of blue therein; head, neck, breast, thighs, belly, vent, rump, and tail of an ashen hue, with but faint reflects of lustre discernible upon the neck; shafts of feathers dark.

SUABIANS.

"These are very handsome pigeons. There are several variations, such as light and dark, heavily and lightly spangled, crested and plain heads, feather-footed, or clear-legged, dark-coloured



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith.

HYACINTH.

SHIELD SUABIAN.

heads and necks, flights and tails, and others upon which, throughout the entire plumage, complete variegation is traceable. All such are Suabians, perfect or imperfect, whether with their plain, unattractive nestling feathers or during their transition state or change of feather, for bear in mind, they often vary at each successive moult; still the perfect ones are, as a rule, those upon which a complete display of variegation, plain, black-and-white, or tri-coloured chequering is observable. There are what may be termed black-spangled, in which black and white only form the attractive chequered plumage, and others upon which a bronzed appearance pervades the entire feathering. I will first describe the former kind. It is quite a matter of choice or speculation which is the more beautiful; both are peculiarly attractive and pleasing in appearance, and for breeding purposes necessary to each other.

"The illustration represents a heavily-spangled 'crested' bird, upon which will be seen a crescentic-shaped course of spangling around the neck, down the breast, and upon the top of head a regular sprinkling of fine white markings. Upon the lower web of each of the primary flight-feathers (which are black) also is a distinct, well-defined, oval-shaped spot of white. This important point greatly enhances the value of the specimen, and adds very materially to its beauty. The tail should be black, and in the very best of specimens there should also be a white band near to its extremity, as in Blondinettes and Satinettes, but this is rarely seen, but is a great point of merit when obtained, not only as adding to the grandeur of that particular part, but birds so marked upon the primary tail-feathers are *sure* to possess body-markings to an extraordinary degree of regularity and fair intermixture of colour; besides, these tail-marked birds when in flight are most conspicuously attractive and beautiful. The head is black in some specimens, finishing off and merging into white at the middle part of neck; and in others terminating to about the same line as a Nun, the black merging gradually into the white; the breast, thighs, vent-covering, rump, and inside of wings and body-feathering, should be chiefly black, but with fair traces of white spangling throughout the whole—such may in most specimens be indistinct, but still they should be there; thus are the Black-spangled Suabians disposed of, whose composition is simply black-and-white feathering. The Bronzy birds are exactly as the aforenamed, with the addition of a bronzy hue being observable upon all the darker parts, and the lighter portions, too, are of a delicate creamy tinge. These birds are very pretty, and present, upon the whole, a very rich and mellow effect. When the primary flights are outstretched, there should be seen a complete intermixture of colours—black, brown, and pale creamy tint, the tips of each primary being black, which, when closed, show upon the surface an entire black flight; the rump is dark, and the tail is bronzy black. Of the Suabian kind there are 'Shell-crowned,' 'Point-crested,' and 'Plain-headed,' feather or clean-legged. If 'crowned,' the feathers should form a clear, evenly-edged segment of a circle, neither unbroken nor indented on its surface or ridge. If point-crested, such should be upright, well raised, sharp-pointed, and perfectly central. If plain-headed, perfect smoothness is necessary. If feather-legged, completely clothed to the toes. If 'clean-legged,' not the ghost of a feather observable; and these last remarks apply equally to all the varieties with which I am dealing. Of the heavy or profuse leg-feathered sorts, I shall have more to say in the proper place; suffice to say here that of the feather-legged birds neither Hyacinth, Victorias, Suabian, Porcelain, Priest, Starling, or Frillback are profusely feathered, but have mere slight but entirely close leg-covering, or 'slippers,' extending to the toes. The eye of the Suabian is orange-red, the beak and nails black. Clean-legged birds form the majority. Feather or plain leg are equally worthy and admirable as show birds, but must be all one or the other, and not in 'pins' and patches.

PORCELAINS.

"These are closely allied to Suabians, and therefore partake of the same general features. Colour only in this case constitutes the difference, as by description will at once be obvious. These birds are of a nice rich brown upon head, upper part of neck, breast, and back (beneath the saddle), and rump, the under parts being of an ashen tint, with the brownish cast partially intermixed. The flights and tail are somewhat of a darker shade, the brown and black prevailing, with lighter parts towards the quills. The shoulders, sides, and back are of the most exquisite beauty, delicate and refined both in tint and markings to the superlative degree; the ground tint is of an extremely pale, creamy colour, upon which is worked out an elaborate, dart-shaped tracery of a wider mesh, as it were, more nearly resembling the opener markings of the Siberian Ice, which I should think formed some part of their composition. The markings are of a very fine character—light, soft, and lacy, and of paler colour, in perfect accord with the delicacy and apparent purity in the general aspect of the birds, the markings running each way almost at right angles with the shaft of feather, which is also tinted and in beautiful harmony with the fine course of point-edging in which the entire body is enveloped. In some of these birds the head, entire neck, breast, thighs, rump, tail, and flights are completely of a dark neutral colour, a sort of invisible brown or chocolate colour, and these are particularly beautiful by reason of the extreme contrast with the uncommon delicacy of sides, shoulders, and back, and the nice set-off of 'tippet' against back, or breast, and thigh against their sides. In these pencilled varieties there are various colours and shades of ground tint, and numerous peculiarities of markings, from heavy to light, broad to fine, black to pale pencillings; 'spangled,' 'laced,' or 'tipped;' 'crested' or 'plain heads;' 'feather-footed' or 'clear-legged;' the latter are in the majority. The eye is sometimes pearlish, but orange-red is the proper colour; beak and nails black; flights, when extended, are evenly variegated, but apparently plain when closed. As with the Suabians, spots of white upon outer extremities of flights, are now and then produced, and are desirable, but are quite exceptions to the rule.

STARLINGS.

"These birds are entirely of black plumage, excepting the bars across the wing-coverts, and a crescent or half moon of white in front of breast. Upon the head of many specimens there is a sprinkling of white spots, extending from forehead to neck, into which it gradually merges; this I conceive to be the proper marking, and from which probably the term 'Starling' originated, for in that particular there is a great similarity to the wild bird which bears that name. The eye is red, the beak and nails black, and the variety chiefly clear-legged and plain-headed, although if the legs be fairly clothed with feathers, or the head adorned with a good crest (which it occasionally is), they are—at least in my eyes—of equal value. The chief points to be observed are intensity of black, purity and accuracy of white crescent and bars, and regularity of Starling spots upon the head. I have no doubt whatever but that these birds are closely allied to both Suabians and Porcelains. Careful selection and judicious mating from time to time of those which more closely resemble each other has resulted in the fair establishment of these varieties, until now each kind may be said to breed pretty true to their several properties; but to those who may have made but casual trials with either, this simple assertion perhaps would not be convincing, and for this reason, that the progeny of any of the *variegated pencilled* varieties rarely ever resemble their parents (however perfect such may be) until after the first or second moult; their nestling feathers are invariably of a very unattractive appearance, dull and dingy, smeared and apparently worthless 'run outs.' But here patience is necessary, when by its exercise one gets rewarded, for at the fall of this



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith London W.C.

PRIEST.

SWISS OR CRESCENT

FIRE-BACK

medley hue the beauty gradually develops, even into the perfect bird; an utter transformation takes place, such as is invariable with *all* the most beautifully-marked or gorgeous-feathered birds in Creation. It is, then, quite a mistake to expect these beauties of feather to burst forth at once with their dazzling chequering. The experienced fancier may judge pretty accurately of the value of these unattractive nestlings at once; some, it is true, come out in early life in fine array, but the majority are, in their nest garb, of a rather dull mahogany tint throughout the sides, shoulders, back, and head, and dark as these appear, they will often change into the most delicate ground-tints, leaving the markings of feathers thereon clear and in bold relief, even in the black-and-white spangled sorts, upon which at maturity no other colour should be visible. There is *at first* a brownish cast all over. With the Starling, too, when young, his 'crescent' is mixed and apparently imperfect, and his bars wholly brown or intermixed therewith; but in time they invariably assume their perfect whiteness, pure and untarnished, so that to those who make choice of these varied gems of pencilled pigeons, patience and perseverance are truly virtues which must be exercised. In breeding for perfect unity of tri-coloured markings, make selection of such birds as possess between them the very properties to the highest degree which you would wish to see amalgamated in the offspring. To mate together pencilled birds of exact colour or markings tends to lighten the tone and lacings of their issue; such may be occasionally necessary, for the paler birds are singularly pretty; but where the three distinctly-coloured lacings, black, brown, and creamy-white, are desirable, there must be a careful and systematic infusion and pretty equal portion or balance of power of each colour so as to avoid a predominance of either, which results in the produce of smeared or irregular dapplings. The more profuse the bronzy hue (for the first season's garb) the better the prospect. The common plain blue-chequering *will* crop out occasionally; but without destroying the specimens, use such as mates with birds possessing extra bronzy qualities to a powerful degree, in order to check or counteract the reversionary tendency, for in their time plain-chequered pigeons have played an important part in the manufacture of these pencilled beauties. Such blue-chequered birds are only useful as occasional supports to their more refined and more esteemed offshoots; they are generally of a stronger and more robust constitution, and as such they may now and then be used, but beware of their prevailing influence and use them sparingly. I may just mention that Suabians, Porcelains, and Starlings are much about the same figure, standing longer on the leg than all the others, save Hyacinths and Victorias, which are altogether bigger and bolder birds.

PRIESTS.

"These are of four recognised kinds—Black, Red, Yellow, and Blue, with several other sorts of less value produced therefrom. The general formation and size much resembles the aforenamed, the body being a little wider, more plump and compact, the neck rather short, and the head adorned with a double crest, or, rather, a wide-spread 'shell crest,' or inverted feathers rising up from the neck immediately at the base of skull, and a tuft or rose-shaped radiation of feathers arising at the back of nostrils and spreading over them, and part of the beak in a circular form similar to that of the Trumpeter. In many of them the nostril-tuft assumes merely a division of feathers across the forehead, the one course falling upon the head, the other overhanging and almost encircling the beak; and further, there are others which display an *erect* and *pointed* tuft of *twisted feathers* growing from between the forehead and nostrils. It is a difficult matter to decide which of the three frontal tufts should be preferred. I rather incline towards either of the two latter, which, although perhaps not so pleasing in appearance as the 'rose' when perfect, still as the 'rose' is a cardinal property of the

Trumpeter, and the other 'tufts' are only peculiar to Priests and Brunswicks or imperfect Trumpeters, I think it should be preferred as being further removed and more dissimilar thereto, more especially as either 'tufts' are very remarkable and eccentric, and equally fixed as a permanent novelty, far enough asunder not to be mistaken for little Trumpeters, which, in many points the 'rosed' variety unquestionably resemble. There are also birds of this kind entirely devoid of frontal tuft, but such are of little value. The top mandible of beak should be white, the lower one black or coloured. The frontal 'tuft' (no matter which shape) must be *white*, the entire skull right away to the 'shell-crest,' and in straight direction with line of mouth, and through the eye to rise of 'crest,' should be white; the crest itself is dark; all else coloured, except the wing-bars, which should be pure white. The eye in each kind is dark, or 'bull-eye.' Should there appear a white band upon the tail primaries, we may welcome such as an additional point of attraction; but it is so rarely seen that one can scarcely record it as a point in the composition of the species. Priests are either grouse-muffed viz., with soft feathering upon the legs and feet to the toes, or else 'slippered,' or medium-muffed; the former style is most desirable.

"*Black Priests:* Intensity and brilliancy of black, purity of white, and accuracy of markings are essential qualities. The eye is dark.

"*Red Priests:* Richness, depth, and uniformity of colour highly essential; slaty thighs, rump, and tail frequently occur as blemishes upon otherwise good birds. Eye dark.

"*Yellow Priests:* Purity, richness, and uniformity are great points; soft, mossy, pale colour, with ashen thighs, are often seen, but should be avoided. Eye dark.

"*Blue Priests* should be of a nice uniform blue, save, of course, frontal 'tuft' and upper part of head and 'bars,' which should be white, with a narrow ridge or edging of black at their nether extremities. Primary flights blue-black. A band of black also is upon the tail. The neck and 'shell-crest' is of a darker shade, and nicely illumined with prismatic colours. The eye is dark. In the young of these, as with many others, the bar is invariably tinted with brown, but in the course of moult assumes its normal whiteness; but in youngsters where the bronzy tint is strong upon the bar at first, they frequently retain a fine edging alongside the black, thus showing a nice variety—black, brown, white—which colours against the body-blue make a charming unity. Each colour should be clear and distinct. In many birds with the tri-coloured 'bar' the colours blend too much, and present a smeared appearance. In such cases the brown is objectionable, and would be better out altogether, but each successive moult often tends to remedy this fault, which rarely is a permanent blemish. Of the Priest variety there are several other sorts, such as Plain Blue-chequered, in which the entire body is marked as in ordinary pigeons, the tuft and head only being white. There are also Plain Light-blue, or Lavender-coloured barless birds, and Plain barless Reds and Yellows, and ordinary Blue black-barred ones. But none of these are so attractive as the four first-named, but are simply peculiarities obtainable in the produce and working out of other sorts in greater esteem.

BRUNSWICKS.

"These possess nearly the same properties as Priests—general form, shell-crest, nasal 'tuft,' or plain front, dark eye, white upper and dark lower portion of beak, Grouse-legged, 'slippered,' and 'long muffed;' in fact, they are of one and the same origin, the chief difference being that in Brunswicks the entire top part of head, including both crests, is white, the ten primary flights white, instead of dark, and in Brunswicks long muffs are in greater esteem; thus it will be seen that there is scarcely enough difference to constitute a severance, simply because they are, to all intents and purposes, white-flighted Priests.



SWALLOWS.

YELLOW
BLACK

RED.
BLUE

SWALLOWS.

"This variety, by reason of their extreme beauty, conspicuous, bold, and well-defined markings, have become popular favourites amongst the Toys. There are nine sub-varieties, viz., *Black*, *Red*, *Yellow*, *Blue* (barred), *Blue* (barless), *Blue-chequered*, *Silver* (barred), *Silver* (barless), and *Silver-chequered*. The general formation and markings are as follows:—Beak, long; nostrils, small; forehead, high; neck, short; shoulders and back, broad; body, plump, and rather squat in shape; legs, short, and either merely 'slippered' or 'long muffed.' At the base of the skull, rising from the neck, is a wide-spread ridge of inverted feathers, which should form a nicely scalloped, clear-ridged, well-raised 'shell crown.' The upper mandible dark, the lower portion white. The line of head-markings runs in direct course with opening of beak and through the eye, all the upper part of head being black or coloured, terminating in an accurate line at the base of skull or rise of 'crown,' which is white. The neck, breast, belly, thighs, hocks, vent-covering, tail, back, and 'saddle' also are white, leaving the wing in its entirety black or coloured; the leg-feathering (from hocks) also coloured; and the eye is dark, known as black, or 'bull-eye.' In the Blacks, intense and glossy black is very desirable; depth, richness, brilliancy, and uniformity in the Reds; and purity, clearness, and uniformity in the Yellows. The Blue (barred) ones should be of a nice, clear, even-tinted colour, with two well-defined narrow bars across the coverts, the primary flights being blue-black, and also in the heavily leg-feathered ones the stiffer quills of feet are also blue-black. Plain barless Blues are as other Blues, simply omitting the bars. Blue-chequered should be nicely and evenly chequered with light-blue and jet-black, the best of such are then very pretty; the three sorts of 'Silvers' are in point of markings just as the corresponding kinds of Blues; the difference only being, in lieu of the blue there is a fine, delicate, whitey-grey, with blackish bars and chequering thereon. In both kinds of Blues, and also the Chequers, and the same with Silvers, the skull cap is of a much darker shade of colour. For my own part, I rather prefer the heavily leg-feathered Swallows, with their coloured feathers protruding from profusely-feathered hocks, and spreading out like little wings on either side, for in such specimens the general effect is far more striking and peculiar. At the present time the medium-muffed birds are in the majority, but this arises, in the main, from the difficulty of adding to or even maintaining the extreme length which I remember years ago. The chief desideratum in Swallows is colour and markings—deep and glossy blacks, richness and purity of the coloured birds; therefore, in breeding them there is not much scope. Blacks may be mated with Reds, and Reds with Yellows, and Blue (barless) to Blue (barred), and either of the latter to Blue-chequers or any of the Silvers. These occasional crosses are absolutely necessary, but need not be practised as a fixed rule of procedure.

FAIRIES.

"These—sometimes termed Spot or Fairy Swallows—are of various colours, Black, Reds, Yellow, Blue, and Silver. In formation they are Swallows, but in markings differ. There are plain-headed and 'crowned' birds, and their points may be briefly summed up thus:—White birds with black or coloured primary flights, black or coloured leg-feathers downwards from the hocks only, and with a well-defined, oval spot of same colour upon the forehead, extending from the nostrils to highest rise in forehead. The upper mandible dark, in harmony with the colour of the specimen, the lower white. The eye is dark hazel. Accuracy of markings, depth and richness of colour, are the points in these birds; ten coloured primary flights, clear lined, central, frontal 'spot,' length of coloured muffs, and without any intermixture of black above or white below the hocks.

"There are, I believe, a variety exactly similar to the above, with the additional feature of a

black or coloured saddle upon the back, and in that point being just the reverse of the Swallow proper. Such birds, however, are very rare, and I only remember to have seen one pair. I conclude they are rarely produced, even in their native place.

SHIELDS.

"The colours of these are Black, Red, Yellow, Blue, and Silver. They are invariably plain-headed birds, in form resembling what we might (for the sake of comparison) term plain-headed Swallows. They are white birds, with coloured shoulders precisely as that of Turbits in every respect, the bars thereon only being white, all else of the plumage is pure and spotless. The beak is white, and the eye is dark hazel. The feet are heavily-clothed, and the hocks are abundantly covered with stiff feathers. In the Blues there are often found, in addition to the white bar, a narrow edging of black, which by some fanciers is regarded as an additional qualification. Intensity of black, richness and purity of colour, and accuracy of 'Shield' or Turbit markings are the primary features to look to.

CRESCENT, OR SWISS.

"These are of the dove-shape character, high in forehead, plain-headed, spindle beak, short neck, flat or squat in *pose*, plump in body, low on leg, and well furnished with fair quills on those members. Their colour is of a creamy-white aspect, with deep, rich brown bars crossing the wing-coverts. Upon the breast, too, is a 'crescent' or half-moon-shaped marking of a similar rich colour, and by reason of its extending upwards on the neck a brilliant, coppery lustre is the result. The eye is orange, and the beak dark. I have heard this variety called 'mere occasional sports' from other kinds, and unworthy to be classed as a distinct breed; but I have had ocular proof of their points being permanently fixed, and that several pairs which have come under my notice have raised progeny *fac-simile* of themselves, and I have heard of other fanciers whose experience has proved the same result.

LETZ PIGEONS.

"These are among the family of Shields, or Turbit-marked German breeds, and only differ therefrom in head properties; for whilst the Shield proper is a plain-headed bird, their 'Letz' brethren possess a double head adornment, viz., 'shell crown' at the back of head, and 'rose' or 'tuft' arising immediately at the rear of nostrils and overhanging them. They are of various colours, each of which display a white wing bar. Their legs are extensively feathered, and, as is the case with birds of heavy leg-feathering, the hocks, too, are superabundantly furnished, turning inwards and downwards until almost trailing the ground. The eye is dark. They are evidently an offshoot of the Trumpeter family, selected and worked up to their specially attractive colour and markings.

FIRE PIGEONS.

"Under this rather inappropriate title is a variety which, in formation and habits, bear exact resemblance, singular to say, to the Ice varieties. I do not want to question or quarrel with the name, but must say that it is peculiar that the very names indicative of the greatest extremes of two elements should have been chosen as applicable to these somewhat similar species of pigeon. However, as at first remarked, I shall deal with them as I find them, and as they are now partially known. The Fire Pigeon, then, is of a beautiful, rich chestnut brown colour upon sides, shoulders, and back; the flights are black exteriorly and bronzy within; the head, neck, breast, under-feathering, and muffs are black, or very nearly so. Upon the forehead, just above the nostrils, is an oval spot of white extending to the high front of head; the tail, too (from a clear line across rump and round to vent), is pure white. The eye is bright orange, and the beak should



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ICE PIGEONS

URAL.
SILVER.

SIBERIAN.
BLUE.

be black, though the upper mandible is ofttimes white. I incline to the black beak, because the best specimens I have had or seen have been so. Moreover, in appearance, it partially destroys the only objectionable peculiarity, viz., the length of head. In this variety the male and female are not quite alike, the cock birds having almost *plain* rich chestnut sides, shoulders, and back, whereas the hens are distinctly tipped with black at the outer extremity of all the feathers upon those parts; and further, the head-spot is much smaller and less perfect upon the males than females, therefore (in this case, at least) the plumage of the hen is, in my opinion, superior and more attractive than that of her lord and master. When under the influence of high light, basking in the sun with outstretched wings, the colouring of their sides—deep chestnut beneath, as it were, a coat of varnish—is uncommonly striking and effective; indeed, upon the whole, they are very attractive birds—black, white, and brown together on one object, but nicely separated. The neck being black throws up a lot of colour of the highest tinsel quality; the black flights on each side or crossing the white tail tell up with capital effect; and the brilliant ruby eye, as it seems, set in black velvet, altogether is enough to command for this breed a high place in the category of the long-faced German Pigeons. The progeny of these 'Fire' Pigeons, unlike their maternal parent, are of a very unprepossessing appearance; they are at first of a dingy mahogany colour, dull and ugly creatures, but time only is necessary, and their beauties will crop out. They breed fairly true, but often without the frontal spot, and now and then with dark feathers in their tails. The muffs upon legs and feet should be *long*—cannot be too much so—and the hocks vultured to a great extent. I have crossed these birds with the Eastern Capuchin (as illustrated in this volume), the result being pretty, medium-faced, almost *black* progeny, with a remarkable coloured lustre all over, the tail being correct white as in both parents.

ICE PIGEONS.

"Of these birds I may say there are four actual varieties:—First, the pale Lavender, uniformly-tinted (barless) bird, in which scarcely the slightest variation of shade is observable in any point, even upon head, neck, flights, muffs, or tail; these are of an exquisite, delicate, and powdery nature in feathering, which is their chief property; they are either 'clear-legged,' 'slippered,' or 'heavily-feathered,' and have dark eyes and black beak; the latter sort are in greatest esteem. Secondly, there are similarly pale lavender-tinted ones, with white bars finely edged with black; but it is invariably the case that where a black edging shows upon the bar, such birds are a little deeper in colour of head, neck, flights, and tail, which has a dark band thereon; still, a sort of lavender powder pervades the whole plumage. In these the eyes vary—some are dark, others bright orange, the paler coloured the bird the more likely to have a dark eye. Thirdly, there are ordinary coloured Blues, with white bars with fine black edging, brilliant necks, blue-black flights, tail, and muffs. And fourthly, there are the spangled or laced sorts, varying from the most delicately grey-tinted ones to others of a much deeper tone. All these spangled varieties are singularly refined and beautiful, the lacings thereon being very uncommon, and differing materially from that of other kinds of chequered or spangled pigeons. The ground tint, as I have said, varies from light to dark, and in proportion to its depth, the markings, too, increase in force of colour, even to deepest black, and run in zigzag transverse figures—white with fine black edging—from the longest of primary coverts right up to and around the shoulder and across the back, forming, upon the whole, a peculiar, undefinable, but regular and handsome laced variegation. The eyes vary, the darker ones having orange, and the fainter marked ones dark eyes. The formation of the whole family group is of a plump but flat or squat character; the figure of a horizontal creeping *posé;* the legs short; and the disposition extremely shy and wild. In each variety there are clean-legged, grouse-muffed, slippered, and long-muffed, each being attractive; but personally, I prefer the wing-footed

ones having fair quills of four inches in length. Such is a point difficult to breed, but tells well upon the specimen thus produced.

"The featherless-legged Spangled Ice are termed 'Ural Ice.' Why it is so I have failed to discover, though, to be candid, I have not made any literary search therefor, lest I might get entangled in sundry jaw-breaking, foreign derivations. Many of the Ice varieties have been mixed up together, hence we see so many imperfectly-spangled birds. It is often difficult, I know, to avoid losing one good point in aiming at another. Feather-leg and pencillings have been the critical parts in breeding: how to *borrow* the heavy leg-feathering of the plainer birds and see it perfectly and permanently fixed upon spangled specimens is the difficulty; for however much may be gained, *something* occasionally must be lost ere the desired unity is achieved, and it is fanciers only who can accomplish it.

FRILLBACKS.

"These are of different colours—White, Black, Grey or Grizzled, and Sandy, amongst which the best specimens are found more especially in the two last-named sorts, which, whilst in colour plain and unattractive, their feathers are invariably curled or twisted to a remarkable extent; and this, doubtless, has been achieved by a systematic course of mating together the best curled birds regardless entirely of colour. There are both crowned and plain-headed Frillbacks, clean-legged, medium, or heavily-muffed. Blacks and Whites are frequently shell-crowned, whilst the Grizzles more often are plain in head. In size they are similar to Ice, appearing perhaps a little larger by reason of the outstanding curls. Head, neck, and saddle, whilst being a little ruffled, are not so well crimped as the sides, but the great object is to obtain *entire curling*, and I have seen specimens upon which it has unmistakably been attained. The eye is coloured.

SPOTS.

"Of this kind there are Black, Red, Yellow, and Blue, feather-legged and plain. They have a beak of medium length, rather more straight than most of the aforenamed kinds. The upper mandible is black or coloured, the lower white. They are white pigeons, with dark tail to a line across the rump and vent. There is also a well-formed, central, oval 'spot' of colour upon the forehead extending from the nostrils. The eye is dark hazel. Perfect accuracy in the markings, with depth and richness of colour, may be said to be the only two points, and unless good in those parts, they are almost worthless; if crested (as some are), that feature must be of good formation, well raised, and well outspread even upon its ridge for a shell; and needle-pointed, well raised, and perfectly upright and central for a point-crest.

HELMETS.

"These are of rather smaller size than Spots, and partake more of the shape of an ordinary medium or pleasant-faced Tumbler, clear-legged, with plenty of daylight seen beneath them. They are more erect in carriage, less wild and unmanageable, good breeders, the produce being fairly true to markings. They are white birds, with a distinctly-marked coloured 'skull-cap' or 'helmet' head-covering, commencing immediately at the nostrils, running through the eye, and continuing around the ear, and terminating in a well-finished curve at the back of neck. The tail, from a clear line around rump and vent, is black or coloured. The eye is a brilliant, pearly white. They are active birds, a flock of which, composed of the various colours, presents a peculiar and striking appearance.

"Having now described the chief characteristics of the several German varieties, I think



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BLACK LAHORE.

RED HELMET. YELLOW SPOT.

perhaps but little more need be added. In points of formation they are not prepossessing; they are not of that symmetrical configuration, graceful *contour*, or vivacious habits which in some breeds momentarily catches the eye and rivets the attention. No; in the main the whole family, in points of form, greatly resemble each other; but what a diversity of splendour in the feathery garments of the entire collection! What a fertile source of beauty! How much with them *has* been done! How much more may be achieved! Hitherto they have, as it were, been worked up out of themselves, and yet remain strong and hardy withal. Who, then, can calculate what additional varieties may be wrought out by well-conceived crosses with other and alien strains? I believe great things may be realised. I *know* much can be accomplished, for we have the proof. For breeding purposes, it must be admitted, captivity is not well suited to them, for being of a wildish temperament, they thrive best at large, and can cater well for their own living if so permitted. Cannot we, then, meet their wants in this respect, and thus utilise their breeding qualities *to the full*, which, owing to their extreme shyness, are comparatively cramped and thwarted when liable to the frequent disturbances to which closely-confined pigeons are subjected."

By a comparison of Mr. Ludlow's descriptions with the illustrations, it will be seen that the German Toys are nearly all the result of careful crossing, and subsequent selection, upon a few foundation sorts. It seems to us very evident that the beautiful Fire Pigeon owes its peculiar colour and lustre to the Archangel; a whole class of birds, such as Letz, Priests, Brunswicks, &c., is evidently built up on the foundation of the Trumpeter; whilst Swallows, Helmets, and others, are evidently closely related to the Nun, the original variety being doubtful. Some of the names are not happy; and it is perfectly certain that the Swallow at least is quite misnamed through a simple error in translation, the bird being christened in German from the Tern or *Sea-Swallow*, and the prefix being dropped in English. It is, however, a hopeless task to attempt to change names now universally received, and we shall not attempt to do so. In other cases the names given are significant enough; and the very two named by Mr. Ludlow as so strange seem to us singularly appropriate, the profuse bloom giving an appearance as much like "ice" or frost to the Ice Pigeons, as the colour and glow impart a "fiery" look to the other.

The most interesting question in relation to the German Toys is perhaps the source of the beautiful variegation of feather in the Porcelain and Ice families. Little positive light can be thrown upon this now; but what has been said by Mr. Caridia from actual knowledge regarding the very similar feather properties of the Oriental variegated Toys, makes it at least most probable that the problem was worked out by the long, patient, and skilful blending of the primary colours found in the variegation. The facts stated by him, and others which we could give of similar character, respecting the results of breeding them together, make it all but certain that neither the Eastern nor the Western family of variegated pigeons was produced from the other, but that each had independent origin; the Orientals working on a short-faced stem, and the Germans on a bird of the ordinary dove-house type. It may be surmised that both probably used the Chequer as a starting-point; but the fact is most suggestive and extraordinary, that widely-separated schools of breeders, working with distinct races of birds, should produce such similar results as regards the plumage of their pets.

We may add that in regard to at least many of the Toy pigeons, our experience has not been quite so unfavourable as Mr. Ludlow's with regard to wildness. There is a great difference between varieties in this respect; and nearly all, if bred at large, will be terribly shy when confined in a moderate space. If they can be allowed liberty all the better; but a tame stock

of most pigeons can be secured by a plan we have rarely found fail. It is, as soon as the young are old enough to bear it, to *feed them by hand*, taking them away from their nurses, and keeping by themselves. It is astonishing how tame and familiar many young pigeons will become under this method, if handled gently and carefully; and though "blood will tell" in this as in other qualities, much can be done in this way to remove what some may feel to be a strong deterrent from Toy-breeding.

There are at once so many varieties, and so few specimens shown of these pigeons under present arrangements, that it is impossible to lay down any standard for judging. Few judges can perhaps be expected even to carry in their minds the exact details of colour and marking which go to make a perfect specimen of each variety, and if the judge looks for evident sharpness and accuracy of marking, he will so far rarely make a mistake. Feeling the truth of much of what Mr. Ludlow has said regarding scant encouragement, we must confess we do not clearly see a remedy. Were prizes offered in detail, we fear they would not be competed for. Perhaps the most that could be done with advantage at first would be to offer, as at Birmingham, double sets of prizes in the "Variety" class, so as to give the judges six or eight to award. This plan would probably by degrees tempt out certain varieties in greater and greater numbers, until at length some section, such as perhaps the Satinette and Blondinette tribe, might support a class for itself, and leave the other free for the rest, and so on. The grand class which such a system always attracts at Birmingham seems to prove that at large shows it would probably be a success; and so much, at least, may be earnestly pressed upon the consideration of committees.



MAGPIES.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE MAGPIE.

AMONG the varieties known generally as German Toys, the most, which have usually to compete in a class for "Any other variety," have been conveniently treated of in one chapter; but as there stated, we reserved for separate mention such as have by degrees attained an amount of popularity which has gained them at most shows a class to themselves. These are the Magpie, the Nun, and the Archangel; the former especially being now so numerous that it deserves to be called almost an English pigeon.

The name is no doubt derived from the resemblance to the well-known "bird of mischief" in startling contrast of colours, and also in the brilliancy of the dark portion, which is greater in this bird than in almost any other variety, except the Archangel and Fire Pigeon, the green lustre on the Blacks more especially being very remarkable. There are besides Blacks, Reds, Yellows, and Blues; but none of these show such lustre as the Black, nor to our fancy such a pleasing contrast of colour; and the Blue especially is generally of a dark sooty colour. In all the markings should be alike; and no pigeon breeds more truly in this respect, the cause of which we believe to be the nearly equal distribution of white and dark plumage.

The head and beak of the Magpie should resemble in shape those of the Blue Rock, viz., both rather long, and not, like some birds now seen, as if crossed with the Tumbler; the short head and beak being directly opposite to the appearance of the bird, which there is no doubt the first producers of the Magpie desired to imitate as nearly as possible. The beak should in all colours be flesh-tint, except a little streak of vandyke-brown on the top of the upper mandible, and if even this be absent, all the better; for we have always found that the birds with light beaks were best in colour of the body, and those with dark beaks generally of dull or bad colours, besides having too much of the dark plumage, the colour reaching too low down the breast. The Magpie itself, it is true, has a black beak, and we would find no fault if the pigeon too had a jet-black beak, but rather prefer it, could we get this with the colour of the body; but as it is not so, we cannot sacrifice the bird's chief property to a dark beak. In any case, we should consider the colour of the beak *alone* a very small point in competition. The eye in all varieties should be a clear pearl, or what is called, when in perfection, a nice "fish eye," with a small red cere round it, and those with red or gravel eyes will generally be found faulty in beak. The dark marking is alike in all the colours, and begins with the head, extending down the neck and breast, but not so low as in the Baldhead. It should end in a sharp, clean-cut line across the breast, which, we hold, should be just under the butts of the wings. Some are too low-cut, which arises from the opinions of some judges obliging fanciers to breed for different styles; but as the rather high-cut style shows the marking much better, it is to be hoped it will be generally received. The colour extends down the back and shoulder-coverts, and on the wings or sides, to the end of the short flights; and the tail and lower part of the rump are also coloured; the line of division here also, and everywhere, being required clear and sharp. To attain this accuracy, few can resist the

temptation to abstract a feather or two at the dangerous line; but this pigeon, being tight-feathered, will not allow of a great amount of trimming, since such can easily be detected on blowing up the plumage at any suspected place, or, rather, a little below it. The flights and tail are longer than ordinary, especially in early-bred birds. These are also larger, which some prefer, while many other fanciers like a small bird. For our part, we would care little about this (except for a leaning to the hardy side), but judge the bird by its properties, only stipulating for a long and snaky head and beak. The legs, as in the majority of Toys, are bright-red and clear.

We prefer the Black to all other colours ourselves, believing this to be the colour the pigeon was *bred for*, and that the others are only sports or offshoots from it. We have, in fact, known all the colours produced from Blacks, as in Barbs. The Blues we value least, as being destitute of that lustre which adds so much to the contrast of colour; but Yellow is, doubtless, the most difficult to breed of a good deep tone, as in all varieties. The fancier who breeds Blacks, however, will be the most likely to produce deep rich colours both of Reds and Yellows, besides the parent stock being more attractive when flying about; and he will have probably quite as many Blues as he wants, which colour few people breed for if others can be procured.

Magpies are well adapted for all fanciers who like a "pretty" bird, and can afford but little *time* for their pets; being very vigorous, needing scarcely any care, sure breeders, and good feeders. Give them food, and keep them fairly clean and they need no more; while they will bear in-breeding to any extent desired for getting marking, which will, however, give little trouble. These qualities may strongly recommend the birds as feeders to those who keep varieties like Short-faced Tumblers or African Owls, and they are perfectly adapted for such a purpose. They are to be had at a cheap rate, and most fanciers would prefer something uniform and pleasing to the eye to a lot of all manner of cross-bred or mis-marked birds.

In breeding, two birds low-cut should never be matched. A bird *too* high-cut is seldom seen, so that those generally called "high" may be matched together, and low-cut ones only matched to the highest cut which can be got. Blacks may be bred, as usual, either with Yellow or Red, being careful to select rich colour in *both* cases, without which the colour, which is so great a point, can hardly be expected.

JUDGING MAGPIES.—When of equal quality in different colours, we think Black should stand first, not as the hardest to breed, for that distinction belongs to the Yellow, but as the premier bird. The rest as follows:—

POINTS IN JUDGING MAGPIES.

Beak: shape, length, colour	3
Head: shape of	3
Eye: colour of, 1; of eye-cere, 1	2
Accuracy of marking	9
Colour and lustre	6
Length of flights and tail	3
	26



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NUNS,

YELLOW, BLACK, RED.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE NUN.

THIS pigeon is undoubtedly of either German or Dutch origin; and a glance is sufficient to show that the name by which it is known is singularly appropriate, the Black variety, which far outnumbers all the other colours put together, looking as if the head were covered by a black veil. The appearance of this colour in the variety is very attractive, the black and white being singularly well contrasted; but we must add that in few varieties perhaps does the black appear so far superior to all other colours; even the Red, which is next best, and which in the Magpie is a very handsome colour, appearing very poor by comparison in the Nun.

The head of the Nun should be roundish, similar to that of a half-bred Short-faced Tumbler, or what is known as a pleasant-faced Tumbler, the beak resembling that of a Flying Tumbler, and showing as nearly as possible the same thickness in both mandibles. The majority of birds are more or less faulty in this respect, their beaks resembling that of the Magpie, which is more Dove-like in shape. The beak should be black in the Black birds, and flesh-coloured in the Reds and Yellows, the upper mandible of the Reds having a stain upon it of a darker colour than the lower; and we have noticed that the deeper in colour the beak is, the richer and more lustrous is usually the black upon the body. The eye should be a clear pearl or white, and not, as is so often seen, a gravel eye, which is a decided fault, though not so much as to cause a bird good in other properties to be passed over, the principal properties lying not in the eye, but elsewhere. The cere or small wattle round the eye of the Nun is quite different to that of most other varieties of Toys; for in nearly all these it is red, or if not, of flesh colour, whereas in the Black Nun it is nearly *black*, which gives the head a still darker appearance than the plumage alone would cause.

In colour we will take for our standard the Black, which is far superior both in numbers and quality to all other colours. The head is black as far back as the hood or shell-crest, which stands up white. The black should come down well under the throat, where the dividing line between it and the white body-colour is called the bib-marking; and the lower down the neck this appears the better is the marking, which should, of course, show a nice clear dividing line. It is in this part that what may be called the *mildest* cases of the trimming, so prevalent in Nuns, are found; we say the mildest, because this part of the marking is not very difficult to produce, and there are plenty of birds to be found all that can be desired. When the bib-marking is good, or sufficiently low down, it indicates usually the presence of another property of still more value, viz., a proper number of black flights, which in a too high-cut bird are almost always deficient.

To finish, however, with the head, we come next to the crest, a most difficult property to get in perfection, and which generally undergoes a most severe trimming, so that to see a crest of the proper size and shape is quite a novelty in a class of Nuns. It should form a complete crescent, extending nearly from the back of one eye to the back of the other, and shaped as if a semicircle of paper were bent or rolled round the back of the skull, with the round side uppermost. It ought to stand quite upright, by no means lying close, like the hood of a Jacobin or shell-crested Turbit;

the best crests being those which stand up the highest, and are most regular in shape. This is seldom seen, for the following reason: the crest should be white not only behind, but also in front, where it comes against the black head. Foul feathers are, however, very apt to appear in the front of the crest, and these being removed by trimming, and the root of the crest thus deprived of proper support, it lies down much too close; for which very reason, in fact, as already seen, feathers are often plucked from the Jacobin, in which the hood *is* wanted to lie close. Comparatively few Nuns but are much weeded in front of the crest; and this evil tends to perpetuate itself, for it is found by experience that there is really no great difficulty in breeding for any marking, when the feathers desired *project* at all from the body, provided the stock upon which operations are based is genuine, so that each step of progress can be distinctly marked, and individuals matched accordingly. But trimming acts injuriously in two ways: in the first place, by allowing the breeder to win with a more or less faulty bird, it makes him *content* with a lower standard; and secondly, by its delusive perfection, although he really knows what has been done it deceives his eye, and leads him to match up birds he would not pair if in their natural state.

Leaving the head, the next property of the Nun lies in the flights; all the body, excepting head, flights, and tail being pure white. In regard to this property we differ from many fanciers, who are satisfied with too small a number. We hold that, as in all other cases, a perfect specimen should have the full complement of *ten* coloured flights in each wing, and that less than eight is decidedly faulty. We have heard of birds being called good which only had six-and-six, and this is laid down as a sufficient standard by old Moore; but still we cannot see why we may not advance upon the old notions, and we would as willingly accept six-and-six in a Baldhead as in a Nun. The getting a sufficient number in *each* flight is the great difficulty. Of five-and-five or six-and-six there are plenty; but when we come to more than that it will be found there are very few alike on each side, and also that many show foul feathers between the inner and outer flights, precisely (only that the colours are reversed) as we have shown in the illustration at page 251, of the flights of a Jacobin, which, in fact, allowing for the reversal of the colours, represents accurately the perfect and defective wing of a Nun. As in other cases where marking is the chief property, there is a class of people who will not only weed a faulty crest, but pluck out faulty flights, so as to make both wings appear alike. The fraud cannot be discovered unless the bird be handled, except, indeed, so many flights be abstracted that the fewness can be seen; and many a time we have heard judges blamed in no measured terms for passing birds which exhibited no obvious fault in the pen, when we happened to know they had been disqualified for being plucked in the flights. No judge has, in fact, any excuse for passing a fraud of this character, as it can always be discovered by counting; whereas in other feather-trimming, unless done to a really barefaced extent, it is not always easy to be sure about it. Although, however, we want if possible ten-and-ten, we would be well satisfied with nine-and-nine; but we think it a great fault to be unequal, unless, perhaps, it be eight-and-ten, or still better, nine-and-ten, or perhaps eight-and-nine. In these higher numbers the fault is not seen until handled; but in six-and-eight, for instance, the deficiency can be readily seen on the faulty side even in the pen; and as we have throughout done, we consider such a blemish far worse than any which can only be seen on examination. We would, therefore, be satisfied if a bird had at least seven on one side, though it had eight, nine, or ten on the other; but, of course, the nearer the better, either for show or the breeding-pen. For in markings particularly the great law of breeding holds good, and if breeders will only content themselves with getting one property at a time they will attain success; and it is simply the *impatience* of English breeders which gives them so much less success than the Germans in obtaining accuracy of feather-markings. They seem to wish for perfect specimens from the *first*

pair they put up, instead of being content with one property, or even one step to a property, at each cross. In this case no one should breed from two birds *both* of which had too few flight-feathers; but putting to such one with more, and so proceeding till the desired number be gained; and when two such are bred together, though all their progeny will not be alike, still there will be almost certainty of obtaining some, and after that, as regards that property, all is easy, and the breeder will find he has really gained and secured ground. And not only so, but when a breeder is known thus to have secured only one property, others are willing to pay well for his specimens, that they may from them obtain the same property for their own strains; whereas, it is the work of a lifetime to attempt to get perfect birds from any one pair, except as the final stage of such a course of breeding. And we would earnestly impress on those who act as judges the great desirability of laying great stress upon qualities like this, which are both difficult to produce, of great value in breeding when produced, and in which attempts at fraud can be so easily detected, as in the flights of the Nun. We would therefore give great credit in judging to all specimens showing more than seven feathers in each flight, and think nothing of those with less for the show-pen at all, considering their proper place to be in the breeding-loft.

The tail, from the root, is of the same colour as the other markings of the bird; or in the case we are supposing, black. It is seldom these twelve feathers are found foul-marked. All the rest of the body should be pure white, and the legs and feet clean. It is very singular that, as with the eye-cere, in many birds the colour of the legs is almost *black*, instead of red as in most other varieties; and, in fact, the *best* specimens of Black Nuns we have seen have always been so.

The size is generally a trifle larger, and the carriage slightly more upright, than of the Magpie. So long, however, as the bird has the proper markings we would not be particular as to size, except that we would always rather prefer a largish bird as having a good-sized head, and more likely to have a thick beak and good crest. Such birds have also, in most cases, the best bibs, the smaller ones being rather apt to be high-cut.

Reds and Yellows are sometimes shown, but, as a rule, are far inferior to Blacks. Their points are precisely the same, except as regards the colour of beak, eye-cere, and legs. We have also seen Blues; but the colour was so faulty we believe them, so far, to be only sports from the Black, which is, even supposing the properties bred to the same perfection in other colours, far the most attractive by reason of the pretty contrast. Mr. Brent states that the German Nuns have white instead of coloured flights. This is, in our opinion, to lose a great beauty, and by the loss of an important property to degrade the pigeon as a fancier's bird.

The Nun is very hardy, like most other Toys; is also a good breeder and feeder, and needs scarcely any care. We believe it would be still more popular than it is, but for the *trimming* so unblushingly practised on this pigeon confessedly above all others. Probably more Nuns have been disqualified or passed over for being trimmed, especially in the crest, than all other varieties put together; but still the trimmed birds deceive the eye to the prejudice of the genuine bird, so that the prizes usually go not to the really genuine, but to those which only need a certain amount; which have been in fact really trimmed, but not quite so much so as to be *found out*. We have ourselves tried the experiment of showing an unusually good pair in their honest state, and been beaten by inferior ones we knew to be trimmed; and so much is this the case, that we believe if judges did see genuine birds perfectly marked, they would suspect they were so treated. We mention this because we believe the dread of being *suspected*, even when showing honest birds of unusual merit, has kept many from an attractive breed, and others who do keep it from exhibiting their specimens; while a rigorous examination of every prize bird, in the same manner as already described for the Jacobin, would both check such malpractices,

and by making the *breeder's* standard more severe, speedily produce specimens that needed no manipulation.

JUDGING NUNS.—For the reasons just stated, the flights of every bird should always be opened and counted, and a searching examination made at the root of the crest, all detected cases of plucking being instantly disqualified. The rest will be as under:—

POINTS IN JUDGING NUNS.

Head: size and shape	3
Beak: shape and colour	2
Colour of Eye	2
Crest: size and shape	6
Depth of Bib	3
Flights: number of, and equality on each side	6
Tail	2
Colour (of marked portions)	4
Size	2
	30





Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith.

ARCHANGELS. SWIFTS.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE ARCHANGEL.

THIS pigeon is a comparatively modern introduction; the first time it is mentioned in any published work being in Dixon's "The Dovecote and Aviary," published in 1851. The only apparently authoritative statement as to its origin we have seen is that furnished by Mr. S. C. Betty to Mr. Tegetmeier. Mr. Betty relates how he was informed by Mr. Frank Redmond, that being in Ghent in 1839, and selecting some pigeons for the late Sir John Sebright, he there saw these pigeons for the first time, and was informed they had been recently introduced from Russia. Having procured a pair, Sir John bred them, the birds at his death being dispersed, many falling into the hands of the Earl of Derby.* As there really appears no reason to discredit the only account that even professes to relate how this beautiful variety was first introduced into England, we shall, until better evidence offers, accept it as to the origin of the Archangel—at least, so far as regards the locality from whence it came to us; whether really imported from Russia in the first place there is less evidence to show. The name may perhaps be held to favour such a northern origin, though there is no trace of the bird at Archangel itself; hence it has puzzled many, though some have supposed the term given on account of the peculiar and glowing lustre, which differs from that of all other pigeons.

We have not had very much actual experience of the Archangel pigeon; and, indeed, though the bird has always been much admired by the "Toy" fanciers, we know very few who have bred it for any length of time, good birds having been scarce and difficult to procure. Of late, however, there has been a perceptible increase both of stock, average quality, and popularity; more exhibitions providing special classes for the breed, and those classes being also much better filled. So that we may shortly hope to see this beautiful pigeon more plentiful, and the few faults that remain to be vanquished in its breeding overcome by the fancier.

The head and beak of the Archangel should much resemble in shape those of the Turtle Dove, but with more substance or thickness, and we consider should be dark, though not black. The eye is often seen of a pearl or very light colour, but should be a deep orange red; but before single birds became the fashion at shows, and when pairs had therefore to be shown, it was rare indeed to find two birds, however good in other points, that matched properly in the colour of the eyes and beaks. At the back of the head is a peak or crest, but of quite a different shape to that of the Turbit, although similarly termed a peak-crest. It is rather the sort of sharp point that is *wished* for in the Turbit, but appearing much sharper through having no fulness, ridge, or mane behind or beneath it, the peak thus coming to a sort of needle-point. It is wonderful how perfect this property can be found in birds of good strain; and yet in pairs it is very difficult to get the same length and development in both birds. The general shape or appearance of the bird is very

* "Pigeons," page 167.

sprightly, as if lightly constructed, and somewhat tall on the legs, like a Priest; and when handled the bird appears smaller still.

The most remarkable characteristic of the Archangel proper, however, is in the plumage, which is something quite different from that of all other varieties; the proper colour is a deep rich copper over head, neck, breast, and body, excepting only the sides of the wings and tail, which should be of a bronzed black. This, however, refers to the colour merely: the *lustre* defies description, and when the bird is seen in the sun, displays almost all the colours of the rainbow, with a bright metallic glitter, more resembling, perhaps, that of "shot silk" than anything else we can call to mind, and putting on a change of hue with every change of position. The black shoulders are nearly as beautiful as the rest, showing all kinds of blue, green, and bronze reflections; and in particular this is the only pigeon that exhibits such lustre on the rump, which in most birds is the dullest part of the plumage, but in the Archangel seems to show the same brightness as the rest. To be seen as we describe very much depends upon the condition of the bird, which of course must be in good health, and with nice tight plumage, to show to advantage. The tail is often stated to be of the same bronzy black as the shoulders; but though we have seen several specimens that deserved to be called perfect in all points but this, we never yet have seen a single bird with such a tail. The best we have seen have been a dark bluish-black colour, a distinct black bar being seen at the end as in Blue or Blue-black pigeons. We have seen hundreds, but never one yet free from this fault, though some of them, when in the show-pen, looked almost black; but even this was too often owing to treatment by the owners, and in all cases close inspection would show the black band. This point, therefore, still remains to be if possible vanquished by fanciers, since it can hardly be doubted that the pure metallic black tail is the standard desired. We often wonder that this much-desired property has not been long since fully engrafted into the breed, especially as there are to be found so many birds of the proper colour, viz., whole-coloured Blacks, and these with a lustre all over the body fully equal to that of their orthodox-coloured brethren. The fact proves how little has really been done by breeders to improve this pigeon, seeing the very birds necessary are within their reach. It cannot be doubted that a few crosses with bright and intense whole-coloured Blacks would speedily impart the property referred to.

Besides the deep and glossy copper colour, there is another well-known colour of the Archangel, which may be best described as a soft yellow, something like a soft-coloured Dun Tumbler. This colour shows very little or no lustre, however; and as this is the most characteristic property of the breed, we consider it a very great error ever to place it over fair birds of the proper description, as we have once or twice seen done at shows. It is, however, of some value for breeding. The tail of this lighter colour is apt to be still more blue than that of the other.

We have had in our possession at different times other so-called varieties of the Archangel: some pure white, others with the head white and also the flights, the rest of the body being as in the Archangel proper. In Germany a variety with the head, neck, and breast coloured, and the rest white, is known, and described by Brent as the "coloured-breasted" pigeon; but all these, in our opinion, are mere crosses, losing much of the true Archangel lustre even in the coloured portions; and as this is the principal beauty of the pigeon, we think such crosses ought not to be encouraged until they at least show better results. It is, we think, very probable that to a cross with the Archangel is due the peculiar lustre of the Fire Pigeon. Crossing with it is well worth the attention of the Toy fanciers. As a rule, the first cross seems to lose nearly all the peculiar lustre which is so attractive, but care and patience would in time probably produce novelties of

value, as in the example just quoted. We have also frequently thought that a cross with a long-faced Almond Tumbler might perhaps produce the spangling of the Almond with the lustre of the Archangel; and if so the combination would be most attractive, and well worth the trouble to those who like to experiment, like the Germans, in creating new varieties.

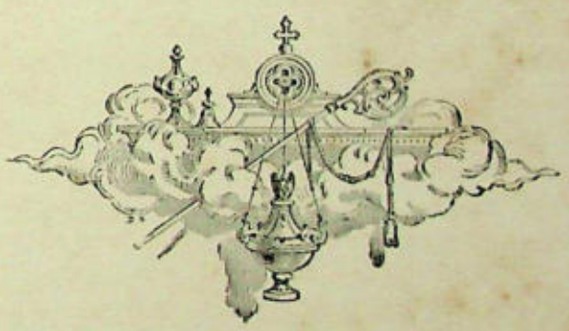
Most of the best Archangels are to be found in the neighbourhood of Birmingnam, which may at present be considered as in some sort the head-quarters of the breed.

The Archangel is hardy, and a very good breeder and feeder, giving hardly any trouble. We can say but little upon matching for breeding, having done but little ourselves, and not knowing any one else who has had very wide experience; but, reasoning from analogy, we should say that when birds of the proper dark shade began to show insufficient lustre, they might probably be improved by mating with the lighter, soft-coloured birds, just as we put a Dun Carrier to improve a Black. Being a vigorous breed, in-breeding may be carried on to a considerable extent without much danger.

JUDGING ARCHANGELS.—There is little difficulty as regards the peak, &c., of this pigeon; and judging therefore, in our opinion, resolves itself almost entirely into a careful consideration of colour and condition.

POINTS IN JUDGING ARCHANGELS.

Shape of Head and Beak	3
Shape of Peak	3
Colour of Eye	3
Colour of Breast	4
Colour of Wings and Body	9
Colour of Tail (most free from Blue)	3
General Shape and Neatness	2
	27



CHAPTER XXIX.

THE RUNT.

THIS pigeon shows very clearly the change in ideas which time alone often causes in the pursuits of the fancier and breeder. For Moore clearly divides the Runt into two sub-varieties, of which one—the Leghorn Runt—is said to be "most valuable," and to be distinguished by the curved or swan-like neck, goose-head, and upward direction of the tail, from the Spanish or common Runt. On these grounds Mr. Ludlow, as already mentioned, traces to the Leghorn Runt the Burmese or Florentine Pigeon; and this shape and whole character of the Leghorn are so characteristic, that we make no apology for copying, so far as an engraving can do so, the coloured plate of a Leghorn Runt, by Mr. Wolstenholme, which forms one of the illustrations to Mr. Eaton's curious work. The outline is by no means an unattractive one, and we confess to a regret that the pigeon should have so completely been lost sight of; which seems the more strange, as Eaton himself, remarking on the price Moore says he was offered for a cock, avers that birds "far from A 1" were sold at five guineas a pair, and even states, "I knew a pair sold for £25." They could probably be recovered from the Mediterranean, as Mr. Brent speaks of them as still well recognised among the "Italian varieties;" and that he was not misled by a mere name is shown by his referring directly to the most marked characteristics, of "necks long and bent" and "tails short, and carried slightly elevated." We have even ourselves had or seen birds, mostly called Roman Runts, which had nearly the same characteristics, and are evidently descended from the same stock; but even these seem disappearing. It is odd that Moore also mentions a "Roman" Runt, but appears to understand by it a coarser and commoner bird than that we have seen called by that name, and which was clearly related to his Leghorn, with the "goose-head," arched neck, and elevated tail. The general effect of these peculiarities will be seen from the illustration; and it is to be desired that a bird with such well-marked characters might be restored to the knowledge of fanciers, especially as all waste stock would be so useful in the larder.

The Spanish Runt of Moore appears to be the common Runt of to-day, and the only generally known representative of the family. At the first Crystal Palace Shows prizes were offered for both Leghorn and Spanish Runts, all fanciers then blindly following old Moore; like some, rather unwisely we think, profess to do now—as if we *must* sacrifice everything to notions of a century and a half ago. The result proved that for all practical purposes the Leghorn Runt was no longer known—at all events no such birds were entered in either class, the ordinary type alone being shown in each; and since then, to all intents and purposes, one pigeon alone has been known as the Runt. It is chiefly in the hope of leading to a renewed inquiry for, and perhaps the fresh importation of a variety that really presents characteristic properties besides that of size, that we reproduce Eaton's illustration.

The common or Spanish Runt is less kept than almost any variety, owing to its want of anything to attract the pigeon-fancier, having as it has practically but one property, viz., size. This is in some specimens truly wonderful, and we have often heard the remark made, "Why,



RUNTS.

SILVER BLUE

those pigeons are as big as fowls!" Single birds under two pounds weight are rarely shown; and two pounds and a half is far from uncommon; but the larger and heavier they are, the more unsightly they become to the eyes of the average fancier, while they have no "properties," as he calls them, to counterbalance this.

Moore and others speak of a "Friesland" Runt, with curled feathers; but these are said to have been inferior in size, and are evidently only a cross with the Frillback pigeon.

The head of the Runt is the ordinary or dove-house pigeon shape, the same as seen in large coarse Pouters, especially when old. The colours are usually now Blue and Silver; and some general symmetry and goodness of colour may be taken a little account of in judging, but size and

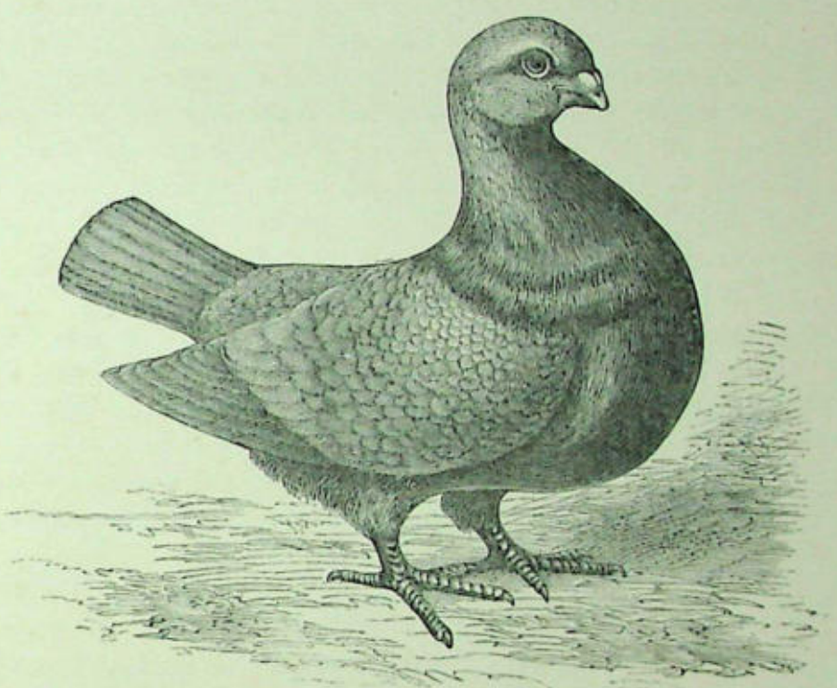


Fig. 69.—Leghorn Runt (from Eaton).

weight are the grand points. Of late there certainly has been a perceptible increase in the number of Runts shown, but we can scarcely expect it will ever be a popular pigeon. The Leghorn Runt, with its well-marked outline and carriage, would, we think, have a better chance.

The bodily strength of the Runt is in proportion to its size, on which account it is better they should be kept by themselves; for in case of conflict they are able to maul about smaller birds terribly, and *often do it, too.* We once had a Roman or Leghorn Runt which possessed not only the properties above described, but was a really well-marked Black-mottle, precisely similar to the mottling in a Tumbler, and as accurately disposed as if painted. This bird weighed two and three-quarter pounds, and from the appearance of its head might have been nearly as old as its owner. It had, however, in the course of its long and no doubt useful life, acquired the art of effectually *choking* all smaller birds it could get hold of at bed-time; and cost us so much in this way that we were obliged to perform the same operation for our own benefit, and thus terminate our acquaintance with the last specimen we ever had, or are perhaps likely to have, of the Roman or Leghorn Runt. It was a remarkable-looking pigeon; and could we renew the strain, we should have little doubt of its popularity.

There can, we think, be very little doubt that the Runt is either the parent, or at least one of the parents, of the Pouter; and this fact gives it a special interest to the fancier. It is still the only bird that can practically be crossed with that breed; a cross we have not only used ourselves, but known several other breeders use also. In every case the progeny, though apt to be too thick and "runtish," and needing care in selection after, are unmistakable Pouters, and the length of feather and even limb gained by the cross is very remarkable. For these purposes the Spanish Runt must be employed, being long in flights and tail; and those who wish to obtain such length can do so in one season by breeding a Runt to a rough-legged Pouter, the latter of course having plenty of crop, and good marking, to counterbalance the want of these properties in the Runt. Some of the specimens thus bred will measure eight inches in limb; and though unfortunately they never *show* much—looking more like four than eight—still such results are sometimes worth securing.

Most of those who keep Runts do so for the table. It certainly does not take many of them to fill a pie; still, even from this point of view, we think they are generally unsatisfactory, since most of them—and the largest most especially—are bad breeders and nurses. If a careful trial were made, and the results noted, we have a strong conviction that one strong pair of common dovehouse pigeons would far outstrip a pair of Runts in the weight of progeny reared during one season; for besides feeding their progeny badly, they are very apt to break their eggs. Some of the smaller specimens breed better, and especially if they can be allowed to fly at large; but even then the produce reared is rarely equal to that of other pigeons; and after all the chief practical utility of the Runt seems to us to be as a cross with the Pouter. In this case the Silver Runt should be used for the white Pouter; and the Blue for other colours, choosing if possible a young Runt with as small a head and as little of the hog-back of the Runt as possible, and carefully breeding back to the Pouter: but it takes so long to get rid of the round back, runtish shoulders, and thick girth, that we cannot and do not recommend the cross if Pouters can be procured, for there are already far too many showing runtish features; but, as now and then it may appear to some necessary, these few words may not be thrown away.

In showing Runts, as already mentioned, the chief point is size. It is necessary, therefore, that the young should be well looked after, and hand-fed, still allowing the parents or nurses to sit upon them and give them what they will. A very good plan, again, is to give only one young one to a pair of good feeders; indeed, it is almost impossible to get fine young ones for show in any other way, for their consumption of food is enormous, and, whether in the nest-pan or later, we would rather keep—so far as food goes—two pairs of any other variety than one of Runts.

POINTS IN JUDGING RUNTS.

Weight	4
Apparent size	2
Colour	2
	8

CHAPTER XXX.

PIGEONS AS FOOD.

MUCH has been said of the damage done by pigeons to the crops of the farmer; and in considering them simply as food, in a few final pages, this aspect of the subject ought not to be ignored. For it would not be right to conceal our belief, derived both from observation and such information as we have been able to obtain, that the question of whether pigeons "pay" when kept merely to supply the larder depends chiefly upon the neighbourhood where they are kept. In other and plain words, they do undoubtedly forage in the fields, and it is only where they can thus obtain a good proportion of food from the land adjoining, only costing the actual proprietor a few handfuls of grain morning and evening, that they can be said to pay so far as concerns providing a family meal. In such circumstances they are profitable stock, even as regards providing so many pounds of meat. Even when all the food has to be provided, there is perhaps little or no loss, provided the pigeons killed be valued at the ordinary prices per couple; but this to all intents and purposes is an artificial value for mere "food," and it can hardly be doubted that the parents must live very largely upon the neighbourhood—not to say "the neighbours"—for the produce to be directly remunerative.

But nevertheless, and though it be granted that the majority of dove-cote pigeons must and do find a great part of their food in the farmer's fields, it by no means follows that they do him a tenth of the injury popularly supposed, or even any injury at all. The late Mr. Brent devoted particular attention to this question, and his remarks upon it deserve consideration:—

"Very curious statements," he says, "have sometimes appeared in print, trying to prove the immense quantity of wheat and other cereals destroyed by pigeons; but nothing is ever said of the benefit they do on the land, which, I really believe, far exceeds the injury done. I may be deemed infatuated, but I hope not so much as not to hear reason and compare facts; and I trust that my readers will for a while put aside the deep-rooted prejudice that condemns the poor pigeon, and consider patiently a few facts. I ask, then, has the pigeon the bill of a rook, that it may dig in the earth? or the foot of a fowl, that it can scratch over the surface? Does it not then follow that the pigeon, which can neither dig nor scratch, can only lift such grains as are lying on the surface, or imperfectly covered, and would inevitably fall a prey to some other bird? The pigeon, by the aid of its swift wings, can, at seed-time, soon fill its crop. When a bird thus laden is shot, and the grains counted, it is a very common practice to multiply the number by 365, to find out how much it could eat in a year; then, reckoning the supposed number of pigeons in the United Kingdom, an awful amount of depredation is placed to the account of the despised birds. But let us inquire if this formidable theory is consistent with practice. Let us suppose that during the sowing time of corn pigeons feed entirely on grain, it will at once appear that, as they are not armed with hoe or rake, they can only take the waste, and consequently do no harm. Again, the enormous cropful that this or that bird was killed with does not prove that such is its daily

ration. On the contrary, a pigeon could not eat that quantity daily for any length of time and retain its health and activity. Where, too, could they procure corn in summer and winter, while all the crops are either growing or housed? What is it then that they feed on? Open their crops, and see. I think I shall not be far wrong when I say that for at least three-fourths of the year they can procure no corn from the fields; their food then consists of seeds—the seeds of various weeds, in devouring which they render great service to the farmer, by helping him to keep his ground clean, in destroying innumerable seeds of weeds that are scattered on the surface of stubbles or other lands during winter and summer. At harvest-time they are also accused of devouring the corn, but I never heard of their attacking the standing crops, except in the case of peas; and here, if we consider for a while, we shall find that the injury done to the crop is in reality nothing. A pigeon cannot split open the pods, but only pick up the fallen peas; and where is there a pea-field that the ground is not more or less strewn with those that have ripened and fallen from the pods before the main crop was ready to carry? and what becomes of them? Hogs are sometimes turned into the pea grathen; but are not bushels and bushels ploughed in every year to feed the mice and rats, and serve them for a winter store? Why then, I ask, refuse the poor pigeon a small picking? I verily believe that much of this bigotry respecting pigeons arises from ignorance, or is made the plea for having a pie at one's neighbour's expense. An anecdote is related, on good authority, of the peasants in one of the departments of France having complained of the great loss they fancied they sustained owing to the number of dove-cotes in their vicinity. The consequence was the suppression of the obnoxious birds. The result did not, however, meet their expectations; they found their crops no better, but the weeds increased so fast that they were glad, after the trial of a season or two, to have the dove-cotes re-peopled. Nor must their manure be forgotten, which is of considerable value as a fertiliser. In Persia and many parts of the East they build large towers or houses for the pigeons, on purpose to obtain the manure only, as the Mohammedans do not eat pigeons, but regard them as sacred, and object to Christians keeping them."

The foregoing arguments are of great weight, and will, we think, convince most persons that the dove-cote pigeon probably does little if any harm, especially when the number of small snails they devour is taken into consideration. As Mr. Brent so cogently urges, when they can neither dig nor scratch, and *can* only feed on the crops for a month or two, is it not plain that all the year through the bulk of their food must come from the seeds of weeds and other sources which not only do the farmer no wrong, but are to him a distinct benefit?

Undoubtedly the very best pigeon to keep for mere food-supply is the bird so well known as the common "dove-house" breed, also occasionally known, though incorrectly, as the Blue Rock. It surpasses all the fancy breeds in comparative plumpness of body compared to its size, that size also being rather large; and is, besides, exceedingly hardy. The colour varies considerably, owing doubtless to occasional crosses from waste offshoots of fancy strains, but the vast majority of birds are either blue with black bars and white rumps, or blue-chequers, the chequer perhaps predominating. Red-chequers are also far from uncommon; but if a cote be stocked with Blues and Blue-chequers only, the appearance of any other colour is very rare, unless some stranger brings it in the shape of a cross. The legs, flights, and tail are comparatively rather short, giving the bird a very plump and "potable" appearance, and making it weigh heavily for its apparent size.

So thoroughly free from disease is this natural race of pigeons, and so regular and free a breeder, that little is needed beyond providing a proper domicile, and the regular thinning of the stud to the proper limits. In former years, when the supply of butcher's-meat was neither so

regular, nor the meat itself of such good quality as now, large stone dove-cotes were regular adjuncts to many country mansions. These were most commonly built in the shape of low circular stone towers, the walls being made of considerable thickness, to allow of the nesting-places, which were built as recesses in the masonry, opening to the inside. Some of these old-fashioned cotes are still to be found in rural districts, the only entrance being at a considerable height from the ground, to keep out undesirable intruders, and entered by a ladder when it was desired to collect the produce. It was the custom only to clean out the manure once a year, and it seems as if the droppings, when thus allowed to collect in a solid form, by their strong ammoniacal odour, really repelled vermin, instead of fostering them, as in what is usually called a dirty loft. We have noticed the same thing in some fowl-houses, where the droppings had been allowed to accumulate until a foot deep, and not an insect was to be seen; whereas, a more ordinary neglect would have bred vermin in swarms. The best time to clean the cote is in the autumn, when the birds have ceased to breed.

With such a cote the management is very simple. It is desirable to fling a few handfuls of grain to the birds morning and evening, even where there is ample forage, for the sake of attaching them to their home; and such a procedure will often, in addition, attract home a stray cock, who will bring a cross to the strain. No scruple need be felt in retaining all such strays, since wherever there are neighbouring pigeons there will be some little of such transfers, and one will balance the other; but should a "marked" bird turn up, showing it to be a "Homer," or otherwise valued, effort will of course be made to discover the owner. Care must also be taken that the pairs of birds are somewhat less than half the number of nesting-places, since each pair requires two, and any quarrelling will diminish the produce most seriously; in a large cote a hundred pairs of birds will be ample for three hundred holes. On no account must odd cocks be allowed, as such would do immense mischief; but a few odd hens are useful, in case of deaths, and meantime will in most cases either pair up quietly, or bring home a cock from some other cote. Supposing all this seen to at commencement of the breeding season, all that is needed will be to take and kill the produce regularly, so as to keep it down. To assist in doing this easily, large cotes used to be furnished with a revolving ladder-frame, attached to an axle turning in the centre of the tower on iron pivots set in stone; the ladder forming the outer side of the frame, and being close to the circular wall, could be turned to any part of the circumference by the hands working in the nest-holes, the attendant thus going round the whole, and filling his bag, without dismounting.

In thus catching for the larder, any unusually large and fine bird should be left, thus reserving the very strongest of the stock; and then at the close of the breeding season, when the whole is gone over, the oldest or most infirm, or any which show signs of illness or weakness, should be killed to make room for them. Pigeons are good eating up to six months old, after which they usually become more or less tough; some may, therefore, be kept on through the winter to supply the larder, but in that case should be marked, or it will be difficult to distinguish them from the old birds; and it is not well to keep the earliest-bred ones, or, later in the season, they are apt to mate, and make trouble. Almost the whole care of the cote, in fact, consists in attention to such trifling matters of detail as this, in order to keep the breeding stock at work through the season quietly and undisturbed. In that case, each pair will produce from seven to ten pairs of young in a year, whereas, if odd cocks or precocious young ones be allowed to make mischief, the produce may probably be diminished one-half. In no case, however, should a greater number of birds be kept than is found necessary, and year by year the stock should be carefully selected, and brought back to the determined quantity.

The general procedure will be precisely the same in regard to a less number of birds, but much ingenuity may be spent upon houses, cotes, or lockers, for them. We have already given (see page 27) what we think a far better plan than usual for a locker fixed to a wall, for giving the young ones adequate shelter; and this can be extended to any amount desired, and will be a good plan where a south wall offers. Where a greater number are kept than can well be accommodated in this way, a good plan is to build a place something like the dormer shown in page 25, with nesting-places round all four walls inside; but an "area" can very well be dispensed with, by covering all with a pitched roof, raised above the walls all round for the birds to enter—in this way they will get plenty of air but very little draught. Provided only there be this fair amount of shelter, and a sufficient number of double breeding-boxes, profit will depend far more on method in managing the stock, as above described, than on any particular plan for the pigeon-house.

A large number of the pigeons sold dead in the London markets are, however, provided in a very different way from that described, giving rise to a very singular business, of which comparatively little is known by the general public, and which we can best describe as the *pigeon-fattening* trade. It is in the hands of a comparatively few large dealers, who import the young birds by thousands from France and Belgium, when just ready to leave the nest. On arrival they are very poor, but are at once taken charge of by professional feeders, who are mostly foreigners, very few English having either the knack or the patience necessary to proficiency. Some use millet, others millet and tares; in either case it is put in water, and the operator, taking a mouthful, picks up a bird, opens its beak, and injects or "blows" its crop full in an instant! The rapidity of this operation is perfectly extraordinary, the young birds being thus crammed nearly as fast as an ordinary person could take them up and set them down again. They are thus fed, by some twice, by others three times a day, and become fat for market in a very few days. Besides this regular wholesale trade, there are journeymen "feeders," who cram for the ordinary Leadenhall dealers; these generally use tares alone, and operate somewhat differently to the foreigners, most whom we have seen giving the birds "three rounds" at each feed, of only a portion each. The regular payment for this feeding is one penny per dozen birds, which will show in another way the rapidity of the process; but it is still in this respect behind the foreign method, by which the whole meal is given to the astonished bird in almost the twinkling of an eye. Birds crammed in this way are very fat and tender, and we have sometimes thought proficiency in such an art might be of great use on some occasions, even to the fancier.

CHAPTER XXXI.

DISEASES OF PIGEONS.

THERE is considerable difficulty in "doctoring" pigeons, from the fact that many medicines which are usually relied upon in specific cases, appear with these birds very irregular in their action. So much is this the case, that we have heard a very experienced fancier say—taking one of the most simple cases of all—that he "knew of no certain purge for a pigeon," and that if he did it would save him many lives. We have never seen any attempt to account for this, and frequently heard it alluded to as a profound mystery; but, after some considerable experience in giving advice to *novices* (who give much better and fairer proofs of the results of treatment than "experienced fanciers," these latter having generally previously tried some nostrum or other which complicates the case a great deal), we think a little reflection upon known facts will readily explain the divergent results by one of two reasons. The first is, that the average fancier, even of great experience, knows little of some of the most valuable drugs or of their action, and trusts too much to remedies of the same stamp as filled the old herbals of a century ago; the second, that pigeons are kept under such widely different circumstances. In this latter point especially they differ from any other creature usually kept as a pet, and we might therefore expect that the operation of medicine would often appear capricious accordingly. Dogs, for instance, generally have more or less liberty, and are fed on food not greatly differing. Fowls are naturally *walking* birds, and, however the accommodation differs, are never debarred this, their natural exercise. Cage-birds, though kept in unnatural conditions, are still kept under very much *the same* conditions. But while pigeons are also, naturally, flying birds, and flight is their natural exercise, there is an immense difference in the degree to which they are allowed to enjoy it, and in their food also; whilst in some varieties points are so developed or modified as of itself almost to amount to disease, since the bird if set at liberty could not obtain a living. Taking only diet, and the very simple case mentioned by our friend, let us suppose pigeons fed on sound old beans. An ordinary purge would under most circumstances act in such a case pretty freely; but if we remember that a mere sudden change to softer *food*—such as wheat, maize, or dari—of itself in most cases purges a bird freely, we might expect that one which had become accustomed to such laxative diet would be far less affected than the other by laxative medicine.

Still, explaining the difficulty does not remove it. It may assist a fancier in deciding between two modes of treatment, or upon the amount for a dose, but he will often remain in the dark; and when the extremely artificial character of some varieties is considered, with the extremely delicate and debilitated constitution which such artificialty, in-breeding, and confinement has produced, it will seen that the task of prescribing for a sick pigeon is not encouraging. Still, we do know that hundreds of pigeons have been saved by judicious treatment, and we shall do our best to give such hints as may be of service. As in some cases different views are expressed, it may be well to state that while such prescriptions or hints as are from the editor of this work are so specified, those not thus defined are by the author.

Let us, however, take this last opportunity of repeating that much can be done to *prevent* disease. It is not correct to say, as some have said, that clean water, &c., will prevent canker, and so on; but much, very much, does depend on such a simple attention, on other details of cleanliness, on due space for exercise, on ventilation, and above all, on not *over-crowding*. This last fault is the bane of three fanciers out of four. People keep perhaps a score of birds, and attempt to rear the offspring, with the result of bringing to maturity one to each pair, none of which are really healthy and strong, when, if they had kept but two pairs of fine birds, they might have reared as many, would have had them in close and racy-looking show order, not had one-tenth the trouble or one-half the expense for food, and lastly, from breeding only the very pick—the *best four* out of the twenty—would have had a far higher quality. Let it be remembered that no interest of our own would prompt any such advice as this; and let the reader profit by it.

It only remains to say that where one dose only is named in any of the following paragraphs, it is supposed to be the average dose for an average pigeon of full age. Exceptionally large and strong birds may have rather more, while small varieties will need little more than half, and young birds according to age. We may also add that where capsules are recommended, if the bird be very low and weak it is best to give the oil or other medicine by a small glass tube with a bulb in the middle, such as is made for chemical experiments, and called a *pipette*. The bulb is filled by suction, when the finger placed on the larger end of the tube will restrain all flow till the other end be placed in the throat, after which, by removing the finger, as many drops can be given as are necessary. Many capsules are made too thick, in which case a weak bird cannot dissolve the gelatine, and an obstruction is formed which may be fatal.

BROKEN LEGS.—See "Fractures."

CANKER.—The treatment of this disease has been already described at pages 88, 89, as regards Carriers, and page 180 for the form in which it usually affects Tumblers. [Another treatment, which may be confidently recommended for canker in most pigeons, is the clearing away of the secretion on the diseased surface, and anointing, by means of a camel-hair pencil, with carbolic acid one part to glycerine eight parts. This may be applied to either ear, throat, or mouth; and many to whom we have recommended it, especially Barb and Carrier breeders, assure us it has been the most successful of any treatment they have tried. It does not, however, suit some small birds when applied internally, and we have known it throw Foreign Owls into convulsions. For internal application—as to the throat—the strength of the acid should, therefore, be reduced one-half in treating small varieties.—ED.]

COLD.—[If a cold is observed in the earlier stages, which may be known by a slight moisture at the eyes or nostrils, and the bird huddling up, with failing appetite, a cure may often be effected by giving one drop of tincture of aconite (we mean of the British Pharmacopœia, not any homœopathic dilution) in a tea-spoonful of water (half the quantity for a small bird), and putting in a warm pen for a few days. It assists to bathe the feet in warm water for a few minutes, well drying afterwards. If the head swells it must be bathed, according to the treatment under roup, which see.—ED.]

CONSTIPATION.—Though purgatives do not act uniformly upon pigeons, they usually do act; and castor-oil, Epsom salts, or jalap, may be given in case of need with reasonable prospect of

success. We strongly advise jalap where that medicine proves efficacious, as it is usually followed by a good and even keen appetite; whereas salts, and still more castor-oil, appear to leave a bird more or less sick and unwell.

Consumption.—See Going Light.

Crop-bound.—Only Pouters seem subject to this. For treatment see page 127.

Diarrhœa.—In most cases of scouring we find it best to administer a purge, such as castor-oil or jalap, the effect of which is usually a momentary increase of the evil, but followed almost immediately by a cure. This plan will succeed in most cases where the diarrhœa is not accompanied by other illness, such as cold or roup, in which event the treatment must be directed generally as in those disorders. [The diarrhœa may, however, be so severe as to pass into *dysentery*, which is known by the evacuations being streaked with blood. In that case one to three drops of laudanum may be administered in a tea-spoonful of gruel. If that failed, as a last resort a grain of tannic acid may be administered, combined with the laudanum; but this medicine has such powerful astringent properties that it should only be tried when all other means have failed. A few drops of chlorodyne have also been known to have good effects.—Ed.]

Egg-bound.—The treatment for this affection has been given at page 38. [When all other means have failed, we have sometimes known the egg laid successfully after the administration of a tea-spoonful of treacle given warm, with a little groundsel minced very fine. Or the groundsel may be given in the treacle.—Ed.]

Eyes Weak or Diseased.—Highly-bred short-faced Tumblers, as already stated, are peculiarly subject to diseases of the eyes, the treatment for which, so far as we can advise any, has been given at page 182.

Fallen Gizzard.—The name by which this disease, so well known to breeders of Carriers and Barbs, has always been recognised, is founded on some old and ignorant error, the gizzard having nothing to do with it. It is, in reality, a displacement of the bowels, or prolapsus. It seems to chiefly attack the hens, though the cocks are also subject to it; and the first symptom is usually a little soft swelling at or round the vent, but which rapidly becomes harder and larger, and ultimately causes death. In bad cases we have known the bird die in the hand as if gasping for breath. We know of no cure for it. It is strange that young birds thus afflicted will sometimes breed, but unfortunately the progeny usually show a decided tendency to the same affection. It is more common for a hen so affected to breed than for a cock bird to do so.

[We have sometimes thought that in the early stages of this complaint an astringent injection might be of service, followed by a stream of cold water upon the vent for a few minutes. Should any readers wish to experiment in this way, very weak solutions of tannic acid, or sulphate of zinc, may be suggested.—Ed.]

Fractures.—Fractures of the leg or wing are not unfrequent. In the case of a wing, all that can be done is to sling it up in the best manner possible, which will be generally in the mode shown at page 383, when a cure may usually be looked for, though at the expense in most cases of a stiff or deformed wing. Broken legs, however, having the joints more accessible, can be treated

more successfully, and even a deformed or crooked limb made straight. Should the case be a fracture, the two ends of the bone should be properly adjusted, after which a strip of calico is to be wrapped round the place, and over this a thin strip of gutta-percha which has been dipped into boiling water until perfectly soft. Two should perform the operation, one holding the bird, and seeing that the position of the limb is not disturbed, while the other applies the calico and gutta-percha, gently pressing the latter while soft till it exactly fits the limb, and joins into one piece. In case of a curvature or deformity to be straightened, the shank will be held in the required position till the gutta-percha hardens, which is quickest done if cold water be poured over it. In about a fortnight the fracture will be united, or the limb will be straightened, as the case may be; when the splint may be taken off by applying to it a hot wire, taking great care not to burn the leg. In case of a fracture, particular care is necessary not to cause a fresh one while removing the splint. If gutta-percha be not at hand, a pretty good splint for a fracture may be made with paper, which after putting on the limb is well soaked with white of egg. As soon as this hardens the splint will be sufficiently stiff, but an appliance of this kind is of no use for a deformity.

GOING LIGHT.—This is the usual name amongst pigeon fanciers for what seems to us to be really either *consumption* or the result of enlarged liver or internal tumour. Its general treatment (so far as we can give any) has been given at page 183 of the chapter on Tumblers, and consists briefly of a change of food from peas and tares, which require a good digestion, to wheat, rice, barley without the husk, or dari, with a little hempseed; also plucking the tail, and giving pills made of oatmeal and sulphur with cod-liver oil, with boiled milk to drink instead of water. We cannot say a large proportion of birds recover. It is sometimes beneficial to give a jalap pill first of all.

[It is probable that many cases might be prevented by giving the young birds a small capsule of cod-liver oil twice a week for a month before the usual time of attack, with two or three drops daily (given by dropping on a pill of bread or meal) of syrup of hypophosphite of iron. We have known a marked increase of success in raising young ones in several cases after following this prescription, and the hypophosphites are known to be of great benefit for similar complaints in human beings. Parrish's Chemical Food might be given instead, but we should prefer the simple syrup of iron in most cases.—ED.]

GORGING.—An affection of Pouters; see page 127. Some pigeons besides Pouters have a tendency to dilate the crop with air to an extent that materially injures their health. In some cases this can be cured by giving a small quantity of powdered charcoal; in others it is necessary, besides this, to make two small apertures close to each other, which is easily done by taking up a small portion of the crop and passing a large needle right through.

GOUT.—This has been described in the treatment given at page 91. [We may add to Mr. Fulton's treatment that, even in the hard and comparatively hopeless stage, we have recommended with success, after turpentine had failed, painting the affected places with tincture of iodine, and the internal administration of very small doses of iodide of potassium.—ED.]

INSECTS.—We believe all pigeons have insects among the plumage, more or less; but these do not increase so as to annoy them unless kept dirty, or too long without a bath. The use of coarse pine sawdust, as recommended in the early part of this work, will keep fleas and other objectionable pests away; but, as just said, the small insect known as the feather-louse is never

altogether absent. Mr. Brent even supposes that the proper food of this insect being the down near the root of the feather, it is of real use to the bird in preventing the plumage from becoming too close and warm. As soon, however, as a bird becomes weak and ill, both this insect and the larger one known as the pigeon-louse generally increase to an amazing extent, particularly round the head and neck, and most of all at the root of the beak, which the bird cannot of course reach to preen itself. Birds with wry-beaks are also, as before mentioned, unable to dress themselves, and so get infested. Pigeons thus pestered, from whatever cause, look truly miserable, owing as we believe to actual *exhaustion* from their constant efforts with the beak to rid themselves of their tormentors. Leaving the droppings to collect is also a fruitful cause of vermin. There is still another insect, a small round one, which most fanciers call the "pigeon-bug." This is a kind of tick, and also comes from allowing the excrement to collect, especially in the nest-boxes. It torments the old birds so that they will often leave their eggs or young, while the latter are even killed by it, as it really bites, and sucks the blood.

The first, or feather-louse, gives the bird little or no trouble, unless allowed to increase to an extent quite impossible under ordinary care. For the next, or pigeon-louse, the best plan is to pluck all the feathers from round the root of the beak, at the gullet, round the vent, a few between the shoulders, and any other place where the eggs can be found; then anoint the bare places with citron ointment, or benzine, and rub it in also at the bare places under the wings. The ointment should be applied three times in the course of a week, which will kill all except in wry-beaked birds; these latter should be treated for double the time, and afterwards looked after occasionally. Keep the bird under treatment in a pen thickly covered with pine sawdust.

The tick or bug is such a torment that we strongly urge every precaution against it, by oil-painting the nests and pans, and renewing the sawdust once a week, or oftener if the least sign of vermin be perceived. The young ones may be relieved by anointing all over the heads and necks with grease or turpentine; but if numerous, there is nothing for it but to pick them off, which is not so impracticable as it would seem.

Some lofts are infested by very small mites, black or red in colour, and smaller than the head of a pin. It is very difficult to dislodge them if they once get a footing, as they creep away into cracks and crevices. The best treatment of the nests in such a case would be a thorough syringing with diluted carbolic acid, or painting with paraffin. The sawdust is, however, a preventive, and this is better than any cure. We mention it again, because some fanciers have a strange prejudice against it, and will not use anything but wooden pans or boxes, in which they put cut straw or hay. Such will be liable to many annoyances from which those who adopt our more cleanly method will be exempt, and we cannot promise any radical cure. Where sawdust cannot be had, it is likely that an occasional sprinkling with turpentine or paraffin might have somewhat similar effect; but painted boxes and earthenware nest-pans, at least, are within the reach of all. We know straw and hay really bring insects where there were none before, and the only objection that can be really urged against sawdust is that weakly birds—such as short-faces—which cannot hold their heads up, sometimes get irritated in the eyes. We believe any such must be so weak they would not ultimately be reared; but to those who object to sawdust on this account, we may recommend a plan described by Mr. Eaton, who advises the sawdust to be shaped into a concave by pressing the bottom of another pan into it, and then covered with a circular piece of rush-matting steeped in tobacco-water. Few insects will appear in such a nest, and the matting may be cleaned and re-soaked after each use; but to make assurance doubly sure, Eaton tells us he was in the habit of putting a very little wormwood instead of anything else inside the matting (*i.e.*, the side next the birds).

LAMENESS.—From time to time a pigeon will mysteriously lose the use of its legs without any apparent cause. In some cases we have reason to believe that the original cause is a bird's suddenly striking against something in its flight, for we have noticed that after several such occasions, though no evil has seemed to follow at the time, a sudden lameness has at some *subsequent* time attacked the bird. These sudden cases we have also known recover with almost equal suddenness; but where a bird, as is most commonly the case, gets *gradually* lame, we cannot say we have ever known a cure. [We have had no actual experience of this disease, or of a remedy; but from a somewhat analogous experience with poultry, are disposed to think it is generally a nervous affection, and that perfect quiet and seclusion, with the administration of a quarter of a grain of opium daily, might in some cases effect a cure. Where the disease evidently arises from inflammation of the knee-joint, or gout, painting with tincture of iodine every day will often be efficacious.—ED.]

LEG-WEAKNESS.—This chiefly affects Pouters, and its treatment by bandages soaked in whisky has been given at page 130. [We should advise, in cases when *unusual* length of limb or previous experience with the progeny of the same parents led us to rather expect weakness, an attempt at prevention by the administration daily of two or three pills made of oatmeal and bone-dust, and four or five drops of syrup of hypophosphite of iron, or the compound preparation of phosphites known as "Parrish's Chemical Food." We have only known it tried in one case; but in that case it succeeded, though previous hatches had failed.—ED.]

MEGRIMS.—See Vertigo.

ROUP.—This disease is caused in nearly every case by draught or damp. It is strange, but we have repeatedly noticed it, that pigeons will often place themselves for the night just in that place, of all others, where the draught is most severe, such as inside the hole by which they enter the loft. We have long ago arrived at the conclusion that a bird which has been thus exposed may suffer serious injury, even though it show no untoward symptoms for weeks or months, after which the evil may break out in either of many different forms. Most usually, however, the first sign of a bad cold is a running at the eyes or nostrils, which, if neglected, becomes thicker, is followed by the head perceptibly swelling—in fact, by true roup. We have seen cases so bad that the whole side of the head seemed gathered or cankered, and the bird lost its sight. When the head is much swelled the cause will usually be found in the stoppage of the nostrils by viscid matter, which, being unable to find an exit, collects inside, and may even fill the throat, so as to strangle the bird, unless removed. When roup is neglected, even though the immediate danger passes off, it is very apt to cause canker in the mouth or ear, for which see the treatment under that head. It is, indeed, cases of canker which have followed a bad attack of roup which are usually most obstinate and severe, the whole system appearing to have become poisoned with the roup secretion, the specific and virulent character of which becomes additionally probable when we consider its fatally contagious character amongst fowls, for we have long been convinced that the disease is very nearly if not quite identical. [We have demonstrated that it can be communicated from one to the other.—ED.] In such cases of canker following upon a severe attack of roup, we have known the canker extend all *down the breast* of a bird, and appear to penetrate and grow into the very flesh; and we are by no means sure, since it is difficult to account for many cases of wing-disease, that even that may not follow a severe cold in many instances.* All we certainly know, however, is, that whenever a bird does not seem

* It would seem to us more probable that the cold or roup was simply the exciting cause of the development of wing-disease in an originally scrofulous constitution, just as a tendency to consumption may be inherited and lie dormant many years, till developed by a cold, mental shock, or other exciting cause.—ED.

to shake off *entirely* the effects of roup or a bad cold (and roup, to all intents and purposes, may be regarded as a bad cold but with the addition of some specific poison which is highly contagious), it is very apt to suffer later on from canker, wing-disease, tuberculated lungs or liver, or diseased formations of some kind in one locality or other, tending to show that there is a *specific poison* which is absorbed by the system. Diseased liver or lungs is not at all an unfrequent sequel to neglected cold or roup, and can generally be detected by the bird preferring to squat on the ground at night instead of roosting on its perch, and panting or gasping when taken in the hand.

Roup is not easy to cure, but there is hope when taken in time. The bird should be at once removed to a moderately warm pen, free from draught, but within hearing of its companions, to keep it from pining away, but first let the head be bathed for five minutes with water as hot as the back of the hand can bear. In doing this, the bird should be wrapped round with a cloth or slipped into the top half of a stocking, that it may not struggle, as its head should be carefully kept downwards, in order to prevent any of the poisonous secretion being swallowed. After bathing, the head should be gently dried, first, however, squeezing out *from* the inside any of the viscid matter that may have collected in the nostrils or passages, which, after the warm bathing, is easily done. Then dip the head in warm oil, or, in case of Barbs or Owls which have contracted gullets, do the whole bathing with the oil, as warm as the back of the hand can comfortably bear. Then give the bird two pieces of salt the size of a bean, and let it remain in the pen till the third day, when, if no improvement, the treatment should be repeated, but if better only the oil need be used, continuing the salt. After six days, if the symptoms did not abate, we would administer two capsules of castor-oil every second day for a week; and if after that the roup still remained we would give a jalap pill of the ordinary size; if the last did not succeed we should have very little hope of a cure. During treatment the bird should be fed upon a mixture of old tares, wheat, rice, and good hemp-seed; and if so bad that it will not feed itself, hand-fed with peas soaked in milk for several hours, giving boiled milk instead of water to drink. It may be well to repeat that the doses mentioned being for ordinary-sized pigeons, Tumblers and Foreign Owls should only have half the quantity.

The foregoing is the treatment we have found most successful with the highly-bred varieties, the warm oil in particular appearing to be of marked benefit, though it of course spoils the bird for exhibition unless very carefully washed off. Common or coarse birds of any kind are cured with comparative ease. We have often, in fact, cured such birds by simply penning up away from draught, and giving a dose of Epsom salts twice a week (dry, giving say a couple of pinches between finger and thumb); but the other treatment, tending as it does gently to allay the inflammation and assist the bird to *throw off* the discharge, has been far the most successful both at the time, and in appearing to prevent after-effects, such as we have described; which on the other hand seem more apt to follow the suppression of the discharge by astringents, such as sulphate of iron, which some have recommended. Our experience leads us to the conclusion that if true roup be formed, the poison *must be thrown off* in some way, if after or secondary symptoms are to be averted; and this we find is best ensured by the warm and soothing bathing of the head combined with purgatives, the salt probably acting merely as an antiseptic. For the same reason, when subsequent canker breaks out on the body, it is little use to suppress the discharge, as it will generally break out again; but by simply applying fuller's earth and leaving it to take its course, there is often a gradual drying up of the secretion, and healing of the wound. The only exception we would make is when the apparently first stage of canker on the body was observed in the shape of a small pimple, as this might arise from some accidental prick or scratch, and still, if neglected, grow into canker. In such a case, therefore, we would apply citron ointment, which, if there be no poison in the blood, will usually cure.

Young birds in the nest-pan will sometimes be badly affected with roup or incipient canker—there is a stage at which it is really hard to know what to call it—the beak and throat being so badly swelled they cannot feed. Probably in most of such cases the old birds have affected the young ones, and when this is the fact the death of the young will not unfrequently cause the recovery of the old birds. We have, however, known the young first affected—usually highly-bred birds which have caught cold—and impart it to the feeders, which, being coarse and hardy, would never have been infected in any other way. In some cases it may be that the exciting cause is the old birds giving the young food that had not become soft enough to suit the digestive organs of the young; and whenever we had cause to suspect this we would give both parents and young a dose of Epsom salts, or a jalap pill; the young, of course, having only half or a quarter, according to size. Medicine given to young pigeons does not, of course, affect the feeders; but given to the feeders will more or less affect both. Hence some give it to the feeders only, but unless they also require it this is unwise, as it makes the old birds sick, and injures their feeding power. It is better therefore to give the salts direct, the dose for a three-week's bird of ordinary size being about as much as will lie on a threepenny-piece. We have in some cases where the young were unable to digest, the crops being evidently full of a watery fluid, opened the beak and held the head down so as to empty the sour fluid, or nearly so; after which the bird has got over its trouble, and all the other symptoms disappeared; in particular, this will often cure a Pouter so affected; but such treatment is only applicable to the larger varieties, and the cases themselves can scarcely be called true roup, though the discharge at the beak and nostrils makes it appear much the same.

Sometimes a bird affected with roup will eat nothing at all of its own accord, but will drink to excess. In such a case it is best to feed it on pills made with oatmeal and cod-liver oil, and give it only an allowance of boiled milk to drink till it is better, and begins again to feed itself. In all such cases, and any others where it is necessary to tempt the appetite, nothing will surpass a mixture of the various kinds of smaller seeds, which will often be picked up when nothing else would be touched.

Young pigeons when they begin to forage for themselves are very subject to what seems a mild sort of roup, in various forms, but all marked by evidently commencing with "taking cold." It is not uncommon for one symptom to be a loss of power in the limbs. It will tend much to recovery in such a case if the floor of the pen in which the bird is kept be covered an inch deep with sawdust or cut clover, which will rest the breast and limbs much better than a hard floor; and it is nearly always advisable in such a case to pluck all the tail-feathers, which has a wonderful effect in obscure diseases of several kinds in young birds. Plucking the tail is, unfortunately, injurious to the show value of Fantails, and of Almond cocks if of a good colour; but with pale birds or hens it rather improves them, tending to a darker tail.

[In some cases capsules of copaiba appear to exert a marvellous influence on the discharge from the nostrils or eyes in roup; but as it is bad practice to check the secretion suddenly, often driving the *poison* into the system, we would advise their use only in chronic cases, and then to be always followed by purgatives. In some instances, however, energetic treatment has mastered very severe cases, though complicated with severe secondary symptoms. As an instance we give the following, being about as hopeless a case as could well be. In the fall of 1874 we received a letter, of which the following are extracts:—

"Some two or three months ago a distemper seized my stock of pigeons, and carried off a few of the best of them. I thought it was roup, and treated it as such, according to prescribed rules. For a time I got it under, but on returning from a few weeks' residence in a distant part of the country, I found upwards of twenty birds dead—mostly young birds, and some of them very

valuable. Since my return I have striven hard to get the disease extirpated, but it has baffled all attempts. Various fanciers here and elsewhere have been consulted, and the disease is unanimously pronounced to be canker of a malignant kind.

"As to the symptoms and progress of the disease, it shows itself, in the first place, by the pigeon huddling itself up in the most pitiable manner, and looking very miserable; then by a violent sneezing, which gradually assumes the form of a hard dry cough, followed by a frothy discharge from the nostrils and mouth. This frothy substance assumes a yellowish tint, and gets consolidated in the throat, preventing the bird from swallowing. The bird consequently 'goes light,' and in time dies. Usually the disease lasts from a week to ten days, but when taken in time, and backed up by a hardy constitution, it will last longer, and sometimes the bird will recover. In addition to rinsing the throat twice a day, I have been in the habit of stuffing the bird with sound beans, peas, maize, and tares; but in many cases they have died with their crops full.

"The disease, I firmly believe, came to me from London, along with some birds I got from a fancier there. These birds were the first to take it, and are all now dead. I wrote him some time ago of the state of matters and my impression as to its origin, but he denied the paternity. He now writes me he has got the disease among his stock, and lost heavily by it."

Here was very evidently true roup of the most virulent and contagious kind, and with a marked tendency to run into canker. We could hold out little hope of remedy, but, after careful consideration, advised the following treatment, through the columns of the *Live Stock Journal and Fancier's Gazette*, requesting that the result might be reported. We may add that all the various branches of treatment were to be carried on simultaneously.

1. To change the food—*i.e.*, if fed on peas, change to beans, or *vice versâ*. 2. To remove all possible secretion rub daily with a swab, and dress with a mixture of one part pure carbolic acid and eight parts glycerine. 3. To pluck the feathers from the throat, and paint over *externally* with tincture of iodine. 4. To administer daily a capsule of cod-liver oil.

We confess, after so many skilled fanciers had failed, and in such a severe case, our hopes of a successful result were not great, but the result far surpassed our expectations. The letter describing symptoms was dated September 1st, and under date of November 4th came a letter including the following:—

Out of *twelve* sick birds, *two only* have died, *eight* recovered, and two are still ailing. This does not include a few which have been cured by one or two applications of the remedies. I cannot, however, say I am yet rid of the disease, as it is now and then breaking out where least expected. Yesterday I discovered a very valuable black Jacobin with a cankerous growth of considerable development far down its throat. Being difficult of access, I am somewhat afraid this will prove a fatal case.

[A subsequent letter, dated the 1st of December, stated that the black Jacobin also fully recovered under the treatment.—Ed.]

Small-Pox.—This seems a virulent form of canker. For treatment, see page 90.

Spouts.—For the removal of this troublesome affection of wattled pigeons, see the chapter on Carriers, page 86.

Starving.—The mode of treating young birds when insufficiently fed has been given at page 40. It may be well also to remark, however, that some unusually good feeders will give young birds too much food and too little water, in which case the fed bird will die. The remedy is, if the young be far enough advanced, to dip its beak in water two or three times a day; if very young, the mouth should be filled with water, and the beak being taken between the lips, a sufficient quantity given in that way.

[We may add another expedient which we have often practised, and recommended to others, and which has the advantage of being capable of *instant* application. We were led to it by coming home past midnight on one occasion to find a young Barb we thought much of with the

crop empty, and nearly dead, at about four days old. We at once took a biscuit, and chewing it till of the right consistency, fed it from the mouth; and since then we have reared birds from the very shell in the same way. The biscuits known as plain "milk" biscuits are best, and may either be given in this manner, or by a glass syringe with a large orifice; and numerous trials enable us to state that young birds will thrive as well fed in this way as if taken every care of by the parents. The great advantage of the plan is, that by taking a biscuit or two in the pocket into the loft, any young bird found empty may be filled up without a moment's delay, and valuable young ones in this way saved. When there are many young ones likely to want such assistance, the best plan is to grind the biscuits into a smooth pap with boiled milk, by a stiff spoon, fill a rather large glass syringe, and stand it, except while using at the moment, in a jug of warm water, as it injures the birds to give food cold. A three-ounce syringe will feed half a dozen young birds without refilling. It must always be cleansed after use, of course. – ED.]

VERTIGO.—This disease is by no means uncommon. It is sometimes slight, though very evident; but in other cases the bird no sooner lowers its head to feed or drink, than it will stagger back, or round and round, perfectly helpless. It evidently arises from either some pressure upon the brain, which we are inclined to think the usual cause; or, in some cases, it may be of a purely nervous character. Generally speaking cure is hopeless if the bird be an old one; but when young and vigorous we have known recovery follow bleeding at the back of the roof of the mouth, or from making an incision, through the skin only, across the entire back of the head. In these cases the sudden relief to the brain is evidently the cause of cure. We once, however, had a very valuable bird thus affected, which getting in our way (as they are very apt to do), received a severe *kick*, so severe as to be left for dead; but next day, to our great astonishment, it was not only alive, but quite recovered. Here the cure may have been from the sudden nervous shock, or it is possible the sudden kick may have given relief by rupturing some small tumour which caused the disease. In other cases, with young birds, we have known cure follow keeping very quiet, in a small pen, for some days, on low diet.

[We once knew chloroform given to a fowl, preparatory to making an incision as just described. A sudden call hindered the operation; but the bird on recovering from the chloroform was perfectly well. This experiment may be worth repeating, but care must be taken not to overdo the chloroform, or death will follow. It is given by dropping some on a handkerchief, and holding near the bird's nostrils till insensibility follows.—ED.]

WING-DISEASE.—The treatment we have usually found most successful in this case we have given in the chapter on Carriers, at page 91. The slinging of the wing properly is, however, so important (as unless this is done the bird will droop or hang its wing when cured) that we show, in Figs. 70 and 71, how to do it in the easiest manner. Two pieces of soft twine or thin tape are first so tied as to form the loop C D (Fig. 70), with a free end at each knot—if each string be knotted round the other neither knot can slip. The loop is then slipped over the shoulder of the wing, from A to B (Fig. 71), with the knots at C D, the size of the loop, of course, requiring careful adjustment. The loose ends are then brought up and tied at E, except that, whereas we have represented the knot outside the wing, it is better to tie it between the wing and the body, which will prevent the bird undoing it, a feat some pigeons are quite capable of performing when the knot is tied outside. The sling must be fastened sufficiently tight to hold the long flights somewhat above the proper position.

Wing-disease, however, seems to vary much in its character; and while we believe the leech to be

usually best in the early stage, and painting with spirits of turpentine when more developed into a cheesy tumour, other modes of treatment may also be suggested. For instance, in the later stage, when matter seems formed, we have known successful results follow plucking the wing nearly bare of all except the flights, slinging it as just described, and anointing regularly with citron ointment over the tumour. Painting with tincture of iodine will also often effect a cure; and sometimes cases will get well of themselves. Again, there are cases of evident disease in one or even two joints, in which no swelling can be discovered. In such a case all that can be done is to sling the wing, and perhaps hold the joint under a cold-water tap for a few minutes every day. In nearly all cases a cock is useless for breeding while suffering from any form of wing-disease; but a hen is not necessarily unfertile, though the complaint usually denotes a scrofulous taint which should make caution desirable in perpetuating the strain.

Mr. Caridia considers that wing-disease is generally of two kinds. The first kind, denoted by a *hard* swelling on one or other of the joints, he believes to be immediately caused, whatever the original constitutional tendency, by the bird *striking* its wing against obstructions; and states that

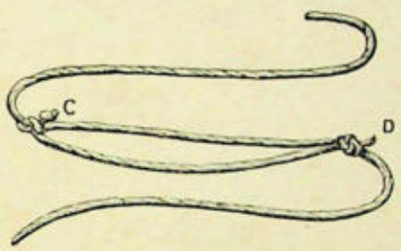


Fig. 70.

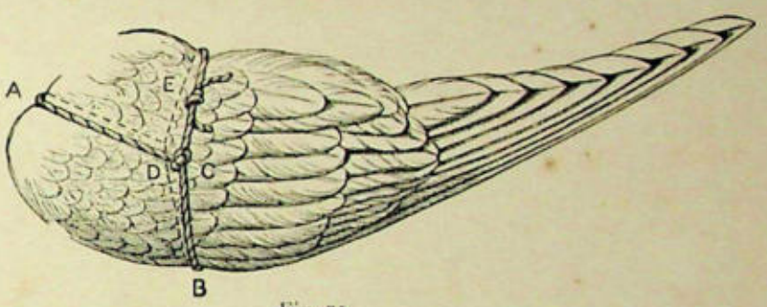


Fig. 71.

if taken in time it can almost invariably be cured by simply *plucking* all the flights of the wing affected, both outer and inner, and also the feathers immediately surrounding the hard swelling. The bird will be for the time incapable of flight, and when the feathers are re-grown will generally be well; but care should be taken to remove all such corners or obstructions as may have caused the malady. The other kind is where the tumour is soft, containing a viscid *fluid*. This he believes to be caused by the bird not having enough flying exercise, and the oil which Nature provides to lubricate the joints not being consequently absorbed, accumulates, and forms the tumour. In this case also he advises the wing to be stripped; but the blister must also be pierced, or a small seton inserted as long as the fluid accumulates. As the feathers re-grow, they carry off the superabundant secretion, and the bird will generally be perfectly well when the wing is again properly furnished.

Wounds.—These should always be attended to whenever perceived, even if only scratches of the skin, since, if neglected, they may lead to festering sores or canker; very frequently being the immediate exciting cause of the latter breaking out, when there is any previous tendency to it. If clean and recent, nothing better can be done than to pluck enough feathers (should it be necessary), to leave the place bare, and apply a little zinc ointment once or twice. If the wound be older, dirty, bleeding, or look at all unkindly, it should be washed with Condy's Red Fluid diluted with water, and the ointment applied an hour or two later, or when the bleeding (if any), has ceased.

APPENDIX.

METROPOLITAN PIGEON SOCIETIES AND THEIR HISTORY.

THE first society of which any record exists was founded in 1720 at the "Jacob's Well," in Barbican. To this society we trace the primitive standard (as depicted in the prints it published, and some of which are in the possession of Mr. Esquilant) of the Carrier, the Pouter, and the Almond Tumbler. During the twenty-five first years of this century, a club, exclusively for Almonds, Black-mottles, Beards, and Baldhead Tumblers, flourished at "The Ship" tavern, situated at the back of Shoreditch Church. Among its supporters were Sir John Sebright and Mr. Bellamy.

The society, however, which stands out conspicuous amongst all others, is the Columbarian, sometimes styled the "Original Columbarian Society." It was founded about the year 1750, and to it the principal pigeon societies that have since been instituted trace their parentage. The "Treatise on the Almond Tumbler," published in 1802, was written by one of its members, a solicitor in Thavies Inn, and dedicated to the Society. The Columbarian Society laid down the Almond standard, citing the five properties, and which is still acknowledged, as no other standard has been laid down. Each house in Fleet Street has its history of the last century, and "The Globe," in that street, is noted as the first home of this society. The members subsequently removed to the "Queen's Head" tavern, Holborn, next to the "Gray's Inn" Gateway. One of its first members was Mr. Garle. Mr. French Stevens, one of its presidents, was a celebrated and successful Almond breeder. It remained *the* pigeon society of England until the end of the last century, when it came under the more enthusiastic care of Mr. Garle's son. A period of high and long success now followed. The average number of its members was about thirty, and amongst them at one time could be counted seven members of Parliament, the others being bankers and other gentlemen of high social position. The names of Sir John Sebright, Messrs. French Stevens, Hollingsworth, Bird, Sells, Hardy, Rutley, and Harton (its last secretary), should be recorded amongst its prominent supporters. After an existence of a hundred years, however, its end came. But it had started columbiculture into a new life at the beginning of the nineteenth century; and these records of its history, though few and brief, will be of enduring and increasing interest to all fanciers.

The societies before mentioned had devoted their energies principally to the Almond Tumbler. But about 1825, to satisfy the want for a club of a more general character, "The Feather Club" was founded, its principal promoter being Mr. Bellamy. Its first head-quarters were "The Griffin," Threadneedle Street, a hostelry many years ago demolished for the Royal Exchange improvements. After being located in Basinghall Street, and at the "Red Lion," in Fenchurch Street, its most celebrated president, Mr. Moray, who could boast that he had not been without pigeons sixty years, established it at the "United States" Tavern, in Liverpool Street

Although no longer known as "The Feather Club," this society still flourishes under the title of the "City Columbarian;" and after a sojourn of some years at "The Crown and Cushion," London Wall, its meetings are now held at the "City Arms," Blomfield Street, Finsbury. The bead-roll of its worthies includes the names of Mr. Carrol (for forty years a member), and Messrs. Moray, Harvey, John Chapman, Jayne, Sparrow, Simpson, Sawyer, Pyne, Esquilant, Southwood, Fossick, White, Bellamy, Miles Hall, George Young, Wolstenholme (the artist), G. Chapman (its president for twenty-five years), Gillett (its present able president), and Ford (for ten years its faithful secretary). The present secretary is Mr. Henning.

From the Feather Club—or according to its more recently assumed title, the "City Columbarian Society"—sprung in 1833 the "Southwark Columbarian Club," with its meetings at the "Yorkshire Grey," in the Borough, under the presidentship of Mr. Nield. To him succeeded Mr. J. M. Eaton, followed by Mr. Corker, its last president, in 1857.

About the year 1820, Mr. F. Redmond, a celebrated fancier in the Borough, first introduced into England the Antwerp homing pigeon, and flew his birds from London Bridge to Belgium. At his house in the Borough fanciers were also wont to meet. On his removal from the Borough, this society, the name of which we have not been able to obtain, also collapsed, and its noted show-pen was then sold by Mr. F. Redmond to the members of the City Columbarian. This pen has since been the distinguishing feature at all meetings of that society.

The Philoperisteron Society was established by a few members of the City and Southwark Societies, who considered the time had arrived to form a West-end Society, and the successful result has proved the correctness of their idea. It held its first meeting on Tuesday, 4th of January, 1847, at the "Crown and Anchor," Strand: Mr. J. J. Bowler, chairman; Mr. F. Bellamy, treasurer; and Mr. F. C. Esquilant, secretary; the members present in addition to the preceding being Messrs. Archer, Butt, Carrell, Gulliver, Pyne, and Thirkell. To this society must be given the credit of originating public shows of pigeons, the proposal being caused by a lively discussion on the colour of the Almond Pigeon, when it was decided that colour could not be satisfactorily settled except by daylight. It was consequently resolved to adventure a public show, which accordingly took place at the British Hotel, Cockspur Street, in January, 1848. Year by year these shows progressed, both as to the quality and quantity of the pigeons, and popularity with the fancy and the public. They were generally held in the large hall of the "Freemason's Tavern," Great Queen's Street, Lincoln's Inn, but upon the amalgamation of the Philoperisteron and National Columbarian Societies in 1868, they were transferred to the Crystal Palace, and with most gratifying success. These shows, up to the present date, are entirely confined to friendly and honorary emulation amongst the members, no prizes being offered.

The National Columbarian Society may be termed an offshoot from the Philoperisteron, the majority of the leading members of the latter, amongst others, Messrs. Hayne, Esquilant, Tegetmeier, Harrison Weir, and Maddeford, joining it at its foundation in 1850. The first president was Dr. Fry, of Brighton; secretary, Mr. W. W. Towse. Its rules provided for election of members by ballot, yearly subscriptions, monthly meetings, and an annual grand show at Anderton's Hotel, in Fleet Street. After about four years, it removed to the "Whittington Club," Arundel Street, Strand, and prospering under the official care of Mr. Jayne, its president, and Mr. Betty, its secretary, it finally established itself at the "Freemason's Tavern."

This immediate contact with its progenitor, and the fact that the majority of each society was by membership connected with the other, led to the amalgamation of this society with the Philoperisteron; the principal members, Messrs. Jones, Volckman, Hedley, Date, Esquilant, Betty, Merck, Harrison Weir, and Jayne, acting in unison for the accomplishment of this object. The

first president elected was Mr. Esquilant, and Mr. Jones became first secretary of the new society, now termed the National Peristeronic. To Mr. Esquilant succeeded in the leadership of the society, Mr. Jayne, Mr. Ord, Mr. Tegetmeier, Mr. Betty, and Mr. Merck. In succession to Mr. Jones, came as secretaries, Messrs. Betty, Howard, and Whitehead. For a time this society's meetings were held at the Covent Garden Hotel, but have now again reverted to the Freemason's Tavern. Of the National Peristeronic Society it may be said that it holds the position of the first pigeon society of the day, with nearly a hundred members; its fortnightly meetings are well attended, and its annual grand show at the Crystal Palace is always an event for fanciers.

Influential societies, most of which have a large and increasing membership, have been also successfully established in other large cities. The chief of these are at Birmingham, Manchester (called the "Northern Counties Columbarian Society"), Liverpool, Leeds, and Newcastle, in England; while the Northern Columbarian Society has its head-quarters in Glasgow, and there is another influential society in Edinburgh. But most of these are of comparatively recent growth, and they are not identified with the history of pigeon-culture as are those above named. It is not therefore consistent with the plan or objects of this work to mention them, particularly as almost every considerable town boasts a society of some sort, and names and officers are continually changing, which makes it impossible to embody such information in a complete or permanent form. It is otherwise with the metropolitan societies. Their past is the past of the fancy itself; and hence it is that, before parting with our readers, we have endeavoured to place on record such brief outlines of their history and—if we may call it so—genealogy as may give the fancier of the present day some general conception of the means and of the men by which and by whom the pets he delights in were cultivated and handed down to him.



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when both mandibles are frequently black. But in all head properties most colours in Beards are very deficient, and the only colour we have seen at all approaching perfection in these points has been the Blue. Even in this colour, though we have seen several cocks which were really fine specimens (all being bred, so far as we remember, either by Mr. Fielding of Rochdale, or Mr. Woodhouse of Lynn), yet strange to say, we never saw but one single *hen* which deserved to be called really good. The reason of this, as in the Balds, is probably the certain fact that it is very difficult to breed hens as good in colour as the cocks; so that there is greater difficulty still in getting a hen which is thus good in colour and also in other properties. We do not think we ever saw a really matched pair both for quality and colour combined; and as for other colours than Blue, we cannot say we ever had the pleasure of seeing birds that deserved to be called more than fair second-rate quality, judging by the same standard as is applied to other short-faces. We hope, however, to see this altered.

It only remains, in describing the bird, to say it should be as small as possible. It ought to be little if any larger than the Almond, though a *little* more length of feather may be allowed.

In breeding to improve the present Black Beards, we would pair the best Black Beard cock we could get to a Short-faced Black Tumbler hen, and select from the progeny the best bird, which showed the nearest markings to the Beard, to breed with another Beard. If this could not be done, we would next season match the father with the most likely young hen; and if another Beard cock could not be had, even match the mother to one of the young cocks showing most of the Beard marking; afterwards proceeding in the manner already described for Baldheads. The cross with the Black Tumbler hen not only improves the head points, but the more important points of head and carriage, these latter being very rare indeed to see really good in the so-called Short-faced Beards. Of course, when crossing in this manner, we would select a bird with as much Beard marking as possible, and with as many flights white as we could get, in order to impart as much of this, and as speedily as possible, to the Black cross; and, on the other hand, the colour of Black Beards being usually bad, the Black hen should be as good as can be found in this point A good black Baldhead would also be a good cross.

Blues, especially the cocks, being the nearest to what is desired, we need only advise to breed the best Blue cock obtainable with the best Silver hen, and, conversely, the best Silver cock with the best Blue hen. Each of these crosses, as in Balds, is for the purpose of getting better-coloured Blue hens, the one cross being for cocks, and the other for hens. There is also the same danger as in Balds, that while the colour is improved it is accompanied often by Kite bars; but when a bird with this fault is produced really good in other points, breed it to a deep slaty or sooty Blue. These are to be found easily, and are very often the best in head and beak qualities; hence this cross not only corrects the bars, but usually produces good head and beak birds.

As to Reds and Yellows, the quality of all we have ever seen has been so poor as not to deserve the name of Short-faced at all. We never yet saw a single good specimen of either which deserved to be called more than pleasant-faced; and yet there are more means within reach of improving them than with either of the other colours. For instance, if the fancier has a decent Red Beard cock showing plenty of the beard, with not less than eight and eight flights—if ten, all the better—breed it with a good Red or Red Agate Short-faced hen, for the improvement of head properties, and "breed back," as so often described. If the breeder knows the difference between a "made" and natural head, he will be all the more likely to experience success, through making a good choice for head properties. As a guide to the amateur (not only in this object, but in all selection of Short-faces), we may note that one sign of an honest head is that the beak, instead of appearing extraordinarily straight, or even pointing

slightly upwards, is a little inclined to be "down-faced." We do not apply this rule to all, as we have seen some birds we knew to be honest whose beaks were thus, especially when the beak is fine in *both* mandibles; but we never saw an *honest* bird with a *coarse* beak and wattle having its beak extra straight or inclining upwards; and usually, this pointing up too much is the most general and certain sign of a "made" head, and a beak a little down is nearly always honest. Still, honest or not, such a Red, with really good head and carriage as well as colour, including, of course, fine beak and wattle, is a good cross. If a Red Beard cock cannot be got, we would match a Red or Red Agate cock to a Red Beard hen; in either case "breeding back" as usual. For Yellows we would proceed as for Reds, or, if proper matches could not be got in Yellows, would cross with Reds. Whenever any good-headed Red Beards were in this way bred they should be crossed with Blacks, which would improve the colour of each; and if the Blacks were the ordinary stamp, this cross would also tend to improve the heads of the Blacks.

There is another variety of the Short-faced Tumbler which we believe to be as ancient as any, viz., the old-fashioned Blue Tumbler. It is seldom, as generally found, very good in head; but deserves to be called Short-faced at least as well as the Beard, if not more; and especially surpasses it in the grand points of shape and carriage. In fact, we believe the better quality of Blue Beards is derived from crossing with the Blue Tumbler. The great beauty of this bird is the splendid colour of the body, with rich black bars, often combined with as fine shape and carriage as can be seen in most Almonds. Some are to be seen with very good head and beak properties, and really fine large skulls; but as a rule the head is badly shaped, being too square. The colour is, however, the grand point, especially on the rump, which is of the sound deep colour of a blue show Dragoon; and no pigeon we know has a sounder or more vigourous constitution, the very best requiring no assistance in rearing their young, which is more than can be said of either Almonds, Mottles, Baldheads, or Beards, when really good ones, though of course the pleasant-faced birds are strong enough. This Tumbler breeds true to colour with little care, and therefore needs only fair judgment to improve to any standard desired.

POINTS IN JUDGING BALDHEADS AND BEARDS.

Accuracy of marking	6
Colour	4
Shape and carriage	4
Head	3
Beak and wattle	3
Eye	1
Size (*i.e.*, smallness)	1
	22

We may add that we would judge Blacks by the same scale as the above, of course omitting the points for marking, since there are none. But in Yellow and Red Whole-feathers six points should be allowed for colour instead of four, as the colour is so much more difficult to produce. Blue Tumblers should be judged the same as Black. Agate Whole-feathers should have the same points for colour as Blacks, viz., four; and Agate Mottles or Splashes, two points. Some of these off-colours, however, vary so much that their chief value is in the breeding-loft.

We must now say a few words upon the successful exhibition of Short-faced Tumblers, and the various "improvements" which are more or less commonly practised before the birds appear in the show-pen. The first point attended to is the beak, and if this appears too long, and especially if the upper mandible at all hangs over the lower, or appears on one side, it is cut off with sharp

scissors to the same length, and then carefully pared into a fine-pointed beak. We prefer scissors for this operation, but some use a file. So long as no more than overgrown horn is trimmed off, this operation causes no more pain than trimming the nails, and is absolutely requisite in a great many birds to keep both mandibles level, without which they cannot preen themselves, and soon become infested with vermin. But beyond this actual necessity, such trimming of the beak has always been held allowable since Almond Tumblers were known, and it is necessary to state this clearly, lest it be confounded with operations which are not so legitimate. Eaton mentions it expressly as the "privilege" of an amateur; and to make birds appear as usually shown, it is necessary, except in very rare cases indeed. We have known a very few which never needed touching. But it is understood, and expected, that no more than dead horn be cut away, without touching the "quick;" and no words are too strong for such trimming as we have seen with our own eyes in some cases, where a poor bird, with an unusually coarse beak, has been cut down so much that blood has dropped from the point of the beak whilst in the pen! We say we have *seen* this, or few would believe it. Such barbarity is fortunately visible to its own disgrace, and makes the beak appear so artificial as to increase the coarse appearance it is meant to improve; but moderate trimming, carefully done, improves the appearance of a bird greatly. Those who first attempt it before being thoroughly used to the handling of pigeons, should tie the bird's legs with a strip of soft cloth, which will make it keep much more quiet and steady. This trimming of the beak applies to all the Short-faced varieties. After the beak is finished, the wattle must be washed, soap or oil being used to soften the dirt that often is to be found hardened upon it, and then carefully cleaned with a small piece of wet sponge.

Then comes the plumage. To this very little can be honestly done; and, in spite of the trash that has been written by some who know little about it, very little indeed *can* be successfully done, if the judge at all knows his business. When an Almond is too mealy in colour, it is possible to put a *little* of the finest oil upon a soft silk handkerchief, and by passing this lightly over the bird to deepen the colour. But in nine cases out of ten this oiling process is overdone, and if it be not uniform all over the bird, or if too much is put on—and it is by no means easy to use little enough—detection is sure. It should always be done a day or two before a bird is shown. Stray foul feathers are generally pulled out, and this is even sometimes done with faulty flights or tail feathers; but these latter can always be detected, if the judge counts them, and then entail disqualification. But when the body-feather is not quite right—say, one shoulder perhaps well spangled, and the other too much so—though the practice can scarcely be defended, most people pull out enough to make the bird "look even." If feathers could only be *added* with equal ease, we should soon see perfectly-spangled Almonds.

Another important point in showing Short-faces, if the class is for pairs, is to mate the birds for some days previously, and then to separate them one clear day before the show. Then when they come together in the strange pen they strut and show themselves off to the best of what carriage they have, and this point is so important in these varieties, that many a prize has been won or lost by bad or good management in this respect alone.

The principal beauty of the Mottles being in marking, these birds have almost always, as we have already hinted, to undergo great "alterations" before being exhibited. Most birds are too "gay" somewhere or other; and the way to succeed in the necessary "weeding" is, not to proceed rashly, but to remove a feather or two at once, carefully examining the effect each time, till the bird is got as nearly as possible what is desired. If the body-colour of a Black Mottle is not good enough, it often gets a touch-up with the oil, as already described; but very great care is needed to avoid greasing the white, and even on the black plumage a very little too much betrays

its presence instantly. Sometimes, also, even good-coloured birds will be rather grizzled towards the roots of some of the flights or tail feathers, and these we have known blackened or dyed to hide the fault, as also the blaze on the face, from which very few Mottles are free; but this, the last especially, is a dangerous experiment, and we have often seen the perpetrator come to grief. Red and Yellow Mottles admit of the same weeding as the Blacks; but we know no means of improving the plumage, beyond the thorough removal of the "bloom" from the feather, which is easily accomplished by continual stroking with a warm, moist hand. Ignorant writers, we know, have said otherwise; and we admit we have seen many birds "oiled" to deepen the colour; but never one which did not show the operation so plainly that it would be a disgrace to any judge not to detect it.

The trimming of Beards and Baldheads is what might be naturally expected. The object is to have sharp, clean-cut marking; and as few birds naturally have not a few foul feathers just on the border-line, these are cautiously removed till that line is as smooth and sharp as possible. Scarcely any birds shown do not owe at least a *little* to this operation, which is done both by pulling out the offending feather, or—what is better, since it lasts the season—cutting them off close to the skin; but this is troublesome and takes more time, since each minute feather, as its extraction is determined on, has to be carefully traced down to the root to be clipped off. The breast or the thighs, which respectively are also desired to be clean-cut, are adjusted in the same manner; and there are at present but few birds which do not need the removal of at least one or two foul feathers from the thighs. The only colour of these birds which can be improved is the black.

Blue Tumblers need, and admit of (except the trimming of the beak, common to all this class of pigeons) no improvement, except that sometimes there are a few foul feathers on the rump, which admit of being extracted without detection. Without defending any of these proceedings, with the exception of beak-trimming, we must say that we have rarely known a man who refused or neglected to remove a foul feather or two if he found his bird looked any the better for it.

The diseases to which the Short-faced Tumbler is specially subject, though serious, are few when compared with the Carrier and Pouter. First, and worst of all, is canker, which we have already treated of, but which in these pigeons is almost entirely confined to the mouth, and assumes so virulent a form when neglected, that we are not sure *cancer* would not more correctly describe it. We could never satisfy ourselves as to the cause of this disease. Some have said it is foul water; but while it may be so in some cases, and we certainly would use every effort, as before stated in this work, to keep the water-supply clear and pure, we must still state that where this was most thoroughly attended to we have seen the disease terribly prevalent, while in others where the water was most foul there was no trace of it. We have, however, every reason to believe that it is hereditary; and since very few indeed of the larger, stronger, and early-bred birds are troubled with it compared with the smaller ones, we think it is perhaps *most* likely to be owing to a deep-seated scrofulous tendency in the blood owing to the notorious in-breeding of these birds, and which naturally developes itself most in the weakest specimens.

As we have said, the disease almost always shows itself in the mouth, and usually at the corners, or where the beak opens. Some fanciers say that lunar caustic will cure it; but we never could cure a case in this way, while by more severe treatment we have met with general success, as follows:—Tie the bird's legs and pass the body through a stocking, or wrap it round in a cloth so that only the head is exposed, to prevent struggling, for with acid a sure touch and steady hand are required. Next get a very small india-rubber ring, half an inch thick, so small in aperture that when placed as a gag on the lower mandible it will remain until removed; and have ready a small

bottle of oil of vitrol (sulphuric acid) and a small camel-hair pencil. When all is ready, first scrape off with the blade of a penknife all cankered substance, cutting it off if needful, though the disease should not be allowed to form so much as to need this. If in doing so the skin bleeds a little, no matter; but in that case hold the head down so that none of the diseased blood runs into the mouth. Then paint over the diseased place with the acid, and apply the gag at once, and hold the bird in the hand for half an hour. The gag, by preventing the mouth closing, not only insures the due action of the cautery, which is not then weakened by the saliva, but causes less suffering by confining the action of the acid to the place first touched.* After half an hour the bird may be released, and unless the case be a very bad one, will be cured. If it is so bad as to defy this treatment, the case may still be generally treated successfully (supposing it in the corner of the mouth, where the majority of cases are) by simply *excising* the part. This operation usually requires a portion taken away from both the upper and lower mandibles, or rather from the soft parts at their bases, thus excising a V-shaped piece. Care must be taken to cut away every particle of diseased growth, after which the wound is to be bathed with cold water, mixed with one half of Condy's Red Fluid, until the bleeding ceases. After three days the wound should be daily dressed with a little zinc ointment until cured. In all such cases, or indeed when any operation involving pain is to be performed, the legs should be tied, and a stocking or other bandage employed round the body to prevent struggling

Sometimes canker shows itself at the root of the tongue, in which case the only chance of cure is in painting with vitriol; but as in this case the saliva hinders the efficacy of the treatment, and the suffering must be great, we do not think more than one application justifiable; in fact, if it be not sufficient, neither are more likely to be so. In other birds, again, the disease manifests itself in the throat; but in this case, unless allowed to go very far unchecked, it may usually be cured. The treatment is simply to excise the diseased place, cutting it in fact clean out from the outside. This is easily done by first plucking the feathers, then drawing out the skin with the fingers (taking care the windpipe is not involved), and cutting out what is necessary. The wound is to be dressed as before, and, strange to say, the opening thus made almost always closes in due time, and there seems little risk if the bird be kept out of cold and draughts till after recovery. It is best after such an operation to keep the bird in a small box or basket, in which it cannot turn round until the wound has begun to cicatrise, after which the zinc ointment should be continued every day for about a week. If all has gone well so far recovery is almost certain, unless the disease has gone so far as to taint the blood of the whole bird as it were. Sometimes canker is caused by the point of the tongue being crooked or twisted, and this continually irritating the lower part of the mouth causes a growth to form, which ultimately becomes cankerous. When this is the case, the crooked part of the tongue should be cut off, when the cankered place will gradually heal.

We very much doubt if the disease so well known as gout, or swelling of the feet and legs, be not another form of the same disease of the blood that causes canker. It is almost incurable; but

* The smart of such an operation must at first be fearfully intense, and many may think it would be better to kill than inflict it, though we have the authority of surgeons for stating that after a few minutes the pain decreases. We could not do it ourselves. Still, it may be remembered that animals have not the pain of *anticipation*, which adds so greatly to the sufferings of man; and their frantic struggles for life may be held to show that if they could choose, they might probably prefer it at the price of half an hour's agony. We may, however, suggest that it is possible, and we may say even probable, that the strongest *carbolic* acid might have the same effect as the sulphuric. If so it has the advantage, that while the smart is great when first applied to wounds, the pain very rapidly decreases; after which feeling is destroyed altogether, and healing is promoted in a most marked manner. For these reasons, carbolic acid is frequently employed by surgeons in dressing wounds, and we cannot but suggest that all its properties—cauterising, anæsthetic, antiseptic, astringent, and healing—give much promise of its successful application in this case. If so, the difference in pain would be immense.—[Ed.]

when taken in good time may sometimes be successfully treated as described in Carriers, viz., by flannel bandages daily soaked in spirits of turpentine. In severe cases we have found tumours actually adhering to the bone, and even extending up the thigh joint.* We would on no account, ourselves, breed from a bird thus affected, and only state the most promising treatment for the sake of those who really cannot afford or cannot procure another; as the turpentine will often preserve a bird for a few months longer, and thus perhaps carry it through the breeding season.

Various forms of disease in the *eyes* are more frequently found amongst Short-faced Tumblers than any other varieties. In nearly all alike the first observable symptom is running or discharge; and when by this or other signs it is known the eyes have been bad from infancy, there is no hope of cure. Where it is evidently exposure to cold which has caused swelling and discharge in and around one or both eyes—and the Tumbler being a delicate bird is subject to this—the treatment will of course be simple, consisting only of gentle bathing with warm water three times a day, drying the eye after, and painting all round it with castor-oil. This last expedient prevents the eye becoming closed up, and also allays inflammation, and much lessens the stoppage of the nostrils. While in this state a bird will often refuse food, and if so must be hand-fed, for which purpose we use peas and tares which have been *soaked* for at least five hours, as in cases of illness digestion is weakened, and soaked food much assists in keeping up the strength. We also advise boiled milk instead of water to drink in all cases of illness accompanied by weakness. When recovered, a bird thus treated should have its head carefully washed with soap and warm water to remove the oil, which otherwise will keep it very stiff and uncomfortable, besides looking bad.

There are also cases in which there is a slighter, but evidently persistent discharge at the *back* corner of the eye, causing a few of the small feathers to stick together and project. On careful examination an extremely minute pimple will be found, which by its pressure on the eyeball and eyelash, causes the irritation. Could it be cut away all would be well, but it is generally too small for this, and the only treatment is therefore to pluck out the feathers, which by their stiffness add to the irritation, and bathe and dress with oil as in the last case. This will generally, if regularly persevered in, gradually subdue the irritation, when the pimple will disappear and the bird be quite well.

Another form of disease is far more serious, consisting of a real growth upon the ball of the eye itself. It begins with a small whitish speck like a cataract, but this gradually increases till it actually *projects* like a white pimple upon the iris. The pain and irritation are of course very great, and the discharge excessive, and in this case bathing is of no use. We have heard it recommended to blow very finely-powdered loaf sugar into the eye in such cases, but could never find any benefit from this procedure; and the only remedy we can suggest is to cut out a small notch from the eyelid where it comes in contact with the diseased growth, which will prevent further irritation, and often stop the discharge. This form of disease is most common in dark-coloured birds of the third or fourth year, and especially if they have been tampered with to improve the skull. It is, however, not confined to these, but may be found in honest-headed birds, though we have been surprised to find how generally it is accompanied by the dark colour to which we have referred. Birds bred from parents with extra-good heads on both sides, if they are not what is termed "bladder-eyed," are also more liable than others to this disease.†

Finally, there is what is too well known amongst Tumbler breeders as the "wasting" disease, to which all fancy pigeons are in some degree subject, but these most of all. It usually attacks

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late-bred hens, but may seize on any weakly birds at the approach of cold weather. The first symptoms are usually a loose, rough, and drooping appearance of the plumage, with green and whitish excrements, the bird at the same time losing nearly all appetite for its usual food. We cannot say we know of any certain cure, the mischief being evidently a debilitated condition which cannot supply the large amount of blood needed to form the new plumage; but it will not be surprising if we say we have had *most* success by giving artifically-nourishing food. Make pills of soft bread the size of peas, soak them in boiled milk, and give a dozen of them every second day, rolling half of them in flower of sulphur, and giving the rest without, and letting the bird on the alternate days have its choice of the usual food, but adding a little hemp-seed, canary-seed, and millet as a relish. Feed thus for about eight days, and if by that time the evacuations have not assumed a more healthy character, give about a quarter of a teaspoonful of castor-oil, after which feed with the pills for a week more, and then cease them and give the usual food, but always till recovered giving only boiled milk cold to drink instead of water.

A very similar disease, if not the same, is apt to attack the young birds during their first moult, and is so common as almost to deserve the name of a distemper. The symptoms are much alike, but the difference in the evacuations is, if possible, still more marked, and the vent may often be seen highly inflamed, corroded, and even hermetically closed by the irritating discharge, if not attended to. Hence the first step is to cut off all the feathers round the vent close to the skin, not plucking them as some do, as such would increase the already inflamed state of the parts. To tempt the bird to eat, some wheat, rice, hemp, and linseed, may be added to its diet, and, if it still refuses to feed, it should be fed alternately with a soaked pea and one of the bread pills already mentioned, until its crop is about half full. Besides this, however, we would give cod-liver oil as follows:—Boil rice in milk, and, after squeezing out all the milk possible, add about equal parts of flour, and about one-fourth of the whole cod-liver oil, mixing it into a stiff paste. Make this into pills the size of peas, and give six every second day for ten days, letting it have its ordinary food besides if it will eat it, and, if not, feeding it on bread pills and soaked peas as directed, but always cold boiled milk and no water to drink. If after a week there seems no improvement, we would boil an egg hard, chop it up with bread crumb, and make it into pills the same size as the others, giving four twice each day for another week, dipping them in cod-liver oil before administration. By these last pills we have saved more birds than by any other plan we could devise, sometimes rolling one pill out of the four in sulphur. The object of all the treatment is to increase the strength of the bird, while correcting the bowels; and it is generally found that if these can be got into a healthy state before the patient has become too weak, recovery follows. Sometimes the debility is so great that the bird appears scarcely able to carry its own tail, which droops and appears a great encumbrance. When this is so the tail should be plucked, which not only gives the patient more ease and freedom, but often seems to produce a really beneficial effect by increasing the circulation of the blood, and to hasten the recovery of the bird. We have seen this so often, and are so sure of the fact, that we should recommend the operation in all cases as far as the disease alone is concerned; but it unfortunately happens that an Almond tail so plucked often comes with only two colours instead of the standard three, perhaps even of a bluish tinge, so that we would only advise it where clearly called for. To avoid the evil results, some fanciers cut off the tail-feathers close to the root instead of plucking them; and this equally relieves the bird of its weight and gives it freedom, but has not the beneficial effect in relieving that stagnation of the blood which we believe to be one cause of the disease.

We know of no other diseases to which Short-faced Tumblers are subject more than other pigeons. Wing-disease they are comparatively seldom troubled with.

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CHAPTER XII.

COMMON AND FLYING TUMBLERS.

THERE can be little doubt that the whole class of pigeons known as Tumblers originally derived the name from their habit of turning a somersault backwards during flight, and that even the Short-faces were bred from these. Eaton himself states that he had seen Short-faced Almonds tumble very well, and even at the present day, though not common, it is not so very rare to see a large and coarse Almond give an occasional tumble, showing that the tendency, though it has long ceased to be bred for, is not even yet quite obliterated. Even among the long-faced or pleasant-faced birds, however, the propensity is not universal, many common Tumblers never tumbling at all. On the other hand, a good Tumbler is very apt to transmit the propensity to its progeny, even though its mate be not a tumbling bird.

Among the prettiest of the Common Tumblers are the Mottle, Baldhead, and Beard. The markings of these birds should be exactly the same as in the Short-faces, except that the Mottle is more commonly found without the handkerchief back; hence our plates of these birds, if long or pleasant faces be supposed, will sufficiently represent them. No bird looks prettier in the air than the Baldhead. In some birds the faculty of tumbling backwards is so developed that they cannot fly a yard from the floor without turning over, and knowing this, will sit for hours on any projecting point they have attained, as if they dreaded to leave it lest they should tumble to the floor and hurt themselves, as indeed they sometimes do. Birds which thus tumble in a very small space, or on rising from the floor, are called "inside" or "house" Tumblers, and the perfection of this kind of performance is for the bird to spring up only a few inches, and turning a quick and clean somersault backwards, alight again upon its feet. There are other birds that tumble many times whilst flying round the loft or aviary, good performers repeating their peculiar movement as often as forty or fifty times in a minute, after which they appear exhausted, and generally take a rest. Others again—and this class of bird is admired by some—make a single somersault every yard or two whilst flying, and scarcely dropping even an inch while doing so, but turning over so quickly as almost to defy observation, and going on as if nothing had happened.

Besides these good performers, there are birds which have the propensity, but cannot tumble properly, merely stopping in their flight and falling backwards. These are called mad tumblers, and many young birds which afterwards learn to tumble well fail in this way at first, as if from want of courage to turn vigorously enough. In such cases it often helps a young bird to either shorten its tail feathers, or pluck a few from the centre, so as to diminish the resistance; when the next time the attempt is made the bird may probably go over, and hence learn to be a good Tumbler.

The propensity appears to us to be either partly voluntary and partly involuntary, or to depend partly upon some special excitement of the nervous system, since even good Tumblers will fly for miles without tumbling if frightened, or even if from home. We have seen this several



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith.

FLYING TUMBLERS,

BLACK ROSE-WING. RED ROSE-WING.

RED BADGE. BLACK SADDLE.

times; though we believe it is not the common opinion. We remember once losing a Blue hen, and after awhile found her some five miles off, and with the assistance of two young companions (we, too, were young then) literally drove her home by throwing stones so as to frighten her. During five hours of this flying hither and thither, gradually approaching homewards, the bird showed no sign whatever of tumbling; but directly she pitched in sight of her cote, she darted inside, and coming out again instantly with her mate, began a "grand round," as if for joy at her safe return, and tumbled, we thought, better than we had ever before seen her do. A sick bird also will rarely tumble. That these differences in the propensity at different times are entirely beyond the bird's own control seems doubtful, since even a strange place will often prevent tumbling for awhile. We have waited before now for hours to see the performance of some fresh purchase, but to no purpose, and began in consequence to feel disappointed, when the next day has repaid us by an unexpectedly grand series of evolutions.

Besides the birds which thus really tumble, the Beard especially is much bred for its powers of flight. Previously to the introduction of the Antwerp, in fact, the "long-faced Beard" was one of the most favourite flying birds, and is capable of doing at least 100 miles. If bred by *flying results*, as the Antwerp is—that is, only the best performers allowed to increase the stock—we have no doubt the powers of this pigeon could be greatly increased. The long-faced Beard is generally about an inch and a quarter in face, but some are an inch and five-eights, and the medium or pleasant-faced birds are, of course, less. These flying Beards very seldom tumble,* but are often beautifully correct in marking.

The most important division of these birds, however, are the true *Flying* Tumblers, or, as some call them, High-flying Tumblers, which go through their tumbling and rolling performances while flying at large, at a great height in the air. These birds have always been greatly admired by many whose means do not allow of more expensive birds, especially in the large towns. In Birmingham particularly they are so largely kept and flown, that one class of performers is well-known under the name of "Birmingham Rollers;" and, as our own experience has lain very little among this class of birds, we are glad to give, instead of any description of our own, the following

* Eaton has, at page 86, the following curious note, which is worth preserving, on "Long-faced Beards.—While much has been, and more will be, written on the Short-faced Tumblers, which may meet the approbation of Short-faced Tumbler fanciers, it would appear to me a very one-sided affair if I did not attempt to take any notice of the long-faced Tumblers and fanciers. They are very fashionable at this time, and are to be met with in great numbers about Regent Street, the parks, the lounges of fashionable watering-places, &c. It is reported the late — Muntz, Esq., M.P. for Birmingham, had a superior stud. 'Tis said ladies are great admirers of them – I believe only to giggle at or about them after they have passed. Strange to say, the more ugly they are the more they rivet attention; I am surprised how they pick up or feed, and that they are not completely starved. This accounts for their being so extremely long faced or lantern-jawed, though heavily bearded. I have noticed before now, in a room where a grand show took place, although not any Beards in the pens, there has been some tremendous, ugly, very long-faced heavy Beards in the room. I have wondered (one name is as good as another for argument) how it were possible, if Mr. Smith wanted to smoke Mr. Southwood's meerschaum-pipe, he could get it into his mouth. You will observe, though strange, yet not more strange than true, there must have been a cross with the Baldhead and the Beard; although they are long-faced, heavily bearded, they are almost perfectly bald-headed. Their feather is mostly grizzle, or a pepper-and-salt colour; I have heard of 'Blue-beard.' With regard to this fancy, I cannot by any possibility think but there ought to be a distinction that only men in the army should be allowed to indu'ge in this fancy. If others will indulge in this bearded fancy, and take such immense pains in rearing and coaxing them, and consider them so luxurious, they ought to pay a heavy tax, like gentlemen paying the powder-tax, which would enable the Chancellor of the Exchequer to take off the Income-tax, and greatly benefit the revenue; or gentlemen only should rear them; for to see a long, thin-faced, rough, ugly beard, deep in moult, or ragged as a colt, what looks worse? You will perceive some of them have a kind of hood on the upper mandible. Some of the inexperienced fanciers take them to be rabbis, monks, or priests; the experienced fancier calls it *moustache*. I find I have made a slight mistake here; I have been describing the long-faced walking or promenading Beard, instead of the long-faced flying Beard; therefore I must try back."

article by Mr. J. W. Ludlow, who has had every opportunity of observing these birds in all their varieties, and becoming thoroughly acquainted with them.

"The number of pigeons which come under the head of Flying Tumblers are, in regard both to numbers and peculiarities, almost incalculable; indeed, throughout the civilised world I may safely say Tumbler pigeons are known, and in most places appreciated, but in Great Britain alone so great is the love of them that the number is 'legion.' These birds serve as a daily source of amusement to thousands of enthusiastic fanciers of the artisan, mechanic, and other classes of society. If confirmation of this were necessary, one need only traverse the streets of the chief centres of labour at mid-day, during the cessation of toil, to be convinced of the extraordinary interest taken in those general favourites. At a glance skyward, to any point of the compass, will be seen the little or big investment, the 'all,' in fact, of the most zealous of pigeon-fliers. Here and there, in front, behind, on all sides, high and low, may be seen innumerable flocks of these birds, going through their daily exercise above their respective habitations, each flickering host chosen for distinct and special peculiarities, in accord with the tastes of their owner, whose watchful eyes beneath are taking into account the merits of each individual specimen, and the lot collectively, and holding every one accountable for its actions on return to *terra firma*; some condemned to rise no more, others to receive fresh favours and honours, and others permitted the enjoyment of another trial, with the hope of amendment, and so on. Nor is the fancy for this variety confined only to those with the horny hand of industry, nor to those who habitually live upon the house-tops, and prey upon the 'waifs or strays' of the locality. Many, perhaps *most* of our best fanciers, have had the flying 'mania' ere they settled down to the more sober and less dangerous fancy of raising birds for the show-pen. With the flying fraternity, indeed, it is only just to say, there is no special inducement to keep their stocks year after year, *beyond a real love of them*; no silver cups, no money prizes, no record of victories won, and but very few congratulations for sacrifices made in raising to perfection the most perfect collections of these birds. The hobby is purely and simply prompted by a genuine fancy for the birds themselves, and a delight to witness their eccentric acrobatic movements when on the wing. By a study of these inexpensive birds the best rudimentary lessons are taught, and one can practice with them without the fear of extensive loss. The little bud of a juvenile fancier first bursts forth with, probably, a speculation to the extent of two shillings and sixpence, and Tumblers are generally the chosen ones, suiting the funds and the tastes also at the same time. With them and others added (as circumstances permit) the knowledge of pigeonology is gradually acquired, and I know of no fancier, to whatever height he may have attained as an authority on pigeons, who would willingly turn round upon his *first* pets, or utter an unkind word concerning the birds which formerly have afforded so much pleasure, even though they are designated *Common* Tumblers.

"As I have stated, the varieties of Flying Tumblers are almost innumerable, but the most important may be reckoned at about thirty recognised sorts, colour and markings constituting the chief differences amongst them. The whole family may be divided into two sections, viz., those with *dark flights*, or wing primaries, and those with *white wings*, or primary quills. Of the former kind there are seventeen varieties; five of these are whole colours, viz.:—Blacks, Reds, Blues (with black bars), Silvers (dark bars), and Yellows, pure, rich, and uniform; all which should be sound and good in colour, and have pearl eyes. Then follow *Rosewings*, in Black, Red, and Yellow. These should have from six to twelve white feathers upon each shoulder, arranged at equal distances within a circular form, both sides alike; all else black or coloured: intensity of black, and purity and richness of colour, are essential points. Next come *Mottles*, Black, Red,

Yellow, the feathering upon which should be composed of a complete intermixture of black and white, red and white, and yellow and white, interspersed with regularity throughout the entire body. Of each sort the flights and tail are *preferred* entirely black or coloured, but white feathers thereon are not regarded as a blemish. Beaks light-coloured, but streaked with dark, in harmony with the feathering; eyes, pearl. Then, again, there are *White-sides*, in Black, Blue, Red, Yellow. In these the head, neck, breast, back, tail, and flights should be black or coloured, all else *white*, to a line across the front of breast-bone. If feather-legged, these must be coloured. A rather singular fact concerning this kind is, that the first plumage, or nest-feathers, are all dark, *i.e.*, solid black, red, or yellow, and the tail and flights, which are required of good colour, are actually the lightest until after the first moult, when an entire transformation in them takes place; eyes, pearl. *Bronzes* should be Black or Chequered, with a brown or bronzy intermixture throughout plumage, as in a good Kite. *Grizzles* should be a thorough admixture of blue, black, and white, presenting a greyish appearance over the body, head and neck being light and powdery, flights and tail rather of a darker colour.

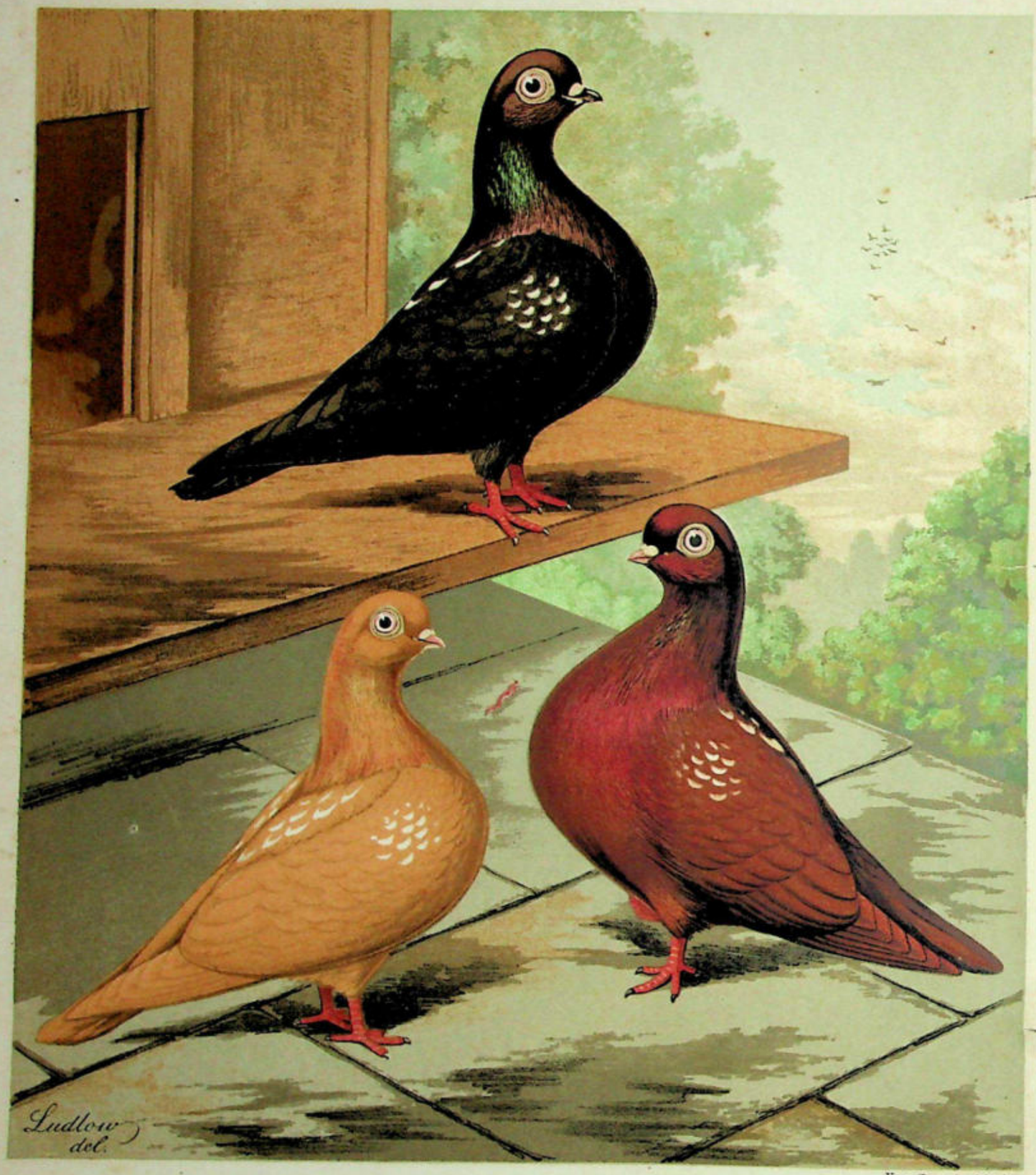
"The above-named complete the seventeen varieties of dark-winged birds, of which there are either feather-legged, medium-muffed, grouse-clothed, or clean-legged.

"The following are the best and prettiest of the *White-flighted* varieties:—1. *Saddles* in Red, Yellow, Black, Blue, and Silver.—The chief points of this kind are accuracy of markings, intensity of black, and purity and uniformity of colour; they are marked exactly as a Magpie pigeon. Head, neck, and breast (to a line across keel) black or coloured; back and tail also black or coloured; all else white, pure, and spotless. If feather-legged, whether long or short, the feather must be white, and each kind must have a clear, well-defined coloured 'saddle.' The Blues should be a clear light blue, with *black bars*. The Silvers should be of a very pale delicate greyish colour, with dark bars, the deeper the better; all 'pearl' eyes. 2. *Badges* in Black, Red, Yellow, Blue, Silver, and Chequer.—In these the ten primary flights must be white, and, if muffed-legged, whether long or short feathers, such must be pure white from the hock-joints to their tips; all else black or coloured. Intensity of black and richness of colouring are important points, more particularly upon back and tail, which unfortunately is too often of a dingy hue. A sprinkling of white upon the head is also observable (see illustration). This is the peculiar marking from which the name *Badge* is derived. 3. *White*, of course pure and spotless throughout its plumage; the natural colour, or rather the prevailing colour of the eye here is dark, but there are many handsome pearl-eyed specimens which look better, and are more highly prized. 4. *Oddities*—Under this distinguished title (as the name signifies) come a large number of singularly marked birds, which, although perhaps not of very prepossessing appearance, still generally possess some degree of excellence as fliers or Rollers above their fellows. There may often be seen Tricoloured or Almond-feathered birds, odd-sided ones, and variously marked or mixed feathered ones. I have seen two or three specimens of a very strange character, one of which was a perfect Red Badge on one side, and as a perfect Black Badge on the other. Again, I remember another bird which was a Red Saddle on one side, and Black on the other, both accurately marked and clearly defined along the centre line of saddle; the back (beneath the saddle) and the tail was of a dark dingy hue, showing the complete admixture of both Black and Red. Further, I have known a Badge on one side, and Saddle on the other, both black; in fact, such may often be seen in large flocks.

"Having now enumerated the chief and most attractive varieties, I had better state here that any of the afore-mentioned are to be found either long-muffed, medium-muffed, grouse-feathered, or clean-legged. It is quite a matter of taste and sheer speculation as to which is preferable either as show birds or as fliers; but to constitute a good long-muffed bird, the feather should be

good fair quills of say four and a half inches long, and resembling little wings. The term 'medium' length needs no further comment. 'Grouse-muffed' are those with the entire leg and foot-feathering of a soft feathery nature, and extending to the extremity of the toes. In all the heavily-feathered sorts the thigh-covering should be long and profuse, not fluffy, but extending backwards, and almost crossing beneath the rump, like 'vulture hocks.'

"I will now give the characteristic points in the formation of these birds. I may say that although there is no sure guide in appearance by which one can predict a good Roller (apart from a trial), still there are certain peculiarities which enable a good judge to arrive at a pretty accurate assumption, and, upon handling a bird, it is not an uncommon thing to hear it said, 'Ah! he *feels* like a good one.' This remark applies in a great measure to the narrow span around the 'stern' of the bird, and the fulness and extra weight at the front, where the chief motive-power is wanted. The principal points of form are, width of shoulder, shortness of back, and narrowness of rump. The size of the bird is say *medium* (for there is always a danger in either extreme), the body round and plump, and the actual outline, when bereft of feathers, presents nearly a triangular form. The head is high is front; the *beak* of the 'spindle' character, thin and dove-shaped, though not long, but 'pleasant-faced,' as they are termed. The eye prominent and of a pearly-white colour; neck short and of a sudden taper; breast, full and prominent; back, short; legs of moderate length (in muffed-legged birds they are *actually longer*, though in appearance about alike); feet rather small. The temperament of these birds is quiet and contented. They make themselves happy and comfortable either high or low, in the garret or cellar (for I have known a good kit of fliers cellar-bred), or any quarters, provided they partake of 'liberty's feast' at least once a day. They are prolific breeders, capital nurses, and are in fact the most domesticated of all the pigeon tribe. They are also of a very hardy constitution, and will thrive upon such spare diet, and in such a homely habitation, as would astonish those fanciers who have only bred and tried the experiment with the more delicate kinds of our show birds. As the Flying Tumbler has been more especially produced for his aerial performances, the various colours have in consequence been extensively crossed, in order to obtain extraordinary flying or rolling properties, rather than the improvement of either colour or markings; therefore it is in most cases quite uncertain, and mere conjecture, as to what even well-matched pairs will produce, although it must be admitted of late years (since some of these birds have been admitted as show birds), they have been more thoughtfully cared for and matched with greater consideration to the produce of issue like themselves. Still even now most of the White-winged ones will breed various coloured progeny of almost every peculiarity of marking. I remember some years ago I was asked by an intimate friend if I would procure for him a pair of pretty inexpensive pigeons, such as would 'look pretty' upon the lawn in front of the window. After carefully weighing over this matter, I purchased him a pair of cheap but good-looking Tumblers, at, I think, 3s. 6d. the pair, but of their history, pedigree, &c., I was in blissful ignorance. They were, in due course, placed in their new quarters, answered exactly their owner's expectations, and then time rolled on. I heard only occasionally of these pigeons—how they had 'increased and multiplied.' In the course of *about* two and a half years I was invited to run up and see a splendid bed of carnations, and then, said my friend, you can see the *pigeons* at the same time. I was amazed at the large number of the latter, and more so at the complete assortment. 'Yes,' said my friend, 'and they all descended from the pair you purchased for me, and we have added pens from time to time to the gable of that building yonder, until, as you see, it is now covered, and we are undecided whether to go round the corner or lop off some of the stock.' I strongly advised the 'lopping-off' process, but I must confess that amongst so large a number, and some of each colour, and of every conceivable style of marking, there was a good percentage of birds of merit so



Vincent Brooks Day & Son Lith.

FLYING TUMBLERS.

(CLEAN LEGGED)

BLACK-MOTTLED OR ROSEWINGED

YELLOW-MOTTLED RED-MOTTLED

far as looks were concerned—muffed and clean-legged, every sort, Self-colours, White-wings, &c. It will be seen by this little incident that there is no certainty of the issue being fac-simile, or even resembling the parent stock. By-the-by, in order that the list of varieties I have given may be correctly understood, I may mention that amongst a number of fanciers it has been considered that a 'Black Mottle' should have a '*handkerchief back*' (think of the absurdity of the term alone), which means a number of white feathers on the saddle. This, *I* hold, to be quite an erroneous idea, for birds thus marked are neither perfect Rosewings or Mottles, but, in my opinion, between the two.

"The following is a brief description of each sub-variety, and the peculiarities by which they are known and distinguished :—

"*Rollers* are those which at every exhibition of their rolling powers pass through an unaccountable number of backward evolutions or somersaults, in such quick succession as to appear like a falling ball. Most fanciers are satisfied if they come through the 'kit' as a ring, but when they appear in a solid form, it is known their convolutions are performed with still greater velocity. A good Roller should fairly roll twenty feet. There are lots who descend by a series of treble or more somersaults to a greater distance, but the most perfect complete a long descent in one spinning bout.

"*Tumblers* are such as fly and roll, frequently taking one, two, or more backward evolutions as up they go, and at every turn.

"*Tipplers* should merely throw a single somersault, and this very frequently; but any more (or less) is sufficient to cause him to be 'plucked' at the earliest opportunity.

"*Mad Tumblers* are those possessing the propensity of tumbling to an extraordinary, and uncontrollable, and almost unaccountable degree, such as, if liberated, even in a room, will be likely to strike against some object, and fall a lifeless victim to their strange habit. Such birds are no use whatever as fliers, as they cannot rise with safety to any height, therefore are chiefly kept as stock birds for mating with good flying birds. I may here remark that in the event of a well-flown, good Roller once coming in contact with any object during his rolling descent, it is almost a moral certainty that he will fall a prey to this affection at no distant time.

"*Twizzlers* are by some fanciers thought very interesting in their mode of operation, which action consists of a sideways spinning or pirouette movement, at the same time as the general flock take their 'turns.' For my own part, I consider this movement an imperfect attempt of probably good birds to work well, and to be contracted by reason of a too frequent habit of practising a lot of good birds together. Such a habit is easily contracted, and would soon be confirmed beyond reparation.

"Amongst the lot of Flying Tumblers, the prettiest and most attractive are Rosewings, Mottles, Self or Solid Colours, Saddles, and Red-breasts or White-sides. Any of these, when accurately marked, are really handsome as exhibition birds, no matter whether clear or feather-legged, and out of this group, too, may be chosen some wonderful fliers and performers; but if the chief desideratum be to obtain long fliers, high fliers, brilliant workers, regular and accurate Tipplers, eccentric Twizzlers, or long Rollers, a trial is absolutely necessary; occular demonstration alone of their capabilities up aloft can serve as a proof of their true worth. In such a widespread fancy, in a pursuit so general, it is only fair to suppose there is often a lack of unity of thought amongst the admirers of this breed. Some prefer the high flier, and make a selection so as to obtain in one flock such birds only as can traverse the realms of space for half a day or more. Others consider that a flock of high and long fliers, if even slow workers, affords the full enjoyment which such displays can afford, if only they will 'scrape the sky' for half an hour. Others prefer a

well-chosen flight of thirty good and true acrobats, brilliant workers, composed of three-fourths good, strong-flying, 'mid-sky' workers, and the other fourth, or say ten or twelve, long Rollers of superlative merit as leaders. This, it is said, is the ideal at which a flier should aim, and I agree there is some rare fun in this combination of talent. Then there are others (chiefly in Lancashire I think) who believe the nearest realisation of merit is that of a flight of good 'Tipplers,' such as perform, in a compact mass, their single evolutions with perfect accuracy and uniformity; such as fly high, are always busy, and endure long flights with comparative ease. Further, there are others who display rapturous delight with their 'kits' of Tumblers, Rollers, and Twizzlers, and such again is unquestionably a singular and novel sight to persons who never before witnessed this amalgamation of funny pigeons. They will, upon being liberated and started up, gradually rise in a compact body, now flying in a uniform and regular manner, steadily rising as they go, and at every turn of about three minutes' interval the whole lot will 'go off,' as it were, simultaneously, like a sudden burst of fireworks, every bird passing through his evolutions clearly and well, and on the completion and recovery from each of these aerial circumgyrations the disordered flight speedily re-unite. The gaps are quickly filled up, every bird upon rallying hastening apparently to the front, with the utmost speed, until the little band are again arranged in perfect order; then flicker, flickering tip-to-tip in a neat manner, and within a wonderfully small space, circuit after circuit is traversed, roll after roll is, with regularity of time and precision of style, passed through with daily-flown and well-chosen flights. The perfect unanimity of action which they display is matter of astonishment at times even to their owners. The Rollers, which generally fly alone and to the front of the flight, by reason of their extraordinary series of evolutions at each exhibition, may be seen falling through the busy mass like spinning balls, even to a considerable distance beneath the lot; then with a strange and dexterous movement—wings outstretched and rudder outspread—they 'catch themselves,' as it is termed, *i.e.*, steady themselves, and, upon regaining their equilibrium, speedily ascend to the busy company above, and describe their circles again and again. For my own part, I prefer a good flight of thirty or forty well-practised ordinary workers, picked birds of strong flying propensities to form the bulk, such as will rise quickly and work in *order* evenly and steadily as they ascend, until a stupendous height is attained, and then maintained for two or three hours; and with such a flock as these I prefer to put half a dozen crack, well and carefully chosen, long Rollers, with a predilection for flying equal to their loft companions; such as I mean are known as 'Top Sawyers,' 'Sky-scrapers,' or 'Leaders,' for at whatever altitude the common flock may reach, these leaders *will* be above them, and will only descend to the bulk of the workers by one or a series of their remarkable 'rolls,' such as they alone can perform. Thus they have greater space in which to perform their extraordinary feats than a larger number, with similar proclivities, would have when too crowded. One thing particularly noticeable is that the best birds invariably fly in front or above their fellows, as if to arrange for a clear space for the full exercise and development of their peculiar yet natural habit.

"I have heard it said of birds that habitually complete their day's fly with a long 'roll' of say fifteen or twenty feet, and with a dexterous 'stop' within an ace of a bang against chimney or roof, 'Ah! he rolls with his eyes open.' Now, although I should not like to say positively that they do or do not roll with open eyes, still I am inclined to believe, at least, most of their ordinary efforts are passed through with a clear vision; yet, of course, in some of the more wonderful 'rolls,' the bird becomes somewhat giddy or stupefied, on account of the rapidity or velocity at which he revolves, and thus partially, or it may be entirely, loses his powers of vision. Still, those fanciers who habitually fly large numbers of good performers together, well know that notwithstanding the close and compact space in which they all move, and the regularity and unity of action, and the

rapidity of those simultaneous movements, that a collision is almost unknown even as an accident; but if they 'performed' with closed eyes, frequent contact would be inevitable. It is then, I think, only reasonable to infer that as a rule they tumble and roll with open eyes.

"Again, much speculation has been made as to whether or not this singular action of tumbling or rolling is an involuntary one. In the case of *Mad Tumblers* the action is, I believe, mainly an involuntary movement over which they have little, if any, control; and this excessive propensity arises from the desire of fanciers to propagate 'long rollers' (or other kinds which possess the peculiarity to an eccentric degree) by mating the extraordinary ones together, and also by close breeding, thereby obtaining progeny in each case possessing to a still more remarkable degree and in a concentrated form the peculiarities of their parents, until they really cannot venture a foot from *terra firma* without endangering their lives by striking forcibly against any object that may chance to be in their way. Such, indeed, are *mad* Tumblers, and cannot maintain their equilibrium on the wing; but in ordinary or even highly meritorious birds, the habit is somewhat modified. There is, of course, in all Tumblers a natural tendency or predisposition to this peculiar action; but in good flying Rollers there is a better balance of good points; there is a more healthy and natural state of things. What (in a good healthy well-balanced natural specimen) may be a semi-voluntary impulsive action, may, by injudicious mating or close breeding, be so converted as to be regarded as a *disease*, yet without showing any external signs of disorder or malformation; and in birds with such physically ill-balanced properties (*i.e.*, instinctively diseased) action is undoubtedly involuntary, for, as I have said, their movements are so eccentric, that their perfect inability to command or control themselves upon the wing must be apparent to any one who has witnessed them. But those kinds which can sustain long flights and perform freely, must have control over the natural tendency, for were they unable to exercise any such powers there would be no *unity of action* in a flight of them, no simultaneous acrobatic movements such as is the case with good fliers, but each bird would be propelled or guided by his own involuntary agency, and aerial collisions would be of frequent occurrence.

"In the selection of a stock of Tumblers much of course depends upon the tastes of the person seeking them, for, singular to say, the poorest-looking ill-assorted things, when viewed in the pen or upon the house-top, are often the best workers, and also the prettiest when upon the wing. Saddles and Badges certainly appear up aloft to greater advantage, and their gyrations and acrobatic revolutions seem to be more complete, and performed in a neater manner by reason of their white wings lost to view during their convolutions, the dark body seeming in a smaller and more compact ball during its descent when in action; but the most beautiful and interesting collection, to my idea, is a thorough assortment of the various colours of accurately marked birds, as they look well either within the pen or upon the wing.

"On the training of flying Tumblers much might be said, but in reality very little instruction is necessary. Each fancier has his own views as to this, and I may say many differ; but most who have business occupations are obliged to conform somewhat to circumstances, and fly their birds when they can best spare the time. Undoubtedly the *best* time for a long fly is early morning or in the evening. The birds at either time should be turned out *without* food, and at once started off upon their upward journey, and no birds put up but those which can and will fly. Care must be taken to prevent any of the old stock, or new comers, or young birds, alighting on any elevated position of their own or any adjoining habitation, or they will regularly cause much annoyance and trouble in dislodging them; the greatest care in fact is required with them *at first*, and if a good plan be adopted and persevered in for a short time, the birds will soon learn to conform to it, and know full well the usual course of their daily practice. It would be of little use for me to

describe in detail any particular style of pigeon loft, as there are so many kinds, but the most suitable position for a flight of Tumblers is the most elevated place that can be appropriated to their use, and this kept for *flyers only*, in which pen *breeding* is ignored. A separate pen should be provided for the stock birds, and properly fitted up and furnished as a breeding pen, but for flying purposes the principal object is to arrange the pen and fix upon a place from which the birds may be easily got off to work straight away, and from which a full survey may be made of all their movements. On page 24 will be seen a well-arranged and suitable representation of what is necessary, and such pens are the best of places for the purpose.

"When the entire flock is well up in the air care should be exercised not to offer or display any inducement for them to descend. Still, it is always advisable to have a small reserve force at home, in case of a clash with any neighbouring 'kit,' or in case the fliers may be drifted away by wind, or overtaken by fog, snow, sleet, rain, or any other eventuality which may necessitate their speedy return home. This reserve force, say a dozen, need not be fliers, but birds of a lively yet tractable disposition, and on the approach of danger these may be liberated, one by one, as decoys or landmarks for their truant associates. It is not at all an unusual thing for a flying fancier to lose his entire stock once a year, especially if they are good ones, and this event is termed 'a fly away;' not perhaps that the birds meant to take their final departure, but were lost on account of sudden atmospheric changes, perhaps lost in a fog, or drifted away in a gale.

"The best way to practise the youngsters is to liberate them two or three at a time, tossing them right into the flight on the return of the kit, together with two or three old ones. This addition will somewhat revive the flagging energies of the lot, and be the means of breaking the juveniles gently to their duties. Old birds do not care to fly with young ones, nor is it well that a good flock should have frequent additions of young birds, but now and then a fresh infusion of lively youngsters does wonders.

"The best diet is grey peas and barley, a moderate supply of barley or buckwheat scattered to them after their first morning's fly, and abstinence throughout the day, but finishing up with a good supply of peas and barley after their evening's fly; and then, if time allow, they may be permitted to peregrinate upon the building for a short time ere they are closed up for the night; but as a rule they should be either on their perches, snug and comfortable, or else busy upon the wing; '*fly or rest*,' '*rest or fly*,' is the motto of those fanciers who estimate the value of their birds according to their powers of endurance on the wing, or for clearness and agility in the manner in which they execute their evolutions."

Somewhat allied to these birds in instinct and habits, though very different in shape and characteristics, are the singular foreign Flying Tumblers, which have to some small extent become recently known in England under the name of "Oriental Rollers." The only description of these birds we have ever seen is that contributed by Mr. Ludlow, the writer of the preceding remarks, to *The Fancier's Gazette;* and as that account really contains all that is desirable we reproduce it, with the illustration by which it was accompanied.

"The accompanying engraving is a correct representation of this very remarkable species of pigeon, which it may be truly said far excels all European Tumblers or Rollers in at least their aërial performances, for although they cannot lay claim to our consideration as beauties, they certainly cannot fail to attract our attention, and receive our admiration, as perfect wonders in their acrobatic feats up aloft.

"These singular-looking and remarkable birds hail from an Eastern clime, as their name