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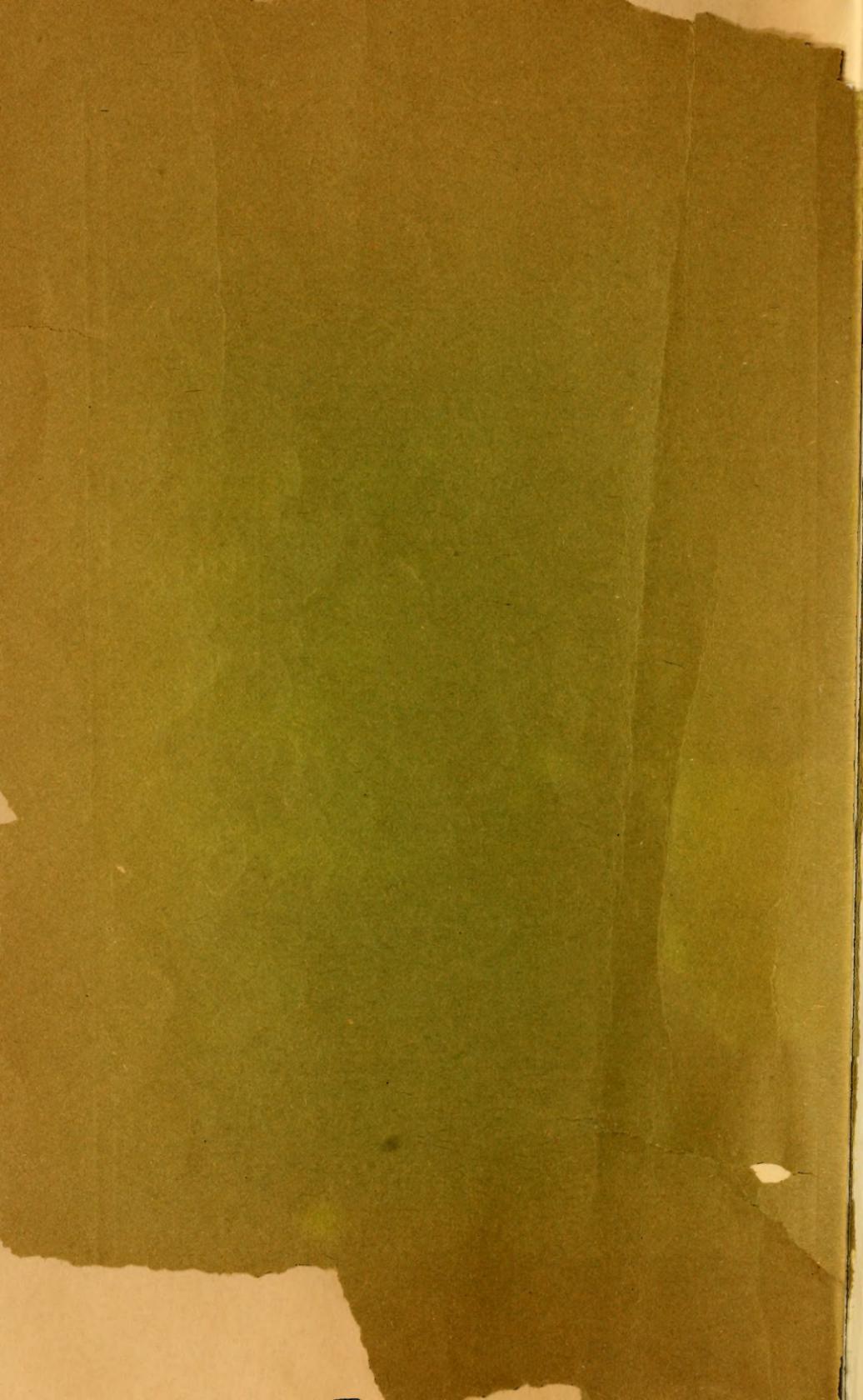
THE FEATHER'S  
**PRACTICAL SQUAB  
BOOK**

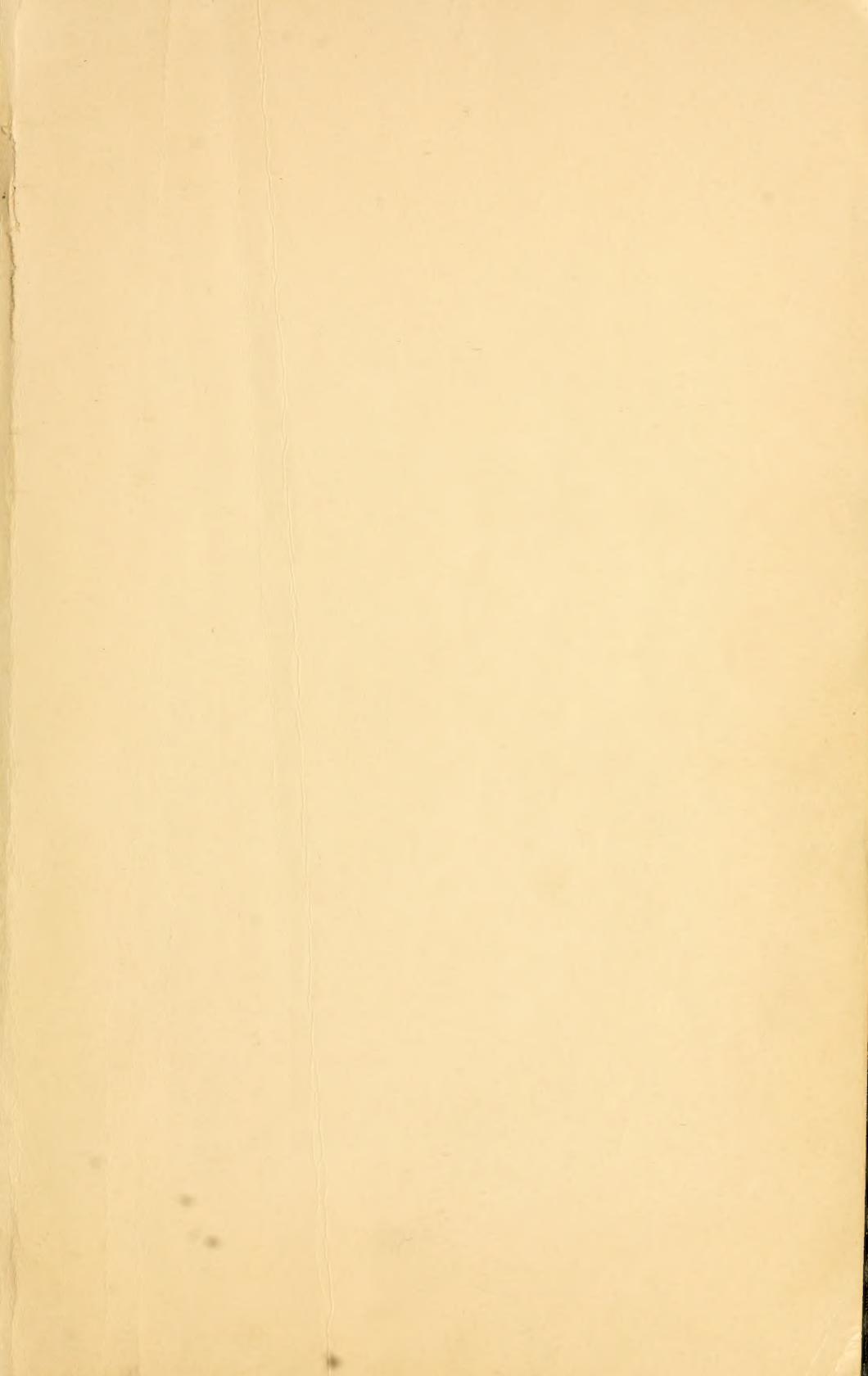


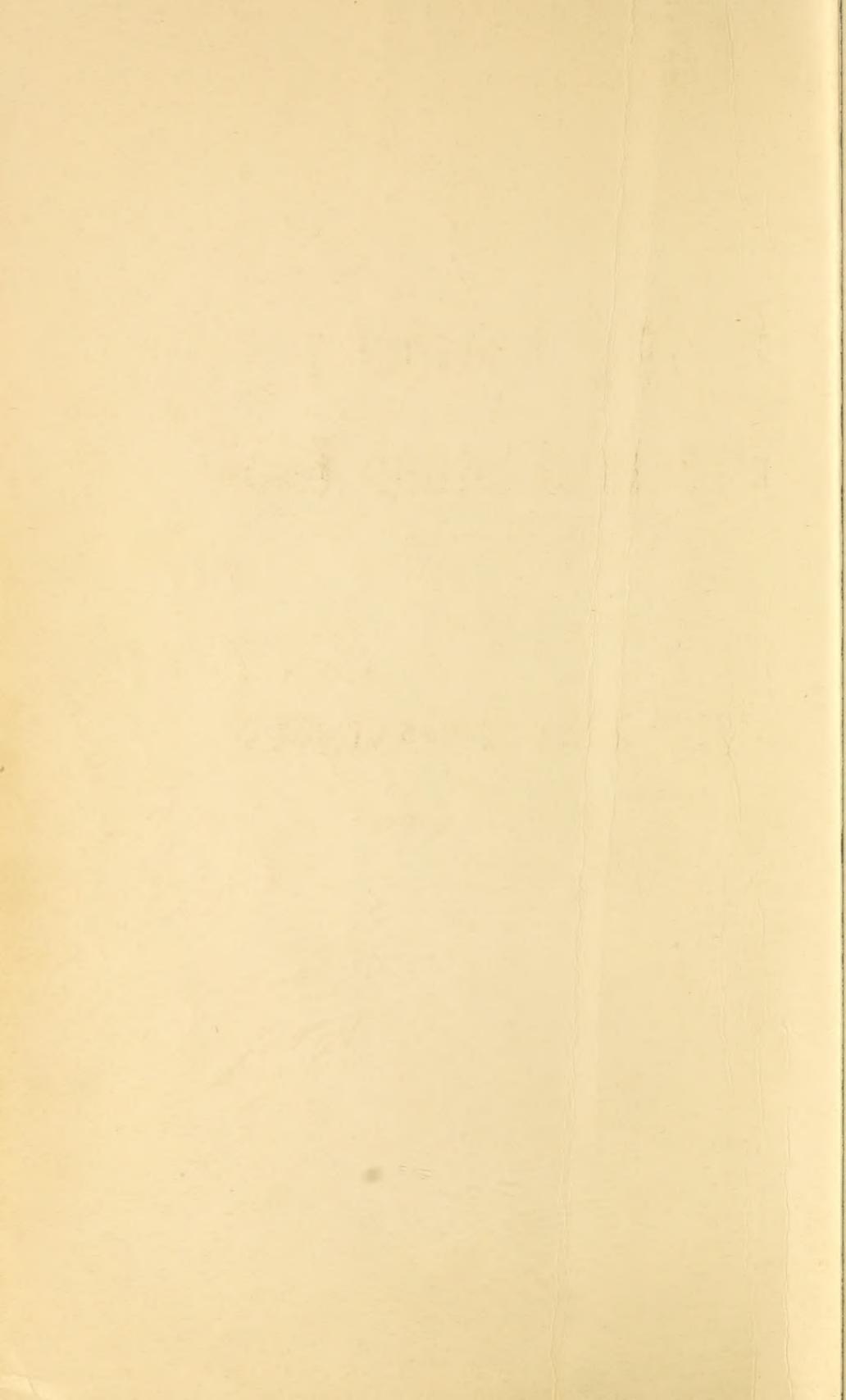
• **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.** •

BY W. E. RICE

• Published by Geo. E. Howard · Washington ·







# The Feather's Practical Squab Book

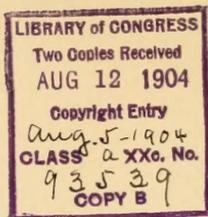


## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

BY W. E. RICE



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GEORGE E. HOWARD,  
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## INTRODUCTORY.

Some businesses are attractive simply because they are profitable and most of us are willing to engage in any honest undertaking which we can successfully manage, if it has nothing more in it to appeal to us than the money that can be made thereby. This is true even if the business has not a few disagreeable elements in it.

When, however, a business is not only profitable but one in which much pleasure can be found in its pursuit, then it becomes doubly attractive. This is peculiarly so of the business of raising squabs.

Any one who has watched a flock of pigeons and noted the iridescent loveliness of their beautiful plumage; their graceful flight when on the wing; and the bright, alert look of these splendid creatures, finds daily joy in studying them as well as solid satisfaction in handling the money they produce when cared for in a proper way.

The pigeon is a sleek bird of much beauty, and is interesting in all of its motions.—at its bath, as it disports itself in the water, dipping one wing and then the other, and submerging the whole body in a grand fluttering splash; then springing a few feet in the air, poising itself, and by rapid wing-motion, freeing its feathers of all excess of water, and then nestling on the ground in the sunshine to dry its plumage.

The purpose of issuing this book is that I may give sound, practical advice in the profitable growing of squabs, in which matter I feel that my long and successful experience warrants me in believing that I can be of service.

Very respectfully,  
WILLIAM E. RICE.

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BY

GEORGE E. HOWARD,

Washington, D. C.

## PART I.

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—The following are extracts from a few of the many questions that we have received from those who are interested in the breeding of squabs. It will be noticed in looking over them how hard it is to give a satisfactory answer in many instances. Some of the questioners give very meagre details, just noting the fact that their birds die, or their birds are sick, and expect an intelligent answer, when they should tell exactly how the birds are handled in their sickness, what kinds of grains, grits, stimulants (if any), the birds are allowed in their daily rations.

All queries have been answered just as completely as the facts in the case would warrant, and while the author of this book desires to give all the information possible in connection with the squab-breeding business, it is necessary that all who read should understand how very important it is to go into details when anything is wrong in the breeding-pens.

#### A VARIETY NECESSARY.

Q. Will you please explain why my pigeons do not eat their feed clean, but scatter it about the floor?

A. To answer this I must first ask some questions as other Yankees do. How are you feeding? Cracked corn only, or wheat alone, or these two grains mixed? Are these grains sweet and wholesome or are they musty? If the grains are sound you are keeping them on too exclusive a diet and should give them more variety. Feed millet, Kaffir corn, Canada peas, with the wheat and cracked corn regularly and once a week give hemp-seed sparingly, and see that the birds are fed *only* what they will eat up clean. If you think your birds

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do not need a variety, feed yourself on buckwheat cake and Jersey sausage three times a day for only a week, then tell me how you would enjoy an invitation to breakfast on Jersey sausage and buckwheat cakes.

However, if you are feeding a sufficient variety examine closely to see if the quality is strictly first class and see whether they have a full supply of grit, charcoal, and salt.

### TOO MUCH WHEAT.

Q. My birds are very loose, making their nest very foul, and keeping the floor covered with soft, mushy manure. Can you suggest a remedy?

A. You have not given me very full particulars to diagnose your trouble, but my first guess is that you are feeding too largely on wheat; if so, slack up,—but first of all thoroughly clean up that pen. You will not enjoy the job but it will do the birds good and it will lead to being more careful after you know the cause of the trouble.

After scraping up and removing all filth from nests and floor, mix an ounce of crude carbolic acid and powdered lime, and scatter in all cracks and corners and damp places and then cover the floor with good, clean sand a quarter of an inch deep. Then in feeding use only one-tenth of wheat in a ration composed of equal parts of cracked corn, peas, Kaffir corn, and millet. Use the latter only once a day and give the birds sweet fern tincture, a tablespoonful to a gallon of drinking-water for two days and the same quantity of tincture of gentian once a week (in the drinking-water), and see that the birds have free access to a supply of charcoal, finely crushed oyster-shells, and salt. If you have not been giving salt regularly, use it sparingly until the birds become

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accustomed to it, for if they have been denied it they would eat it too greedily and hurt themselves in consequence.

### OVERCROWDED LOFT.

Q. I would be very grateful to you if you would kindly tell me why I lose so many squabs during the winter months. My losses have been large and I do not know the cause.

A. Like the previous patient, you give me very little information to give positive reasons for your ill-success, but there are several causes for your squabs dying, and you may surely depend upon it that the cause is removable. Let me ask you first how many birds you have in a pen—if more than twenty-five pairs in a pen eight by ten feet, they are too crowded and this of itself would be a sufficient cause. Or you might not have sufficient nests—each pair of birds should have two nesting-places. Second—Do you know positively that your birds are all mated? If they are not I can soon explain your trouble. Perhaps you have a couple of extra cock-birds or two extra hens. If you have such do not expect good results, but look for trouble, for if there is an extra cock-bird he will spend all the day visiting from one nest to another seeking a mate and will sometime force his way into a nest and the resulting fight is most surely death to the squabs, they often being found dead upon the floor. Likewise an extra hen will cause as much mischief, for in such case some cock-bird will play Brigham Young and have two wives, when there will be as much trouble in the nest as if two wives were in the same house anywhere else except among the Mormons. If we have not yet touched the trouble let me ask you if you ever see any mice in your pens. If

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so, here is the cause, for mice will cause much mischief in the breeding-pens, and I have known instances where \$50 worth of squabs have been lost in a very short time in this way; the old mice make their nest underneath the squabs in the bottoms of it, and by their presence and movements scare the old birds, when the squabs die from exposure. Pigeons are easily alarmed at any unusual noise, and any movement underneath them, as a mouse crawling in, will cause them to instantly leave the nest and fear to return.

Examine closely for mice and clean out all hiding-places in which they might harbor, for if they once gain an entrance to the pens, the warmth of the nests speedily attracts them and in the winter season is extremely gratifying to them and they quickly learn that such a place is a snug home, and unless vigorous measures are used to exterminate them you will have serious trouble.

Only a week ago I passed through a pen whose owner had lost many squabs by mice. Here I found little birds from a few hours to two weeks old lying cold and stiff in death. Their crops were all well filled and death from exposure was only too evident. An examination showed plainly that mice had nested under the squabs, young mice being found snug and warm, and the entering of the old mice after dark had scared the old birds from the nest, when they were either afraid or unable to find the way back and the young birds quickly chilled and died.

### SELECT BREEDERS IN THE SPRING.

Q. When is the best time to save young birds for breeders, and the best way to take care of them? And should they be kept in a separate house by themselves? Would it make any difference if old birds are kept with them?

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A. April, May, and June are the best months. Every week when you visit the house to select the squabs, when you find a pair of good size, well feathered, sitting in the nest, and from a pair of your best breeders, mark them for keeping and let them remain a week or so with the old birds until they are noticed to go in and out of the fly. Then it is time to take them out, and they should at once be removed to a fly by themselves.

These young birds should be carefully fed just all they will clean up and no more. No feed should be permitted to lay around—using cracked corn, wheat, and Kaffir corn, no peas being used in their ration—and see that pure water is freely supplied for drinking and bathing.

By all means keep all young birds separated from the old birds, for they will thrive and grow better than when in a pen with older birds; for the old birds will worry and chase them about and their growth will be stunted.

### INJURED BY FRIGHT.

Q. Please tell me what is the cause of my young birds having lumps on their wings. I have a pen of fine young birds, but several have lumps on their wings. Can you tell me the cause, so that, if possible, I can prevent it in the future?

A. Your birds, I judge, have not yet become settled away, and are probably scared. If you notice every time you go near your pen of birds they will all flock to the exit-holes. They are afraid you are going to catch them again. In crowding about the exits to get out, some hurt their wings, which causes the swellings you notice. It takes about eight weeks for a bird to recover from such injury. I have had birds injured in

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this way, and have tried all remedies but have finally come to the conclusion to let Nature take her own course. Leave them in the pen, unless the cock-bird or older birds chase them around too much, in which case removal to another place by themselves is advisable.

Whenever it is necessary to catch any bird, the house should be entered quietly, and as soon as inside stand perfectly still for half a minute or until the birds get settled away; then quietly approach the bird you want, and, holding both hands above the bird, catch the bird as it flies up and make your exit as quickly as you can.

### PROBABLY TOO YOUNG.

Q. Can you tell me why it is that the eggs from my young birds do not hatch well, and also why, when hatched, the squabs are not well raised?

A. You must not expect too much from young birds just mated. Oftentimes the first pair of eggs do not hatch. The young birds do not sit steadily on them and they get chilled. The young birds do not attend to their duties properly.

When hatched, the young birds also seem sometimes to lack experience, and do not feed the squabs properly, and as a consequence, they suffer and sometimes die. If you get squabs enough to pay expenses in three months after mating you are doing well, and should be perfectly satisfied, and after this the birds will have acquired sufficient experience and will give you good returns.

### POSSIBLE INCOME.

Q. Please inform me how much money I ought to make with a flock of five hundred pairs of pigeons.

A. Out of this number, provided your birds are good, vigorous stock and straight Homers, and properly cared

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for, you ought to market 5,500 squabs in a year. This is allowing eleven squabs to each pair of birds, which is a fair average.

In the New York market these birds were worth, according to prices ruling in 1902, an average of sixty cents per pair for the whole season, and makes the gross receipts \$1,650. The expenses of feeding, at, say, \$1.20 per pair of birds, which according to the present prices of grain, amounts to \$600, and incidental expenses would add \$50 more, making \$650, leaving a margin of \$1,000 for the time and trouble used in caring for them. Of course, to do this the birds must all be mated, and good working stock.

### BADLY FRIGHTENED.

Q. Kindly advise me what is the trouble with my birds. I have a new pigeon-house with 100 pairs of birds in it, but I can not get them to go in the roost at night. I have shut them in for three days at a time, but when allowed the freedom of the fly again, they would not go to roost in the pen, but stayed out all night in a heavy downpour of rain, and next morning looked like drowned rats.

A. Perhaps you have a hundred pairs of wild pigeons, for your flock is evidently badly scared about something. Perhaps your birds have been caught and reshipped several times, and it takes time to settle a flock, which has been handled so much. Every time you go among your birds go very quietly, throw a handful of hemp in the feeding-tray, and try to tame them down a little. Do all your feeding and watering inside the house, allow no one to go with you, and go very quietly, making no sudden motions, using a little hemp first before you feed. Your flock will come around all

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right with a little patience. By all means seek to quiet your birds, and never scare them, using all possible gentleness.

### HOW TO BEGIN.

Q. I am very much interested in pigeons, and will be very grateful for a little advice how to start in the pigeon business.

A. My advice is first build a neat house say 10x12 feet, setting it up on brick piers about a foot from the ground, so as to avoid all danger from rats. Make the fly of wire netting, eight feet high, 10x14 feet. This will accommodate twenty-five pairs of birds. Make nests inside the house a foot square and nine inches high, having the bottoms removable for cleaning out. Keep sand on the floor about a quarter of an inch thick, and use a tray 1x3 feet to feed out of, and get a two-gallon stone fountain for drinking-water, a smaller box for salt, one for oyster-shells, and one for charcoal. Level the ground within the fly, and cover about four inches deep with clean, gritty sand—not gravel full of stones, but good sand. You are now ready to get birds. Get some one who knows how to purchase your stock—first-class Homers, if possible—from some reliable breeder. Start with, say, five pairs of birds that are surely known to be mated, and study these birds until you become acquainted with them, and have successfully raised several pairs of squabs, then add five or ten more pairs of birds as you prefer, but do not put any new birds in the house or fly until they are surely mated.

### HOW TO MANAGE YOUNG BREEDERS.

Q. Do you allow your young breeders to fly at liberty? I mean young stock just weaned which are to be used

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for breeders, and what percentage of loss ought I to expect up to the time they are three months old?

A. As fast as young birds are taken from the old ones put them in a separate pen in which none but young ones are kept. Feed them in the morning and do not let them out of the pen into the fly until noon, at which time let them out in fly for exercise. Do this as long as you are adding young birds. When no more young ones are to be added, let the exit-holes remain open all the time. If you find a dumpy bird pluck the tail-quills at once and watch them daily so that sickness may not get the start, and your losses ought not to exceed five per cent.

### HOW TO FEED SALT.

Q. What is the cause of canker? And how shall I feed salt?

A. Canker in old birds generally comes from a cold caused by draught. See that all the cracks are stopped up, and canker should not bother you. The question is dealt with more fully in another part of the book. As to the proper way to feed salt, I will gladly answer. If pigeons have not been accustomed to a daily supply feed a limited quantity at first—a teaspoonful on a clean board—and notice how eagerly the birds will peck every particle of it. Feed a little more next day and gradually increase the quantity until some is left at night when a full supply may be kept before them all the time. A small box filled weekly will answer the purpose, but should be carefully cleaned out whenever it gets foul. Do not use rock salt. I have seen it used with bad results. In a certain pen I once saw a large lump of rock salt on top of a box filled with sand, and when the birds were watered a small quantity of water was dashed on the salt, which running down on the salt would make the

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sand salty, but because the birds could not pick off the salt they would gorge themselves with the salty sand and soon became in bad condition in consequence, with crops filled with sand. My advice is to use fine table salt, nothing else, no rock salt—"salt cat" or bag of salt soaked in water which soon hardens like rock. I know it is much easier to throw in such lumps in the pen, but they soon become filthy and the birds do not get a regular supply. Salt is essential to the health of all living animals, and should be supplied daily as needed.

### HAVE CANKER AND CHOLERA.

Q. My birds are sitting around on the ground, not being able to fly, and are dying. Have a running at the bill and yellow discharge at the anus.

A. From the description given your birds were probably in bad condition when purchased, and I should think they had canker and a touch of the cholera.

### SQUABS DIE AND EGGS GET COLD.

Q. I have four hundred pigeons which I feed well and give plenty of water, but a great many squabs die in the nests, or the old birds leave the nest and the eggs get cold. I do not think it can be lice, as I spray the box with a good lice-killer. The pigeons are shut in pens, one twenty-five feet by thirty feet with one hundred and eighty birds in it. The other is forty feet long by twenty feet wide, with an underground passage, so that the birds may go from one pen to the other. The pens are six feet high. Any information which you can give me as to why the squabs die in the nest and why the old ones leave the eggs will be thankfully received.

A. You evidently have not very desirable quarters for

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squab breeding. In the first place plug up that tunnel—pigeons engaged in the breeding enterprise have no time to devote to mining operations and should never be permitted to go from one pen to another. Do you know positively whether all your birds are mated? If not, this will explain your trouble. Are there any rats or mice in the pens? The presence of either of these vermin will explain your trouble.

If you have unmated birds in either pen you must expect dead squabs and cold eggs—for a single, extra cock-bird unmated will break up a pen of one hundred and fifty pairs of breeders, for he will work ten hours a day going from nest to nest scrapping with every bird he meets and has no tender regard for either squabs or eggs. Take him out and keep him out.

As to mice, examine all nests, especially the high ones, and you may find you are raising as many mice as you do squabs. You can not raise mice and squabs at the same time. A bird will not sit on a nest with a lot of mice squirming about beneath her or with the old mice running around over the nest. Look out for rats, for these vermin, rats and mice, are worse than lice.

Your houses are large but not in the right shape for squab breeding. A house fifty-six feet long by twelve feet wide, divided into seven pens, with fifty pairs of birds in each pen will accommodate 350 pairs. The house must be at least eighteen inches from the ground to prevent rats and mice entering, with a good board floor, and a three-foot alley-way on the north side. This gives a room 8x9 feet for each breeding-pen. In each of these have 120 nests. After preparing your house in this shape put only mated birds in each pen until each pen is filled. Band each pair of birds and keep a careful record of them before putting them in

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the pen. Go through your flock in this way and by the time you have done it thoroughly you are fairly started on the way of squab growing, but be certain that you will not have any success until you do this work. For light have two six-light windows in the south side of each pen, and three six-light windows in the north side.

### JUMBO SQUABS.

Q. I understand there are squab breeders who say the premium class often weigh eight pounds, and sometimes nine pounds, and will bring \$4 a dozen. I often raise them that weigh twelve to fifteen pounds to the dozen. I would like to know what class they belong to.

A. You have evidently large-sized birds, probably Runts, for breeders, and your squabs, I should say, belong to the Jumbo class. Squabs that weigh twelve to fifteen pounds per dozen are worth, in the New York market, \$5 a dozen, as a rule. There are very few birds going into market that weigh over eight pounds to the dozen.

### BIRDS' FREEDOM NOT ADVISED.

Q. As compared to the colony confinement plan, what do you think of the same arrangement of pens, openings, feeding, etc., minus the wired enclosure, where conditions for freedom are favorable?

A. For raising pigeons for pleasure and with a small flock, there would be, perhaps, no objection to letting the birds have their freedom. Losses must be expected in such case, from hawks and gunners. If, however, one is engaged in the squab business for profit the wired fly, so that birds can not escape, is the best arrangement, for the birds are under the eye of the breeder and if anything gets amiss can be easily and quickly at-

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tended to. Squabs will be regularly fed, for the parent birds will receive their feed at regular times.

### NOT TOO YOUNG TO BEGIN.

Q. I am a boy sixteen years of age, and am fond of all kinds of pets, but have never kept pigeons. Do you think I could make any money raising squabs?

A. I can best answer your question by saying I know a young man on a farm who began with pigeons when just your age, his father furnishing him feed for them for one-half the profits. This young man is now a little more than twenty-one years old and is said to have \$1,000 in bank at interest as the result of his work. But I can not say that you could do so well, and again, you might do better, for this young man had some serious losses.

My best advice to you is to begin with a few pairs or even one pair, and, if possible, visit some one who has been successful for several years and if he is willing to tell you how he manages you will get valuable suggestions. If you begin with a single pair of birds keep them until they have successfully raised the first pair of squabs, and if pleased with the result get a few more birds as your purse will allow. Keep a record of your flock and constantly dispose of any that fail to show results after a fair trial. Do not get any except pure-blood Homers, and be certain they are mated before putting them in the breeding-quarters. Any time you buy new birds keep them in a separate enclosure until mated.

Attend to your birds personally and see that no musty or tainted grains are fed them and only pure, fresh water given them. I wish you the best of success.

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### SOFT CANKER.

Q. I am losing at least fifty per cent of my squabs by an ailment not described in any of the books at my command, and thus presume upon your time and courtesy to see if I can enlighten myself concerning it. When from three to six days old they begin to sit with head thrown up and back, constantly gaping, inflamed about the gills and upper neck, and in most cases a puffing of air under the skin about neck and breast. I have never yet saved a squab thus affected. Can you enlighten me as to cause and remedy? If so, I will be under lasting obligations.

A. This is an excellent description of soft canker. It is one of the most dreaded diseases and the hardest to cure, most especially in squabs. It is almost invariably fed to the squabs by the parents, though they show no signs of it. If several pairs of youngster from the same pair are so afflicted, kill the old birds, as their time of usefulness has passed. There is no known preventive, for nest after nest will produce squabs with this ailment. I had a pair of fancy birds which died. I took their eggs and put them under Homing Pigeons, putting the Homers' eggs under the fancy birds. The result was the Homers raised the fancy birds, but the Homer squabs died with canker. It appears among all kinds of birds and in the best-regulated lofts. It will be noticed that the throat is closed with a thick, gummy, yellow substance, and when they are fed the solid food sticks in the throat while the water goes down. Then there is a certain amount of air pumped into their crop so that it is puffed.

The only effective remedy is to clean out the throat with a flat stick or ear-swab, and wash it with a solution of 5 grains of nitrate of silver to 1 oz. of water.

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The throat should be swabbed clear down to the crop, when it will be noticed the air will leave the crop and the squab will get several good feeds before the throat closes again. Do this twice a day, if the bird is worth it; otherwise the gain does not pay for the trouble.

### DO NOT USE BROOM-CORN SEED.

Q. I would be very glad to know if you consider broom-corn seed a good food for pigeons.

A. I do not use broom-corn seed in my pens, because I do not like the sharp beard which the seed has. I have known some breeders to use the seed but do not know whether they continued to use it nor with what success. Any bearded grain such as barley, sugar-cane, oats, and all others which have beards, or sharp-pointed ends, I fear to use on account of the tendency of such grains to make sore mouths and consequently more liability to canker.

### SEEKS MORE INFORMATION.

Q. A breeder who read an able article on squabs writes to elicit more information.

A. 1st. Regarding roosts: I do not allow a perch or roosting-place inside, but let all the birds use the nesting-places for roosting. Each of my rooms has 120 nesting-places twelve inches square and nine inches high, and the birds invariably roost in these. In the fly I have nothing to obstruct the flight of the birds, everything being entirely clear from exit to end of fly, nothing across against which the birds might strike in their flight. But on each side of fly there is a six-inch board on which pigeons may alight. This board is four feet from ground, the fly being thirty-two feet in length and these boards running the entire length.

2nd. If squabs are raised for breeders do they have to

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roost outside all the time, or do they sit in nest-boxes until old enough to hatch?

My practice in raising squabs for breeders is as follows: Every Thursday is killing-day at my place. In the morning I personally go through my house and select all fit for market and if I find a pair of extra-fine birds from a good pair of breeders, (and this is the only kind I save,) I leave them in the nests until they are about five weeks old or as soon as they are able to fly out the exit-hole. Then I remove them to a separate house kept for the sole purpose of raising young birds and in which they are kept until they are mated. I always allow young birds to select their mates instead of picking out two birds and putting them in mating-boxes until mated, as I get better results when left to their own choice.

3rd. Breeder further questions as to whether it would not be well to lay a double floor with wire netting between to exclude mice.

I use best beaded flooring, single thickness, and find it entirely satisfactory and free from any trouble of this nature, but my houses are on brick piers eighteen inches high from the ground.

4th. He also asks about sheathing walls with paper.

The north side of my houses is the alley way. I would suggest lining this side with paper then sheathing again with ten-inch beaded sheathing. This makes a very warm wall; the south side I do not regard as necessary to be sheathed.

5th. Respecting his suggestion as to using nest-pans, I consider them very good and use them in all my houses, and respecting the use of pine needles,—I would advise their use where they can be easily obtained, and would certainly use them if I could get them.

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6th. As to windows about which he further asks—I would say I have ten six-light sliding windows to ten by twelve lights in south side of each pen. These are fifteen inches from the floor and can be opened to any desired width for purposes of airing. From the tone of his communication and his statement as to previous losses in the pigeon business I am afraid he is not very practical and I extend to him an invitation to cross the Delaware Bay and visit my place and I shall be pleased to give him my personal guidance in looking over my plant and may be able to give him valuable pointers.

### WHAT CAUSES CANKER.

Q. Can you tell the cause and remedy for "canker" in squabs.

A. Your question is a very difficult one to answer. There are various kinds of canker and perhaps various causes for same. Sometimes inbreeding, which tends to reduce vitality, renders the birds more susceptible to the disease. If there is any taint of canker in old birds I think it can very easily cause infection.

Examine all your birds thoroughly and if any are found with a lump in mouth or throat, remove such growth with a small stick or match-stick, being very careful not to draw blood, and then treat as mentioned below. Besides the lumpy canker, the disease sometimes manifests itself in a spongy or "cheesy" form called soft canker. When any accumulation of this nature is noticed inside the mouth and around the bill, procure a swab and using pure, clean water thoroughly cleanse the mouth. Now take a piece of blue-stone the size of a chestnut, put it in a four-ounce bottle of water, letting it thoroughly dissolve, and with a camel's-hair brush apply the solution to the parts affected, first carefully scraping off any portion of cankerous growth

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which may not have been dislodged by the swabbing. Repeat daily until bird is cured and treat squabs in same way.

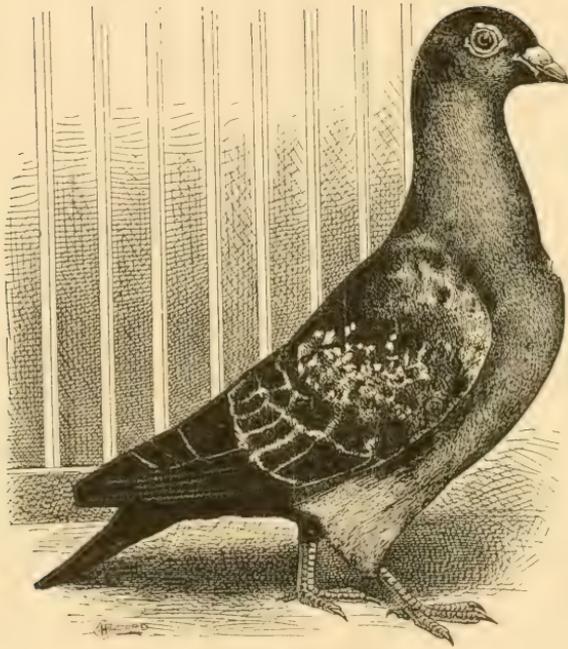
If the old bird is so cankered as to breathe with much difficulty, my advice is to destroy such bird at once. If your squabs have hard lumps in throat, do not try to save them, as it is almost always futile. Destroy them and if you have cured the old birds, let them breed again: but if they continue to give cankerous squabs you had better destroy them. If the old birds have no cankers, and their squabs have, perhaps you may have had draught in your house, or the nest is near the exit-holes, which may chill the squabs and render them more susceptible to the disease, especially if at the same time the feed or water should be impure. I think canker is somewhat akin to diphtheria and many things may contribute to its growth.

See that your birds get pure food, clean water, plenty of salt, oyster-shells, charcoal, and full supply of clean grit, and feed with regularity, keeping your houses well cleaned weekly and at each cleaning use powdered lime and carbolic acid, scattered in edges of nests and on the floor.

If you are in the squab business for a living, it might pay you to pay me a visit some time. I might be able to show you something, and might learn something from you.

### PIGEONS GOING LIGHT.

Q. My trouble is pigeons "going light." I have all Homers and Dragoons, and a cross from Hennies, Runts, and Mondaines. I have a new house, 12 feet wide, 48 feet long, and 16 feet high in front with two stories, the upper for breeding, and lower (7 feet high with open front) for feeding and watering, and have



RED CHECK HOMER.

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ground floor. Am feeding screenings, cracked corn, millet, Canada peas, and hemp-seed twice a week sparingly. Give them drinking-water in fountain three times daily, and tubs for bathing purposes which are emptied as soon as used. Have two inches of sand on floor of breeding-pen.

A. Stop feeding screenings. I consider them unsafe because they consist mainly of shriveled grains and seeds of weeds. In place of screenings use pure red wheat that has not been sunburnt and such only as millers buy for grinding into flour.

Feed according to directions which you will find under head of feeding, and if your birds are from young, vigorous stock and not inbred and have full supply of salt, oyster-shells, charcoal, and grit and are well cared for they ought not to go light; but if the birds are getting old, and have been bred continuously for several years, the best remedy is to get new stock. Perhaps you have an extra cock-bird in your pen; if so such bird will drive a hen when the other cock-bird is also driving, and as a consequence the hen is not given time to feed properly.

Go through your pens and remove every unmated bird of either sex, leaving nothing but mates. As soon as you discover a bird "going light" catch the bird and holding it firmly in one hand grasp all the tail-feathers firmly with the other and with a sudden jerk pull all the tail-quills at one motion—never pull out one feather at a time—by doing this when it first makes its appearance you can save nine birds out of ten. If you allow the trouble to run for a week without attention it is difficult to save such bird. Get ten cents' worth of pure cod liver oil and three cents' worth of creosote, mix well and use an ordinary dropper; fill it, and opening the bird's bill administer the contents, giv-

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ing the dose twice daily for four or five days. Give compound tincture of gentian about three times a month, —a tablespoonful to a gallon of drinking-water. Gentian is a good tonic and serves to keep the birds in good health. Remove all birds that are in bad condition to a temporary hospital until thoroughly cured.

### NO FACTS IN THE CASE.

Q. Will you kindly let me know what the disease was that got into my flock of Homing Pigeons and killed them all; and what to do to kill it out? Before one would die it would lose the use of its legs and feet, get droopy, tumble forward, and die.

A. What will we do with such questions? Lose the use of its legs, get droopy, tumble forward and die. I never saw a sick bird that was not droopy, and when they die they always tumble forward or some other way. Nothing is said as to how long the birds are sick, whether they have symptoms of cholera, go light, or some other ailment. Nothing is said about how the birds were fed, or where they obtained water, whether they were ever given any stimulants or oyster-shells, salt, charcoal, etc., whether the flies were kept clean and sanded, and many other things which should have been mentioned if an intelligent answer was expected.

Clean out the houses thoroughly, fumigate with plenty of crude carbolic acid and air-slacked lime, dig up the flies, or any other ground where the flock of birds were, and give that a thorough coat of the same acid and lime, and with proper attention birds should do all right in such a place provided the houses are arranged for the purpose.

### WANTS TO ENTER THE BUSINESS.

Q. I want to start in the business of raising squabs

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for market. Can you tell me if it will be profitable and whether the squabs should be dressed or sold alive?

A. My advice to a beginner invariably is to start with a few pairs of first-class birds, well mated, and after a few months' experience if you learn how to feed and manage them you can safely enlarge your flock by further purchases. As to the profits—they will depend entirely upon the management—if the birds are well housed and properly fed they will yield a profit.

New York markets require the squabs dressed; Boston will take them bled only; Baltimore takes them alive. I am unacquainted with the Western markets, but you can easily inquire at your nearest large city.

### KEEP SEPARATE.

Q. Will you inform me if I can successfully raise fancy pigeons in a loft occupied by Homers for squab breeding without their interfering with each other?

A. My advice is not to mingle fancy birds with Homers. If you want to raise fancy birds keep them separate. If you wish to raise squabs from Homers keep them separate and you will have better results, for there would doubtless be more or less mixing of breeds if kept together.

### HOMERS OR HOMER-RUNT CROSS.

Q. Will you kindly tell me when Homers are through molting and if then is a good time to start in with a flock of squab breeders? Are Homers or Homer-Runt crosses considered best for squab breeders?

A. As to molting the best answer is that birds are done molting when they get a full new coat of feathers, and this varies with the season and condition of the birds; the season is generally August and September, but individual birds may not get through until middle of October and I have known birds to molt in December.

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After the molting-season is a better time to buy than at the beginning. As to the variety, my preference is for straight Homers although I have a few Homers and Dragoons crossed. No improvement is made by crossing with Runt blood. The Runt is too slow and lazy and few squabs are the result.

WANTS ADVICE AS TO KEEPING PIGEONS AND CHICKENS TOGETHER.

Q. My idea is to build a house about 8x8 feet, with an open-front shed to the west. This building is to be 14 feet high in front and 12 feet high back, facing south, the downstairs to be used for chickens and upstairs for pigeons—with a covered run 25 feet deep for a fly. Now what I should like to know is whether the pigeons and chickens are likely to get along together. I suggest this arrangement because my room is cramped and I want to keep both.

A. Keeping pigeons and chickens together I regard as risky on account of lice. If the henhouse is kept thoroughly clean with carbolic acid and dry lime plentifully used, the lice may not be troublesome, but constant watching must be given, especially during hot weather or the lice will soon boss the situation. In one week's time lice can gain the upper hand and cause infinite trouble. Lice can be kept down much more easily in a pigeon loft used for pigeons alone than where pigeons and chickens are kept in same building. In a house 8x8 feet you must not keep more than twenty-five pairs of birds, and be sure that each pair is mated before being placed in the loft or you will have trouble all the time.

A BAD CASE OF CHOLERA.

Q. I have a flock of about seventy-five pairs of pigeons and have lost nearly half of them in a week's time.

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They have diarrhea of a green color and watery. They seem all right one day and the next morning are dead. I have cut open several birds to see what the ailment is and found the lining of the gizzard of a dark green color. Could you tell me what it might be and a remedy? I had intended buying stock for squab raising. How long would I have to wait, and what would I have to do before I put any birds in the house where the sickness is?

A. From the description given you have a serious case of the cholera. Before placing any birds in the infected house, clean all the nests, floors, and all corners, scraping everything thoroughly. Use a peck of air-slacked lime and about 15 cents' worth of crude carbolic acid well mixed together. Sprinkle the mixture on the floor, in nests and all cracks, going over all thoroughly. If this is well done I would not hesitate to place birds in the same enclosure again. Of course, you understand the fly should have equally as good attention as the house. About two inches of the soil should be removed and fresh sand brought in to fill up, sprinkling well with the carbolated lime before sanding.

### SQUABS DIE AS SOON AS HATCHED.

Q. I have twelve pairs of pigeons and am feeding one part of cracked corn and two parts of wheat with an occasional feed of Kaffir corn, hemp, and crushed Canada peas. My trouble is that the squabs die before a day old. Have had hatch after hatch result in this way. Can you tell me what is the matter? And how often should I use a "salt cat"?

A. In carefully considering your letter, I should say you must be careful to let Nature take her course in reference to hatching. The eggs after pipping must under no circumstances be touched, nor the squabs when

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hatched. I have known persons to enter a house and noticing a squab hatching, take the egg and try to help the squab out of the shell. This is all wrong. Do not touch the egg or young, for Nature may be trusted to attend to her part in the affair and death will almost invariably be caused by the meddler who may think he can improve on Nature's method. Your method of feeding is faulty. Too much wheat entirely, which causes looseness of bowels. Do not attempt to handle the eggs or young when hatching. As to the "salt cat", if you use it at all keep it constantly before them: otherwise the birds will gorge themselves to their injury.

### BIRDS NOT MATED.

Q. In a house 24x12 feet I have three hundred birds and am not getting as many squabs as I think I ought and am not sure that my birds are all mated, and would like your advice as to the best plan to get them mated.

A. In mating birds to the best satisfaction two persons are necessary. Just as soon as a pair is noticed driving, let one person keep his eye on the hen and the other select the cock-bird, and, keeping the birds in sight, let one use a small net such as is used for landing fish, but preferably larger, and entering the pen catch the bird he has already selected, when the other one may be pointed out by the assistant and caught. These birds should be placed in a separate enclosure, and the whole flock gone through in the same manner. After all mated birds are thus penned together count what cock-birds and also hens are left. If there are more of one sex than the other, buy a few more of the needed sex to even up and let them mate up before being placed with the mated pairs. By all means never allow an extra bird

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of either sex among your breeders or you will have trouble all the time. If the birds you catch have squabs or eggs, put the squabs under other birds to rear, and put the eggs in other nests if there are nests with only one egg in, otherwise break them, as you had better lose eggs in this way than to continue with a lot of unmated birds.

SIX AND ONE-HALF TO SEVEN PAIRS A FAIR AVERAGE.

Q. What numbers of pairs of squabs is a fair average for each pair of breeders to produce, annually?

A. From six and one-half to seven pairs of squabs are a fair average for a flock consisting of from one hundred to five hundred pairs. Smaller flocks, carefully culled and mated, may average from eight to ten pairs.

A FORTUNE IN SUCH BIRDS IF FOUND.

Q. Have you for sale one hundred pairs or more Homers, twelve to eighteen months old, in prime condition, mated and guaranteed to produce nine to ten pairs per year, weighing ten pounds to a dozen at four weeks old? White-meat squabs only.

A. It would take me a good while to answer just as I would like to. In the first place, if any man had a large flock of birds that would produce nine to ten pairs of squabs per year he would have a fortune. I think from your letter you have been reading the stuff from some of the get-rich-quick squab companies, which I do not take a particle of stock in, although you might give them a chance to prove what they say.

I have bred Homing Pigeons for squab breeding for the last eight years, and out of six hundred or more pairs (and as fine as can be bought) my birds average

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me about six pairs of marketable squabs per year to each pair, an average of eight pounds to the dozen.

If you get a lot of birds, preserve this letter and see how near right I am, and if you get a lot of the truck and trash scraped up from Southern points, and sold through agents, you will have a job meeting expenses.

If you get together a nice flock of Homing Pigeons that will average you, say four pairs of squabs per year, you can clear \$1 per pair on each pair of old birds. It costs \$1 per year to feed each pair. During the winter of 1903, squabs cleared 80 cents per pair, the prices gradually dropping to 54 cents per pair. Say the average price is 60 cents, four pairs would be \$2.40, the feed would be \$1, other expenses 20 cents, which would leave you at least \$1.20 profit per pair. I always say \$1 per year clear is a sound conservative estimate, and there are a great many who are practical breeders who will agree with me.

If I had a lot of birds and every pair would breed me eight pairs of eight-pound squabs per year, no man could buy them at \$10 per pair; but I have not, neither has any other man. I have visited every coop of any consequence around this section, but have not found any such birds as you speak of in your letter, yet agents of the Boston concern have bought birds right here in Bridgeton. Of course, they get hold of some good birds and a whole lot of mighty poor ones.

Take the business just as it is, I think you will agree with me, considering the expense, it is about as good an investment as you will find.

It would cost you \$1,250 to erect suitable houses, and furnish them with five hundred pairs of good birds. If you got good mated birds, being careful where you

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bought them, you should, after the first few weeks, receive at least \$500 profit per year from your investment, which is \$1 per year, and I will venture this is as good as the majority of breeders are doing. Of course, there are some exceptions, but as I say, this is conservative. Some, like myself, for example, who have saved youngsters from their best working birds, and careful that every pair are mated before they are put in the breeding-pens are doing a little better than that; but do not expect any profit with a lot of mixed birds, not knowing how many are mated or anything about them. As your birds mate, catch and band them, and put them in a breeding-pen, after you have made a record of them. I have bands made with my initial on them, and numbered from one up as far as you want to go. If birds are banded when I get any new ones I use the bands they already have on; if not, I use one of my own, as follows: R 765 Red Chk. cock; R 642 Blue hen. This denotes that this pair is mated.

One more thing in your letter I want to speak of is where you call for white-meat squabs only. You will find after you have been in the business awhile it will rest with you almost entirely whether or not you will market all white squabs. Of course, it is necessary to have the right kind of stock to get white-meat squabs, but your feed will have almost as much to do with the color of the squabs as the birds themselves, and if you do not run into any more serious snags than a dark-meat squab once in awhile, just shake hands with yourself, and think you are in luck.

Seventy-five per cent of squabs go in New York at six to seven pounds per dozen; twenty per cent at eight pounds per dozen; five per cent at nine to ten pounds per dozen. Ten-pound squabs are quoted at \$4.10; eight-

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pound, \$3.75; six and one-half-pound, \$2.25, for week ending September 5, 1903.

### THE CARE ENTIRELY DIFFERENT.

Q. In studying the question of squab raising as a business for me to try, I have read your interesting pamphlet, issued by the Department of Agriculture, at Washington, as Farmer's Bulletin No. 177. I beg leave to ask you to do me the favor to reply to my queries and observations, as herein set forth. Have you any device or mechanical means of closing the window-sashes in the living rooms, so that you need not enter such rooms, when you would close or open the sashes? If so, please describe the same. You speak of whitewashing the interior; that is the usual plan with good poultry keepers, but I am thinking another mode is better, that is spraying the walls with kerosene emulsion with a little carbolic acid added to it. Only once in my experience with young chickens have I had trouble with the tiny lice that ruin many chicks, if they have the opportunity. Whitewash can not easily be made to enter cracks between boards and it does not kill lice that may reside in such cracks, while by a good spraying-pump or syringe the kerosene emulsion of any desired strength can easily be made to enter the cracks between boards and touch the lice. Moreover, it is more readily and cheaply applied than the lime-wash. It could also be applied by a flat paint-brush to the nesting-compartments often, say whenever cleaning a nest. Permit me to suggest that instead of nailing cleats to the upright boards to support the floors of the nesting-compartments, that two finishing wire nails be driven through prepared holes in uprights and of such length as to allow about three-

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eighths of an inch of nail to project on each side of the board and upon which the floors can rest. Referring to whitewash, etc., I am told that one squab raiser in your State has used rooms for fully seven years without whitewashing or any other application and cleans the quarters only occasionally, a few times per year. I am told he has no lice, but I think I can not follow his practice. Regular cleaning would be my rule. I clean poultry-houses every week. Do you ever give your pigeons any green food? If so, what and when? Would they enjoy picking at a suspended cabbage or cut beet? It seems to me that a self-feeding box in the pigeon-room would be advisable to contain the mixture of corn, wheat, and peas. The birds would always have food and a difference in feeding-hours would be avoided and the changing seasons and special causes may produce different hours. I see that you strongly advise buying only pure Homer stock; can you inform me where I can buy mated young birds of such stock and at what price? Have you such for sale? If you are not selling such, what, in your judgment, would be a proper price per dozen pairs of such birds? If you hire birds (squabs) dressed, how much do you pay per bird for the work? Do you sell the bird droppings or use them for fertilizing your garden? What sort of fertilizer do they make? How many openings for birds do you make to every room? I am pleased with your views on certain points of the squab business; they seem so reasonable and correct. You advise an alley on one side of the house; some persons dispense with it and gain more space for the birds. Please reply soon, if convenient, and fully; and if you think of any advice not given in the Bulletin, which you wrote, and on any point I may not have mentioned, please give it. I wish the full benefit of your

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experience before I start in the business. I hope to soon erect the house.

A. The letter is one where the writer is getting pigeons mixed with chickens. Anyone who undertakes to use the same methods to produce squabs as they do spring chickens will not succeed. Pigeons do not enjoy a cabbage strung up like a chicken does, and should not be allowed such coarse green food. A little tender lettuce or pepper-grass is much enjoyed by the old birds.

The interior should be whitewashed with a small amount of carbolic acid in the lime. A sprayer may be used if so desired, although a good whitewash-brush is more satisfactory. Nails are not the thing to use as cleats; the nests do not slide readily on such contrivance while the cleats are more substantial.

I know of some breeders who do not clean up their houses but once each year, and are said to be successful, but as for me I do not care to take the risk with my flocks. Clean your houses every two weeks at least; the birds will like it better, so will you. Cut out the self-feeder question. See that the birds are fed, twice a day, all they will eat up clean, and you will not be bothered so much with sick birds. I advise pure Homer birds simply because, as a whole, they produce the best squabs and more of them.

It costs five cents per pair to have the squabs dressed and washed ready to pack. You may be able to get it done a little cheaper by hiring it done by the hour. The droppings may be sold to a Boston man for one cent per pound. If used as a fertilizer we understand they must be used sparingly to get the best results. Two openings are made in each pen. The alley-way is not at all necessary, but very convenient for the attendant.

As for receiving the full benefit of my experience, it

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makes me smile out loud, when I stop and think of some of them. I really do not know how you could get the full benefit of it unless I write another book, and that would take too long. The best kind of experience, in the long run, is bought experience. A person very seldom does as another tells him until he runs into the same snags himself, and then he repents. Do not get pigeons confounded with chickens, the care is entirely different, although there is no reason why anyone who can raise chickens successfully can not profitably breed pigeons.

### TOO MUCH LIBERTY.

Q. I have about seventy-five pairs of Homers I keep for squab raising only. Will you give me the correct way to feed? My birds have their liberty. What makes so many of my young squabs die? The old birds will not feed them after they get two weeks old.

A. The trouble with your birds not raising the squabs is only because they have too much liberty. If you will confine your flock in a fly, say 8 feet high, 25 feet long, the width of your house, and are careful to see that there are no odd birds in the coop, and will feed them what they will eat up clean twice each day, you will probably have a greater measure of success.

Feed the birds sifted cracked corn, Canada feeding peas, Kaffir corn, small amount of good wheat (not screenings), millet, and such grain as will constitute a change. Oats is not recommended on account of the sharp hulls, as is sometimes the case with barley. See that the birds have a good supply of clean water, changed twice each day while the weather is warm. The self-feeders are all right to keep salt, charcoal, and oyster-shells in, but not for grain. Do not feed outside, it is dangerous. A little sour feed does more damage than any other one thing a breeder has to contend with.

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### MALE BIRDS LARGER.

Q. Kindly let me know how to tell the sex in pigeons for sure. The male birds run larger, do they not? Let me have what information you can.

A. There is no way to tell a male bird to an absolute certainty, although a male can generally be told by his actions? They are larger as a rule, and look masculine around the head. Especially is this true of the Homing Pigeon. The male drives the female, does the cooing, and generally makes the trouble if he hasn't any mate.

### CHOLERA.

Q. I am losing my birds with some kind of sickness. I have lost quite a good many. I think it is cholera. I have noticed when I pick one up in my hand the water runs out of its mouth and smells very bad.

A. From the tone of your letter and the description you give, your birds have cholera. Give six drops of diluted carbolic acid in their drinking-water in the morning once, next morning give two tablespoonfuls of gentian in their water—three times a week of gentian, and only one of carbolic acid; then after this give only once a week of gentian. Every morning give a good condition powder for one week and then only once a week until they get well, one teaspoonful to a pair of birds in their feed. Dampen their grain just enough to mix with this powder. Don't give bath but once a week while sick, and dump the water out as soon as the birds get through bathing, so they won't drink the dirty water.

### FEED QUIETLY.

Q. Some pigeons are timid and at feeding-time are afraid to go to the feeding trough amid the rushing and

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struggling. Would not scattering feed on the floor give these timid ones a better chance to eat, since the stronger ones eat the choicest feed, leaving the balance for the weaker ones? And may not this explain a cause of birds going light?

A. The best way to feed birds is in a long trough three feet long, a foot wide, with a two-inch strip giving about a depth of two inches. When entering the house always go as quietly as possible and go to the extreme end of the house if a long one, and begin feeding at the end coop, feeding in each coop in turn coming toward the entrance door. When each coop is fed close the door and come out at once and do not again go near the house for two hours. Some enter the house in feeding and place feed in first coop and then the next, reversing the order suggested, and when reaching the opposite end and all coops are fed, must retrace and replace each coop and scare each pen of birds as he passes. This is not the proper way to feed birds.

### DARK BILLS NOT DESIRABLE.

Q. Do black or dark-colored bills and feet indicate that squabs from such parents will be dark?

A. Dark-billed and dark-footed birds are not desirable to breed from, although such birds often throw light-colored squabs. I always examine the skin of dark-billed birds and if the skin is light I always retain it, and if it is dark I reject it. Oftentimes the kind of feed has something to do with the color of squabs. Too much wheat has a tendency to make dark-skinned squabs or too much corn will make a yellow skin. I have a pair of coal-black Homers with dark bills and legs but of very light skin and these birds throw as light-colored squabs as any in my pens. Regarding

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different colored, whether Red Check, Blue Check, etc., I do not consider the color of the feathers has anything to do with the color of the skin, but if the skin is light colored the squabs are very apt to be so.

### BIRDS SHOULD BE BANDED.

Q. I have a flock of fifty birds and have lost a number and am anxious to know whether they are cocks or hens. Please advise me what to do in a case like this so I may know what sex to buy to replace the dead ones.

A. If your birds are not banded, and if you have kept no record of your birds the only way to tell is to cut open the dead bird, when the sex can easily be determined. The best way, in putting a pair of birds into a pen, is to always band each bird and make a record of them. This is the only correct way and when a loss occurs consulting the record will immediately tell you which sex is lost.

### FROM EIGHT TO TEN YEARS.

Q. How long will pigeons breed to good advantage?

A. I have known a pair of Homers to breed for eighteen years when the hen bird died, and the male bird lived until he was twenty-two years old. A good pair of Homers will breed from eight to ten years with good success.

### NOT GOOD FOR THEM.

Q. Is brewers' grain good feed for pigeons?

A. Don't touch it.

### A BIG DIFFERENCE.

Q. Is there any difference in the quality of the meat of squabs?

A. There is a big difference. A squab bred from a common bird when killed is generally of poor quality,

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but the Homer squab when killed is always plump and in good condition. Any good judge can pick out the best-bred birds every time, and the market to-day calls for the best, at best prices.

### FEED WITH CARE.

Q. Do pigeons need green food?

A. No, not necessarily. Only when you can procure a nice tender head of lettuce, and not too much of that. They enjoy it, and would probably eat too much if allowed to. Lawn clippings are very dangerous to feed; birds will gorge and in vomiting it into the squabs kill themselves and the squabs also. Do not try it unless you are looking for trouble.

### THE HEATING QUESTION.

Q. Is it necessary to have the squab-house heated during the winter?

A. This depends entirely on the location. I only know of one squab-house that is heated by steam. It is not necessary in South Jersey if the houses are good and tight. The only time we use artificial heat is during cleaning-out days to keep the house comfortable while the birds are outside, and this is only done during extreme cold weather.

### VENTILATING THE HOUSE.

Q. How do you provide ventilation in a squab-house? And is it necessary to make colony-houses or one continuous house? And do you put wire or boards for the partitions?

A. If you have the room make the house one continuous house, 40 or 80 feet as you like. The partitions in the pens are made with solid boards up to peaks,

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except a two-foot square hole, which is covered with wire. Where a long house is used, this provides ventilation from gable to gable. One window in each end the same size as wired holes, which gives plenty of ventilation through the entire building. Regulate the gable windows according to the weather. Close all windows and doors in cold weather, and leave the exit holes open at all times.

### KILL THEM YOUNGER.

Q. The point uppermost just now is how to keep my saucy squabs from flirting out into the fly before killing-time; they are then so hard to catch.

A. Kill the birds before they get so aged. They should not leave the nest until one month old as a rule; but during the molting period the parent birds sometimes neglect the young squabs, which may be the cause of their "flirting" out into the fly. You speak as though your flies were not erected properly, as you say the squabs are hard to catch. This should not be so. The fly-outs should not be over eight feet high, and you should have a large, deep net to scoop up any birds you desire to catch.

### TWENTY.

Q. How many male birds shall I put with twenty females?

A. The above question comes, in all probability, from a person who has made a study of poultry, but not of pigeons. It is not only necessary that the number of sex should be equal, but that each male should have a mate, same as man and wife. In fact, the person who has a good pen of mated birds can study human nature in them if he will sit down and watch them a little while each day.

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### NOTHING SERIOUS.

Q. One of my old birds has a funny bark at times, yet otherwise he looks well. Anything serious?

A. No, nothing serious, yet it might prove so if not promptly attended to. The bird probably has a slight cold. Get a small oil-can, or squirt-can, as some call them; fill it with ordinary kerosene and squirt a couple of drops up each side of nostril, open mouth and drop a few drops down the throat.

### EASY TO TELL.

Q. Sometimes I get puzzled for fear I might get an old bird for a squab. Is there any sure way to tell them apart?

A. A person with very limited experience should be able to tell the difference between a squab ready to kill for market and an old bird simply by looking at them. If you can not tell by looks catch the bird; if it is a squab it will likely squeal—altogether a different sound from the old birds. Lift up the bird's wing and see if it is full of pin-feathers. If so, it is a squab ready to kill; if not, its too old to kill for a squab and you had better let it fly.

### BAD TIME OF YEAR.

Q. I have not many squabs just now. Can you tell me why it is? My birds seem to be all right.

A. Nothing at all the matter. The old birds just now (September) are getting rid of their old feathers and getting in a new winter's coat, and are not able to furnish squabs while they are passing through this trying ordeal. You should give your feathered pets all

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the care possible just now. Keep them in good condition, and as soon as they commence to look slick and pretty they will go to work with renewed vigor.

### DEPENDS UPON CIRCUMSTANCES.

Q. Is it best to let birds fly out or keep them caged up?

A. If you are in the business for what there is in it keep them under wire. The first pen I got together I allowed to fly out, and the consequence was I had very few squabs to kill. The same birds kept in a fly are doing nicely, and attended strictly to business, and raising as many squabs as any pen in the plant.

### MUCH-DISCUSSED QUESTION.

Q. Is there any danger of overfeeding pigeons?

A. This is a question that has been discussed in all its phases. There is no question but that the birds should have all they require, but no more. This is best regulated with a No. 3 sugar scoop, which holds three pints of feed. Ordinarily, one scoopful will be sufficient for twenty-five pairs of birds, although there are times when they require a little more or a little less. Watch the birds from one feeding to another, and if any grain is left worth noticing, cut down the quantity a little. Good judgment is necessary to keep the flocks in condition and fit for work.

### MIXED FEED WELL LIKED.

Q. Is it well to give my birds mixed feed every meal?

A. Yes. Procure a kettle that you can carry about comfortably, filled with feed. Fill it with one scoop of cracked corn, one scoop of peas, one scoop of wheat, one of Kaffir corn, and repeat until kettle is full. A

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little millet, rape, or hemp-seed is very much liked by the birds and should be fed occasionally.

### MODE OF FEEDING CAUSING THE TROUBLE.

Q. Can you tell me what the trouble is with my birds? I have two pens, fifty pairs in each pen, and they sit around, look dumpy, and almost every day I find anywhere from two to seven or eight dead.

A. The above question was sent us to be answered without, practically, any information whatever, consequently we wrote a letter asking the owner of the birds to give us some idea of how his birds were cared for. He wrote us further on the subject, telling that he fed his birds outside in the fly during the summer months, gave them water when their pans were empty, and did not know that oyster-shells, grits, charcoal, etc., were essential to the birds' health. This lot of birds were compelled to eat sour feed or starve. Had practically nothing to help them digest it, consequently the whole flock has cholera in the worst form. The feed should not be allowed to lay out in the warm rains to sour. The water should be looked after just as carefully as should the feed. Here was just the trouble with this fine lot of birds, and it should be a note of warning to anyone who feeds their birds outside, or is not careful to see that there is a full supply of good, clean water given either in stone jugs or galvanized iron fountains. Bath twice each week. Other articles in the book give full information on how to cure cholera.

### HOMING PIGEONS THE BEST.

Q. I have a lot of birds of mixed varieties, but am going to clean them out and get some good ones. What

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kind do you recommend as being the best squab breeders?

A. The Homer is probably the best bird for squab-breeding purposes.

### BIRDS NOT MOLTING RIGHT.

Q. What can I do to help my birds molt? They do not drop their old feathers right.

A. You should have commenced on them as soon as you noticed they were molting, and given them one-quarter hemp-seed twice each week, with one-sixth German millet each afternoon feed. The oil in these particular grains helps the birds wonderfully.

### HAS NO EGGS AND ASKS QUESTIONS.

Q. Can you tell me if my birds should be without eggs or squabs now while they are molting? I have about four hundred pairs of mixed pigeons, and only could count four nests with eggs in. They are pretty well mated but do not seem to molt out right.

A. We should say in reply to the above that there should be more eggs than the questioner has counted in his coops. At this time, the middle of October, birds are pretty well through molting and are working very well. We speak now of those that have been properly cared for during the molting season. Four hundred pairs of good, mated Homers should now have, at the lowest estimate, 200 nests with eggs in. One thing which is very noticeable in the letter is—"They are pretty well mated." When we read anything like that the inference is drawn that the writer does not know whether or not half of his birds are mated. The first thing to do with the flock would be to catch all the mated birds, band them, and put into another breeding

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pen, after marking down in a book the numbers on the bands, so you can tell which are really mated. The next thing would be to give them some stimulant to help them get into condition. The idea that pigeons will do well by throwing a little feed in the pens, and giving them some water when the fountains run dry is a mistake; it will not work any better in the pigeon business than any other. The birds must be properly cared for. Give this flock two tablespoonfuls of tincture of gentian in an eight-quart fountain of water twice each week for a month; give a small quantity of hemp-seed twice each week for a month; feed millet-seed sparingly every night, and you will see a change very soon. Canada peas, cracked corn, good sound wheat and Kaffir corn are good for the birds both morning and evening.

### ONE DOLLAR PER YEAR.

Q. How much should I clear on pigeons each year?

A. Depends entirely on how many you keep. Each pair of mated birds should clear, at the least calculation, \$1.00 per year.

### CAN A WOMAN SUCCEED WITH PIGEONS?

The following letter comes from a lady who, tired of indoor life, used what spare cash she had to buy a pigeon plant, and shows what a woman can do who wants to do, and will not turn away from the duties involved in rearing squabs for market:

Glassboro, N. J., Nov. 1.

My Dear Friends: I am glad I went into the pigeon business. Really, I have not been as happy for several years. As I said, the indoor life was fretting me. Now I am very fond of these birds, and the house—a home of my own, is a pleasure too.

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I want to thank you for the kind advice which has resulted in my being pleasantly placed and feeling independent. I don't like to think of the winter coming, but hope to learn how to meet it.

Yours very truly,

M. E. R., Glassboro, N. J.

### SALT AND DRINKING-FOUNTAINS.

Q. Do your birds in some pens pick down *all* the salt from the grit-box as soon as it is filled, in a pile on the floor? Some of mine do. What drinking-fountains do you really recommend for winter use, and what do they cost?

A. It is well to keep salt before the birds at all times. They would not be so apt to spread it about the floor, unless they were hungry for it. In this locality (South Jersey) the large stone fountains can be used all the year around, if the houses are modern, although a number of breeders use the galvanized iron, which can be made by any good tinsmith.

### A SUCCESSFUL TRAP.

Q. I have read on different occasions where rats bother, especially during the fall months, which I think is due principally to the fact that they are hunting for a harbor for the winter. I, like others, have had some trouble, and want to tell you how I captured the thief, after he had killed one dozen squabs. I tried various ways, such as plastering up holes with cement, setting wire traps, etc., and thought I had finally driven him off; but the only way to drive them off is to catch them. And I soon found it out, when I opened one of my houses in the morning and found that a couple of nice squabs had been used for a square meal. I took a piece of inch mesh wire and made a regular cage about

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two feet long and one foot wide, then I set it over the hole he had made the night before; it suited me. I then got a regular steel trap, did not bait, but set it inside my wire cage, and scattered several handfuls of loose feathers over it. Of course, Mr. Rat made his appearance the next night, expecting some more squabs, but in trying to get through the wire he stepped on the trap, and the next morning I had Mr. Rat, feathers and all.

A. This is quite an idea, and may be of some value to any who are troubled with rats.

### TO GUARD AGAINST RATS.

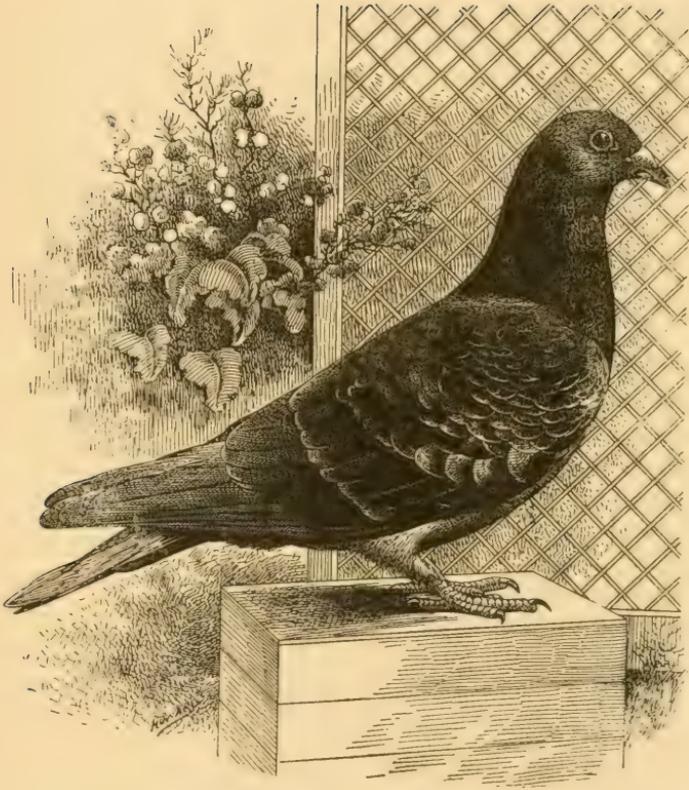
Q. How high would you advise me to put a house from the ground in order to be absolutely secure from rats?

A. Do not have the lowest pier less than twelve inches from the ground. We know of a house eight inches from the ground at the lowest point, where rats got started and destroyed a number of squabs before they were routed out. Do not forget that a rat is very cute, and hard to catch in a trap, when it once gets a taste of a nice, fat squab. Get your house far enough away from the ground, and keep it clear. A good rat-dog is a good thing to have around, whether you think you need it or not.

### SPRING A BETTER TIME.

Q. Do you consider December a good time to save youngsters?

A. Not as good as the spring-time, during the natural incubation season, although, by giving the youngsters good, warm quarters, you could succeed in raising a good percentage of what you save. They would not be as large nor strong as spring-hatched birds.



BLUE CHECK HOMER.

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### A STANDING INVITATION.

Q. I have been having holes near the floors for my birds to use in addition to the holes over the windows, but have been losing some squabs. Do you think the bottom holes are responsible for the loss?

A. Depends altogether on how you have been losing them. If they have been taken by rats or weasels, the bottom holes are probably responsible. If you think you must have the holes, only use them in one pen, and put all your birds with crippled wings in there; but do not have the holes open in all the pens, as it is a standing invitation for all kinds of destructive animals which could get through the wire on the flies. If you decide to have one pen with bottom holes, have a slide to shut them up during the night.

### AS TO MOLTING, FEEDING, ETC.

Q. I would ask if you will please be kind enough to answer a few questions about the Homer, as I am contemplating starting in that business sometime in the future. 1. How many molting days, on an average, has a Homer? 2. What, according to your experience, is the best method of feeding and treating a young Homer during its first molt? 3. Does a young Homer ten months old that has gone through its first molt make as strong and good a breeder as a Homer three or four months old that has gone through its molt? 4. Do you continue breeding during the molting season or do you separate the sexes? 5. How soon after molting do you let them begin breeding? 6. Do you separate the cocks from the hens during the winter months, or do you let them breed the best they can during the cold weather? 7. Is there any time during the year that you separate the sexes? 8. Which makes the stronger

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breeder; one hatched in the spring or one hatched later in the season?

A. 1. This is a hard question to answer. No two birds molt exactly alike, much depending upon their individual condition. This one may finish molting two weeks earlier than another. The average may be taken at six weeks to two months, though some birds have finished in four weeks. Then, again, birds will begin to molt, continue for a time, then seem to stop, and afterward begin again, thus prolonging the time. 2. I feed my young stock exactly the same as any breeding stock and if I notice a bird not molting freely I catch that one, and pluck all the tail-quills at one pull. 3. Very seldom does a Homer molt in two months; when it occurs I should not consider it likely to prevent developing into good breeding stock. 4. I continue breeding the whole year, including the molting season and don't separate the sexes at any time. 5, 6, 7. These questions are so closely related to number 4 that one answer really suffices for all. I may state further, however, that it is a practice among those who keep pigeons for flying purposes to separate the sexes during a portion of the year.

The incubation of pigeons differs radically from that of poultry. Both the cock and hen take regular turns during portions of the day in sitting upon the eggs, thus making it much less irksome than when a hen sits continually for twenty-one days.

If a squab breeder should separate his birds in the fall of the year and remate them in the spring he would need much extra house capacity, and lose much time in remating to say nothing of the loss of revenue during the time of separation. 8. Squabs hatched out in April, May, and June I consider make the best and strongest breeders. Seldom do I save any birds during any other time than the months mentioned.

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### HOW TO START, HOURS OF WORK, ETC.

Q. I have been a business man, but am now an invalid and must take up outdoor work, both for health and income, and propose starting with a house 16x12.

1. Would it be better to start with, say, ten to twenty pairs of breeders and breed my own birds, or start with full capacity of house and market squabs at once, enlarging the house as it becomes necessary? 2. One authority states that the Homers produce all white squabs. Is this so? And the same authority estimates the cost of feeding a pair of birds at 50 cents, while you give it \$1.04. How do you account for the difference? 3. How many hours per week of actual time would it take to care for two hundred pairs of breeders, pick and market the squabs, and clean the house? 4. Is there a market all the year around for squabs, and do you think the demand will increase?

A. 1. I would advise starting with a few pairs of birds, but be sure that these are first class, and after a few months' experience buy other selected stock, and if your first birds prove good breeders you may save their young in April, May, and June, but don't expect these latter to be profitable under a year or you will be disappointed. 2. All Homers do not produce white squabs. You will find some Homers with dark skins and these will surely throw dark squabs. Examine your birds when buying and reject all dark-skinned birds. My figures of \$1.04, cost of feeding a pair of birds a year, is based on actual experience, taking the feed bills for a whole year. I can not pay feed bills at the price in my section, on a basis of 50 cents per pair a year. 3. Half a day ought to be sufficient for a good man to pick and market squabs and clean house—two hours for picking and three hours to clean. I pay five cents apiece for picking squabs. 4. I send squabs every week in the

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year to the New York market; the prices have been better this year than last, and I see no reason why the demand should not continue.

### DESIRES TO ENTER THE BUSINESS.

Q. I am thinking of raising squabs for the local hotel. Can get \$2.50 per dozen the year around. 1. Is there anything in squab raising at the above price? Of course, I would go at it in the right way and give it my personal attention. 2. Would you advise me to engage in the business to make something? If I could make \$600 a year net I would be satisfied.

A. 1. At \$2.50 per dozen the year around, if you succeed as well as I have done, your net profits would be \$1.00, instead of \$1.50, which I have been getting. For my squabs have averaged me sixty cents for the year, while your price as mentioned is a trifle over forty cents, or about two-thirds. So if you purchased first-class Homers and gave them excellent care your income might be at the rate of \$1.00 per pair of birds. 2. In order to make \$600 a year you would require a flock of 600 pairs, figuring as indicated in previous answer. I do not advise any beginner to enter the business so largely. It would be much safer for you to begin with not more than fifty pairs of mated birds and add to them as your income from the birds enables you to do. If you have some choice common stock doing well, get some pure Homers and mate with them and breed back their squabs to pure-bred Homers.

### KAFFIR CORN—PLUCKING TAIL-FEATHERS.

Q. 1. I notice you quote Kaffir corn at ninety cents per bushel. I have just received a quotation of \$26 per ton, with a freight rate of fifty-seven cents per cwt.

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2. Why do you advise pulling out the tail-feathers of young birds?

A. 1. The price quoted for Kaffir corn was correct for the year, but the price has advanced very materially since, and is now quoted in our local market at \$2 per hundred, and hard to get. I think it is grown principally in the South and Southwest. 2. I pluck the tail-feathers from young birds when putting out to shift for themselves because the molting season is approaching and the quills must be thrown off by Nature, which is a slow process. The plucking does not seem to injure the bird in any way, and during the weakened condition of the bird the absence of the dragging tail seems a relief.

### SQUABS DYING.

Q. I am losing squabs about a week or ten days old. Our house is well built, lined with tar-paper. We feed half corn, one-sixth barley, one-sixth wheat, one-sixth millet, except on Sundays we feed part peas. Have lost four in the last week. Our pen is twelve feet wide, sixteen feet high and sixteen feet long, extending over the house. Would it be better to have it not so high, and longer? We have our mated birds in separate pens from the unmated. The door between the pens was left open by mistake and four of the unmated birds got in with the mated. Would it be advisable to leave them there, or go to the trouble of separating them again?

A. In the absence of any further description of your dead squabs, it would be difficult to assign a positive reason. They may be dying of canker; they may be chilled because the birds have been scared from the nests at night by some cause and do not go back. Are the crops of the dead squabs full or empty? If very much

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distended with food, the barley may probably be causing the trouble. Most likely, however, the unmated birds are causing the mischief. I have known a single unmated cock-bird, by his fighting in nests of young squabs, to kill many. By all means get the unmated birds out if at all possible. If you have a record of your birds this will not be difficult to do. If you are not keeping a record, try to find these birds and catch them and put them where they belong.

### SALT FOR PIGEONS—MATING BIRDS, ETC.

Q. I take the liberty of writing to ask a few questions, as I have within the past few months embarked in the business and I want to learn. I obtained my Homers from a company. They directed me to put a lump of rock salt where the birds could get at it; you say place table salt, powdered charcoal and sand in small boxes. Will not the birds eat too much salt if allowed free daily access to such salt? Mice are in my pigeon-house; do they do any harm? Rats will, I know. I have about fifty pigeons old enough to nest (not pairs); only about fifteen pairs working, and often they lose both squabs and sometimes one. I feed cracked corn and red wheat, giving as varieties Kaffir corn and peas (cracked) every three days. I give oyster-shell all the time and rock salt at all times. My house is 10x20 feet. How many pairs will this hold without crowding? I ventilate and give fresh water in tub five inches deep by eighteen inches. They seem healthy, hearty, and sprightly, but do not work as they ought. As I am trying to raise squabs for market for profit, I would be glad to find out the reason why they don't breed better. Can you give me all the information about raising for profit? Anything you can say to help me will be gratefully received. So far, my pigeons have been an expense.

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A. I prefer feeding loose salt because the birds can easily pick it up, and rock salt is difficult to break off; birds can pick at it a long while and not get any salt except by eating the salty dirt around the lump. If salt is fed regularly, I have never found any injurious results to follow, but I am always careful with a new lot of birds to feed sparingly until they are fully accustomed to it. Mice are a positive danger in a pigeon-house, and may be the cause of your dead squabs, for they often seek the nests of the pigeons because of its warmth and make their homes there, and by their stirring around cause the birds to leave the nest. Your birds are mixed up, mated and unmated all together. Separate them at once, putting the breeders in a coop by themselves and as others mate up add them to same quarters. Unmated birds often fight in nests, throwing out eggs or a squab, which may explain why you sometimes have one dead squab and at others two. Your feeding is fair. I would suggest adding a little millet in afternoon feed and twice a week hemp instead of millet. Your house is large enough for fifty pairs of birds if you have sufficient nest-boxes. Provide not less than two such boxes for each pair of birds, and it is as well to have a few extra. Do your birds drink and bathe in same water? If so, don't allow it unless you are very careful to empty the tub after each daily bath. I much prefer bath-tubs and a separate drinking-fountain, then birds can not bathe in fountains, and the bath-pans can easily be emptied as soon as birds have used them. It is difficult to tell the exact cause of your trouble without further knowledge or an inspection of your dead squabs. Clean out the mice and put the breeding birds by themselves and see if you do not get more squabs.

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### TIME TO START—HARDY BIRDS.

Q. I have a few Homers which, up to the present time, have done nothing; although I have had them for several months, but two of them have made nests.

1. Would you advise going into the business of squab raising? 2. When is the best time to start? 3. Are White Homers as hardy as the others? 4. How long can the old bird remain off her nest with safety this weather?

A. 1. I could not safely venture an opinion as to your taking up the business of squab raising unless I knew more about you. Many are making money in it; others are dropping money and giving up the business. You can not succeed in this business without paying strict attention to details. There is a whole lot of advice floating around to the effect that it is an easy matter to make money in squabs. You will have to learn something before you will keep the bankteller busy counting your deposits. 2. I would not start during the molting season, and if I had a good, dry, suitable building, and could get birds that I knew were first class, I would start at any time excepting, perhaps, in mid-winter. You will have some loss from chilled eggs and young squabs frozen in severe weather during winter. 3. I do not find the White Homers as hardy as the other colors, but I have never had a large number of them. 4. In the severe weather of December and early in January if the birds remain off the nests very long the eggs will chill.

### ONE OF THE DIFFICULTIES.

Q. I would like to ask how you determine the sex of the birds in order to keep a record and also the mating. In a flock of fifty birds the task of catching the mating

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pairs to determine the numbers is rather a difficult one. The mating seems to be one of the difficulties of pigeon raising, as the pigeons seem to bear no distinguishing mark.

A. No one is able, in all instances, to tell with absolute certainty the sex of pigeons until the egg is laid. Usually the cock is larger and more bull-headed, while the hen is smaller and neater about the head. But sometimes the hen is as large as any bird in the flock. Usually the sex may be told when "driving," the cock driving the hen to nest. Two persons are needed to catch the birds that are mated. Each one should select one of the pair and keep eyes on it until caught, for it is difficult for one person to watch both birds. When caught put numbered bands on the birds and put them in a separate breeding-pen. Make a record in a book of each mated pair, thus: 1040, Red Checkered cock; 1070, Blue Checkered hen. Then when 1040 dies a new cock can be placed in the breeding-quarters. This mating up does take time, but I do not know any way to have success without doing this work, and having the record as suggested makes one know certainly how his birds are.

### PRICES—MARKETS—EXPENSES, ETC.

Q. 1. Do you raise squabs for market? 2. What prices rule for squabs during different seasons of the year, weight and conditions the same? 3. Do you raise breeders for sale? 4. Are they mated? 5. Would Homers do well in this climate? 6. What would be the probable number of squabs from each pair per year? 7. With such attention as is given by breeders North what weight squabs might I reasonably expect? 8. Are pigeons in confinement more liable to disease than when at liberty? If so, what? 9. How many pairs of

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breeders should I start with to ship, say, ten dozen squabs per month? 10. Can you give me range of prices I may expect from squabs during the year? 11. Referring to next above on basis of eight pounds per dozen? 12. Best market and names of receivers? Are they consumers or commission men? 13. What would be probable expense of shipping; viz., proportionate cost of shipping-coop, ice, freight charges, etc., as compared with amount received for each shipment on basis of eight pounds to dozen and ten dozen in the package? 14. Have you tried selling squabs through your express company? If so, with what success? 15. Could arrangements be made with hotels and restaurants to sell to them direct, so as to avoid dividing profit with the middleman? 16. Will Homers in confinement produce as many squabs per year as when at liberty? 17. In your opinion, could a house be so arranged as to reduce the disturbance of the birds (when cleaning house) to a minimum? For instance, suppose the lower tier of nest-boxes to be six feet above the floor, or any arrangement by which disturbance may be lessened?

A. 1. Yes, and lots of them. 2. The average price for squabs during 1903 was 60 cents per pair, ranging from \$3.00 to \$5.50 per dozen for eight-pound birds. 3. I do. 4. I have both young and old birds and they are now mated. 5. I know personally nothing about conditions in your locality. Birds exist everywhere. You can judge the local climatic conditions better than I can. 6. The number of squabs from any flock depends on the breeders, kind of stock, and management. From five to six pairs ought to be produced in my own section. 7. This also depends entirely on person and stock. Pigeons of good healthy stock and properly cared for ought to yield squabs weighing from seven to eight

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pounds per dozen in four weeks. 8. I do not find that birds confined to coop and fly are more susceptible to disease. I know some flocks which are allowed full liberty of flight and they have the same diseases as those kept closely confined. 9. This so much depends on breeder, stock, care and management that I could not guarantee any figures unless these conditions were fully granted. At least 275 pairs of birds under the best conditions would be required. If you realized better results you would be fortunate. 10. See answer to No. 2. 11. The prices were based on eight pounds. Seven pounds and under are cut in price. 12. I ship altogether to New York market. Philadelphia is a very poor market. I have not tried Boston. My birds are all picked at a cost of 5 cents a pair. There are lots of commission men on Washington Street in New York City. 13. I pay about 8 cents for shipping-box; 12 to 15 cents for ice; about 40 cents for expressage. I ship from sixty to 125 squabs weekly during the year. Commission charges are five per cent. 14. No. 15. I have not attempted this. 16. They will do better in confinement. When at liberty they may not feed young so regularly, and may be caught by hawks or shot by gunners. 17. I can see that nests would not be nearly so handy set up six feet from floor and would require a step-ladder to catch squabs and clean the nests. My birds do not get much disturbed, but I do not allow any unnecessary noise or confusion.

### ANOTHER PARTY IN TROUBLE.

Q. 1. Will you kindly tell me how to mate? 2. How can I tell males from females? 3. If I catch pairs of equal numbers and separate them from others, how can I tell which are mates, or, if not mates, when they are mated? 4. How long shall I keep them together?

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5. What disposition can I make of those that have no mates? Some of my pigeons died last fall from cholera, I think, leaving, doubtless, some without mates. I have about eighty or more, and only some ten or twelve pairs are nesting at all. My house has ninety nest-boxes and room for twenty-five more. I started with six pairs eighteen months ago. I want, of course, to raise squabs for sale. Have never sold one yet. My house is lined with tar-paper to keep out dampness and draughts. It is eighteen inches from the ground on slight elevation. Have flying-pen fifteen feet high, twenty feet wide, and fifteen feet long. 6. How much common salt shall I give this number of birds, and shall I keep it before them all the time?

A. 1. Take all unmated birds out and put them in a pen by themselves, and when you notice a pair of these birds driving and building nests, catch them, put bands on them, make a record of the pair in a permanent book, and put them in the permanent breeding-coop. 2. Telling the sex comes from practical experience, so that you can tell in most instances, but there are cases when it is absolutely impossible for anyone to tell until eggs are laid. The action of birds in most cases is a sufficient guide. An experienced breeder can tell at a glance, when birds are on the sunning-board, the majority of those that are cocks and hens, but a few of them will puzzle the most skilful. 3. Observation alone will tell when birds are mated, and I am constantly urging novices not to put any birds in the breeding-quarters until the birds have made nests and laid eggs. Placing twenty cocks and twenty hens in a pen by themselves does not in any manner constitute mated birds. A great many persons have bought birds which are supposed to be of equal number as regards sex, and presumed they were on a fair road to success, but after weeks of delay

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they have found their birds are not mating up, and the probability is the birds never were mated. When you buy birds insist on a guarantee that they are mated at time of sale. Last summer a visitor came all the way from Lancaster, Pa., to see me, and told me he had purchased fifty pairs of mated birds, and after he had them six months only ten pairs had mated. He then called in an expert and found he had purchased ninety cocks and ten hens. Another party purchased six pairs of birds, sex guaranteed, and received eleven cocks and one hen. The novice ought to purchase only mated birds, and he will even then have many difficulties to overcome. 4. After having placed all the mated pairs in the breeding-quarters, try to find out how many cocks and how many hens you have left. If you have more cocks than hens, purchase the number of hens needed to make the sexes equal, or if hens are in excess, purchase cocks. Another way would be to dispose of the excess number. If after doing this the birds do not mate up, your best remedy is to dispose of them, for they are a bill of expense. 5. This is answered above. 6. Keep a full supply of fine table salt constantly before them.

### WHAT CONSTITUTES A MATED PAIR OF BIRDS?

Q. A question has come up wherein there is quite a difference of opinion, and as you have had experience in handling pigeons I would like to have your opinion. If you received an order for ten pairs of mated breeders, what would constitute a mated pair? In shipping mated pairs—several pairs in a crate—would there be any danger of these pairs being broken?

A. My opinion of mated birds is this: A pair of birds that are producing squabs. My own practice is to band my squabs in the nest, and when a pair begin driving and carrying nest material I catch them, take

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the number of each band and record same, and *when they produce a pair of squabs I consider them mated, and not until then.* A given number of birds of each sex offered for sale might or might not be mated birds, and birds in one pen if sold to another breeder may not be mated the same in new quarters as in the old place. Young mated birds when moved can not be relied on, nor can older birds, to keep mated in new quarters. I have in my coop a pair of birds three years old. These birds seemingly are mated, but they have not laid a single egg in all this time, and yet they raise a pair of squabs nearly every month. I put a pair of eggs in their nest whenever I find them, and they invariably produce good squabs, for they are extra good feeders. A large coop almost always has some eggs on the floor, and by placing these under this pair of birds I utilize them to good advantage, and would not part with them for \$5. They are probably barren birds, and I can not consider them practically mated, for if I did not go to the extra trouble I have mentioned they would be a bill of expense.

### PIGEONS IN COLD CLIMATES.

Q. I have become much interested in the squab industry, though I had formerly looked upon the business as "moonshine." Do you think one could be successful in this cold climate (New Hampshire) raising squabs? Thermometer falls to sixteen degrees below zero sometimes. Have a barn loft, 12x60. Would you advise five or ten pairs now and breed up as fast as I can, building a suitable house in the spring?

A. Regarding the climate in New Hampshire, I am not competent to judge. I have experienced the coldest weather this winter since I have been in the business, the mercury reaching zero and even six degrees below,

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but I have had better success than during any previous winter. We have had it cold, but dry, and this is probably the reason. My houses are sheathed inside on the north side, with a dead-air space between sheathing and weather-boards. My advice would be to partition off the barn loft, provided it meets the requirements as to warmth and ventilation, and put in a few pairs of birds this winter, and by spring you will have had enough experience to indicate whether you can succeed or not. I would not advise you to enter largely in the business without experimenting in the way suggested, unless you find pigeons are bred successfully during the cold months in that section.



## PART II.

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### BUILDINGS.

#### THE SITE.

In selecting a site for the home of pigeons, as much care and judgment should be exercised as in choosing the location of one's own home. An unhealthful location for man would most likely prove unhealthful for the birds. A damp place, or one exposed to extremes of heat, cold, or wind, is to be rejected. The spot selected should be well drained, should be facing the south or east, should be free from obstructions which shut out the rays of the morning sun, and be sheltered either by trees or buildings from the north and west winds. Such a place, with a shallow stream of pure running water for drinking and bathing—so essential to the health of pigeons—will be an ideal site, and will require a minimum of expense and daily work in caring for the stock. Of course such sites can only be obtained in the country.

#### THE HOUSE.

SIZE AND CAPACITY.—The house is as important a the site. Some successful breeders prefer single houses holding not more than fifty pairs of birds; but five of these single houses will cost considerably more to build than one house of five sections accommodating fifty pairs in each section, and giving the same capacity as the five single houses. Again, feeding and other daily attentions to the flock require less time and labor in one large house than in five separate smaller houses. In stormy weather and in time of snow-banks, this increased labor for separate houses is quite an item.

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In no case should a house be built for more than 250 pairs, nor more than fifty pairs be kept in each section. It must be so designed as to be well ventilated and easily kept clean, secure from attacks of mice, rats, and other animals, and not subject to draughts of air.

The houses last built by the writer (Fig. 1), the form of which is recommended, are 40 feet long and 12 feet wide, with six posts on each side, and 9 feet high to peak of roof. Along the north side a passage-way (Fig. 2) 3 feet wide runs the full length, the rest of

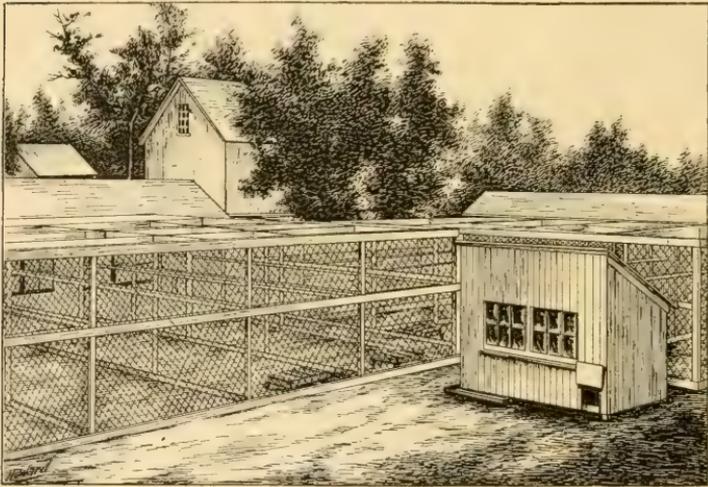


FIG. 1.—General view of pigeon-house, fly, and other buildings.

the space being divided by four partitions into five equal pens. These pens are separated from the passageway by wire netting, reaching from the floor to the roof, with a door into each pen. If the pigeon raiser has but one house he should either use one of these compartments as a room for storing feed and other supplies, picking

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squabs, etc., or add 10 feet to the length of the building for such purposes.

LIGHT AND VENTILATION.—These are provided for as follows: Each gable near the peak has a four-light window. The south side has a window with two six-light sashes in each section, and the north side two six-light windows. All the windows slide so they can be opened to any extent desired, and they are all covered with wire netting on the outside to prevent the escape of the birds.

Ventilation is secured by closing the doors or windows against which the wind may be blowing and opening those on the opposite side to the extent which may be necessary.

Each partition contains an opening (covered with netting) of the same size as the gable windows and in line with them, thus permitting a circulation of air through the entire building when necessary. A projecting ventilator should be built in the roof just over the center of the building, and should be furnished with slides operated with cords, as a means of additional ventilation.

MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION.—Three rows of brick piers 18 inches high serve as a foundation for the building, and on these rest the joists, which are 4x4 inches in size and placed 3 feet apart. Matched flooring should be well nailed to the joists, matched pine lumber should be used for the walls, the building should be covered with a good shingle roof, and the whole structure should be well painted with two coats of good paint.

In such a climate as that of Southern New Jersey it is not necessary to plaster the inside walls or sheathe with building-paper, but in a colder climate it would undoubtedly be well to give such protection.

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The partitions between the sections are made of inch boards running to the roof. All inside doors are of wire netting and are hung with spring hinges so as to be self-closing to prevent the possible escape of the

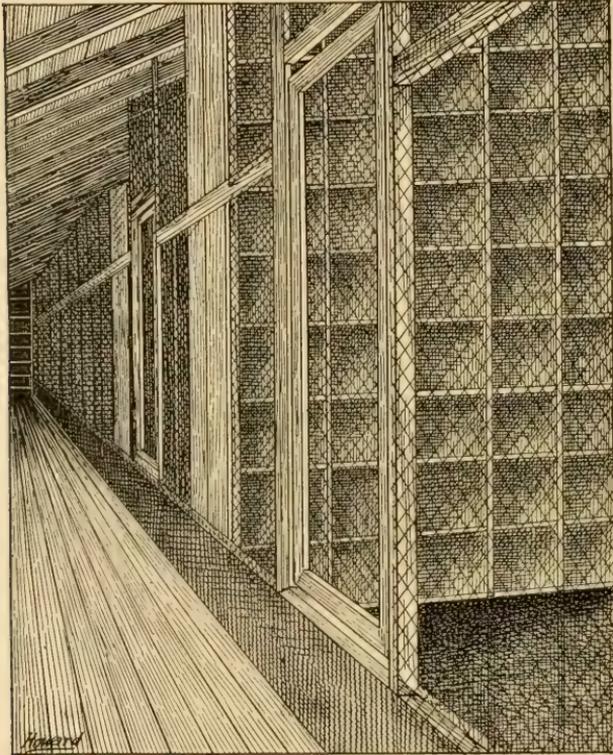


FIG. 2.—Interior view of pigeon house.

birds. Each pen has one of these doors and likewise each end of the building, and both inside and outside doors should be kept securely locked.

NEST-BOXES.—Nesting-places (Figs. 2 and 3) can be made as follows: Inch boards 12 inches wide, with

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parallel cross cleats (from strips 1 inch square) nailed on 9 inches apart, are set upright 12 inches apart (in the clear), with edges against the partitions and securely nailed at top and bottom. These boards extend from floor to roof, and when in position boards 12 inches square of inch stuff are cut and placed on the cleats to form the floors of the nest-boxes, thus making little homes for the pigeons 9 inches high with a floor 12

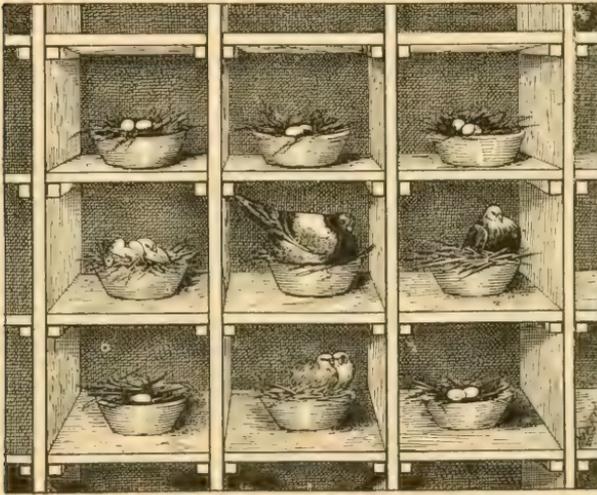


FIG. 3.—Nest-boxes and nest-pans.

inches square. The sliding floor of each box furnishes an easy method of removal for cleaning. Each pen contains two sets of nest-boxes, one against each partition containing sixty boxes, or 120 in all, supplying each pair of birds with two nesting-places, with twenty to spare. The bottom of the lowest box is 15 inches from the floor. Nests should not be placed directly on the floor if possible to avoid it. Some pairs will per-

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sistently build on the floor, in which case it may be best to humor them and make no attempt to compel them to nest elsewhere.

No provision should be made for perches within the house, the writer's experience being that no advantage results therefrom. It is a good practice to visit each house every night before retiring, to see that everything is in proper shape. The birds will almost invariably be found each in a separate box, the same bird in the same box night after night. They are thus secluded and do

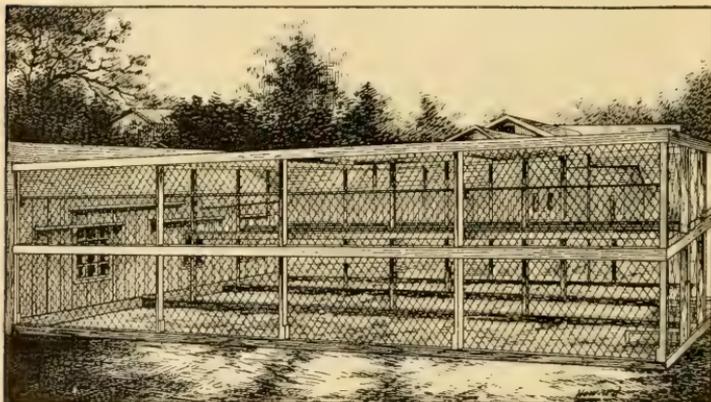


FIG. 4.—The house and the fly.

not soil each other by their droppings nor foul the floors as they would if they occupied individual perches outside the boxes.

A long running-board within the pen is a disadvantage, for on it a cock inclined to play the boss can chase away other birds and keep the whole flock in an uproar. On the other hand, with each bird settled away in a separate nesting-place, little opportunity is given for fighting; and if it be attempted, the bird within the box

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has a great advantage over the one outside and can soon compel a retreat. The use of small eathernware nesting-pans (Fig. 3) is advised. Some pairs may refuse to use them, and persist in building on the floor of the nest-box. As a safeguard against lice, the base of

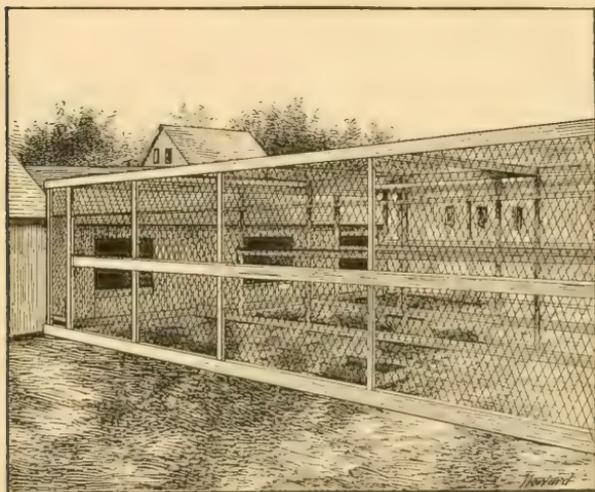


FIG. 5.—The house and the fly.

the nest should be made of tobacco-stems. Straw should be supplied for the use of the birds in completing the nests.

### THE FLY.

The house being finished, consideration must next be given to providing for the proper exercise of the birds in the open air and sunlight. This is secured by erecting a wire-netting cage or fly (Figs. 1, 4, 5, and 6) communicating with the house by means of small open-

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ings. The ground should be made level if not naturally so, and for a house of the size indicated it should extend out 32 feet from the side of the house. The frame of the fly is made of hemlock posts 2x3 inches in size, and 8 feet high above the ground. These posts should be set in three rows parallel with the side of the building, six posts in each row (Fig. 4). The outer row supports the end of the fly 32 feet from the building. Then another row is set half-way in toward the house, and the third along the side of the house. Hemlock boards an inch thick and 4 inches wide are nailed to the top and bottom around the sides and an additional 4-inch board is nailed between at such a height that a netting 4 feet wide will reach from it to the strip at the bottom and a 3-foot netting from it to the strip at the top, thus making, when the netting is properly nailed on, a wall 8 feet high. The posts are so placed as to divide the fly into sections corresponding to the pens of the house, thus giving each lot of fifty pairs a separate pen and a communicating fly. An assistant is required to stretch the netting while it is being nailed on. It is a good plan to fasten one end and the top edge first, then the assistant with a stout forked stick can stretch the netting smoothly while the lower edge is being securely fastened. Doors opening into each section are provided. These are placed 1 foot from the side of the house, all in line, covered with netting and put up with spring hinges. The latter are very important for they secure promptly self-closing doors, thus effectually preventing the escape of any valuable Homers which may have been brought from a distance and which, if permitted to gain the free air, will immediately fly to their former homes. Brackets are nailed to all the posts 4 feet from the ground and boards 4 inches wide are nailed to them to furnish the

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pigeons a place to alight and walk when not in flight. These boards are placed at the ends of the sections as well as along the sides. No cross boards or roosting poles are permitted to obstruct the clear passage, for if they were used, birds might injure themselves when exercising or in trying to escape from the keeper in his necessary attempts to catch certain birds.

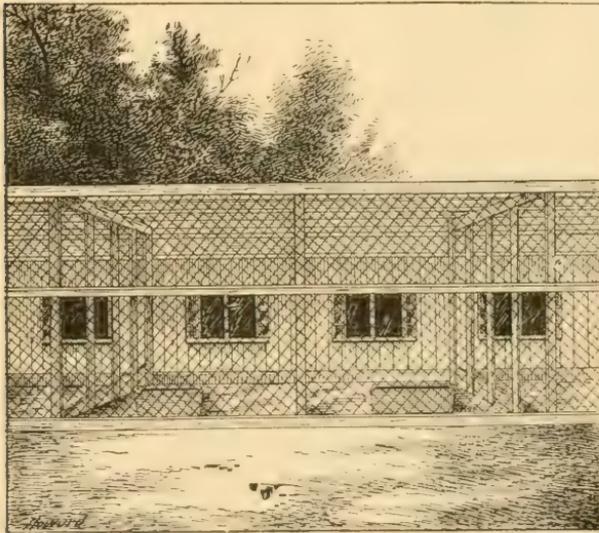


FIG. 6.—The house and the fly.

The birds are allowed to pass from the house to the fly through an opening in each section 3 inches wide and 4 inches high, rounded at the top, with a lighting-board 6 inches wide on either side. Slides are arranged to close these openings when it is desired temporarily to confine the birds in either fly or house for the purpose of catching any one, or in severe weather.

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The cost of the house 12x40 feet in size, well painted outside and whitewashed thoroughly on the inside, with materials at present prices, is \$250. It is safe to estimate the cost of houses at \$1 per pair of birds, not counting the earthen dishes used for nests.

For the beginners who desire to start with 25 pairs or less, temporary structures can be improvised or existing buildings utilized until sufficient experience has been gained to enable them to branch out.



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### VARIETIES OF PIGEONS.

#### THE HOMER.

The best variety of pigeons to keep for squab raising is the "straight" Homer (Fig. 7).

These magnificent birds are large and healthy; are



FIG. 7.—White Homing Pigeon.

good workers, always active and hunting about like the Leghorn fowls; are the best of feeders; are of quiet disposition when properly mated; and their eggs are seldom infertile. For these reasons I consider the straight Homers par excellence among all the pigeon-kind for squab farming.

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### THE DRAGOON.

The Dragoon (Fig. 8) is much esteemed by some, but I have yet to find an intelligent breeder who accords the first place to any variety except the Homer. When the latter are not procurable in sufficient numbers or the price seems to be too high, a cross between a Homer and a Dragoon usually gives excellent results. The Dragoon is a large bird, a good worker and feeder, as quiet in disposition as the Homer, and, when crossed as directed, the squabs are of good size. The crossing of these varieties can be accomplished with equal success either by mating a Homer cock and a Dragoon hen, or a Dragoon cock and a Homer hen. Straight Dragoon squabs are usually five weeks in growing to sufficient size for market, while straight Homer squabs are ready in four weeks and sometimes a trifle less.

### THE DUCHESSE.

By some this variety is preferred. The writer is not enthusiastic in regard to these birds because a full blood of this variety is not nearly so good a feeder as the Homer. A cross of Homer and Duchesse blood will yield a good squab, but not equal to the straight Homer, and the presence of feathers on the legs, a characteristic of the Duchesse, is a disadvantage when dressing them.

### THE RUNT.

The Runt is the giant among pigeons. It is very highly spoken of by some breeders because the squabs are so large, but the number of squabs is small. It takes an extra good pair of Runts to yield four pairs of squabs a year. While crossing with Homer blood will increase the number of squabs, the tendency of the squabs of such mixed blood to be dark in flesh is so serious a disad-

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vantage that I can not recommend them, for the novice will soon learn that dark-fleshed squabs are cut in price when he takes them to market. I find that even one-quarter of Runt blood is often sufficient to make dark

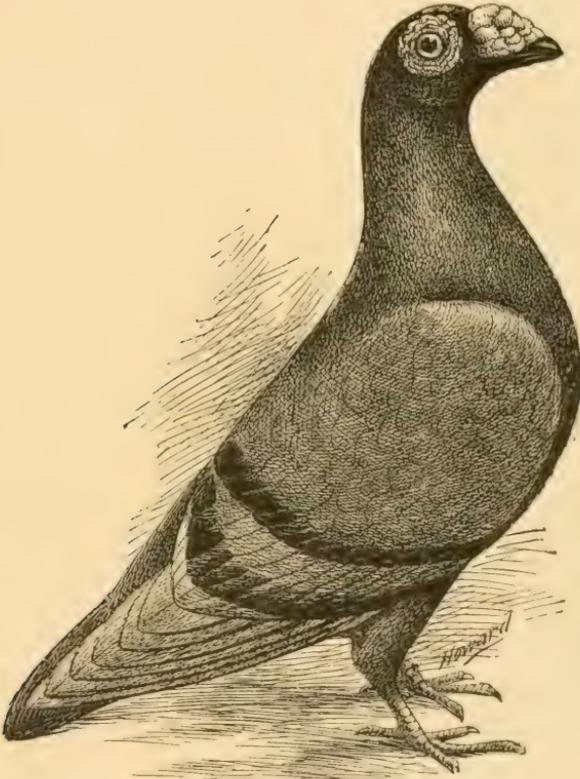


FIG. 8.—Blue Dagoon Pigeon.

squabs. Other objections to this variety are that both parents and squabs consume more food than Homers and they are less active and slower in driving.

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LESSONS FROM OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIENCE.

In traveling about the country and visiting many squab farms, I seldom find a flock of straight Homers, but frequently see all kinds mixed together, with no apparent system or purpose on the part of the breeder, the evident desire being to raise, if possible, a few squabs. I have made the proper kinds of birds for squab growing my study for the last five years, visiting many different places during this period. My experience, not only from my own pens, but from this extended observation, teaches me that for profitable squab growing there is nothing equal to the straight Homer.

About ten years ago a gentleman advertised for sale a lot of pigeons. I visited him and found about 200 pairs in an old corn-crib. I picked out of the entire lot fifteen pairs, thinking that I had good stock for the squab business. I kept them for several weeks but the results were so meager that I became disgusted, and, when a customer came along and made me an offer, I sold him the whole lot; but the birds never gave him any substantial results. I mention this because it is a common experience with those who start with poorly selected birds.

When I next "contracted the fever" I purchased a few pairs of straight Homers and in due time forty pairs of as pretty birds as one usually finds graced my pigeon quarters.

In two years these birds averaged me seven and one-half pairs of squabs per pair per year, while some pairs gave me ten pairs and a few yielded as high as twelve pairs. But I think that any claim of a flock averaging twelve pairs of squabs per pair annually is extravagant.

Advertisements of straight Homers often attract prospective purchasers who, when they have bought, are

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very much disappointed. Straight Homers are hard to procure at a low figure. Sometimes, though straight enough, they are worn-out birds, which will merely prove a bill of expense.

### BREEDING.

In the selection of breeding stock the beginner should consult some one having experience and critical knowledge and, if possible, secure his active assistance.

### MATING UP.

A very important detail in squab raising is the proper mating of the flock. Unless the birds are known to be mated they should not be placed in the breeding-quarters. Hence, a mating-house fitted with nest-boxes is necessary even when but few birds are kept, and in this house they should be placed until they begin to carry material and build nests; then, and not until then, they may be transferred to the permanent breeding-house.

When but few birds are to be mated a box with a wire-netting front and a partition can be used, or any small room can be improvised.

### KEEPING A RECORD.

Before the birds are placed in the breeding-house each bird should be banded. Open numbered bands can be purchased of dealers at about one cent apiece in quantities of one hundred. Squabs intended for breeding must be banded in the nest before able to fly, as by so doing nest-mates can surely be distinguished. If closed bands are used, they can only be put on when squabs are quite small.

It is advisable to keep a record book and enter the number of each bird, noting the sex, color, and any other

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distinguishing mark, so that the record will accurately describe the bird. Then should any bird die the record will show its sex and another mate can be substituted, or the remaining bird can be taken out and placed in the mating-coop until again mated.

If a beginner is in possession of a flock of fifty pairs of selected birds, well mated, this record will make easy the matter of increasing his flock intelligently. Young birds, from the best breeders only, should be selected and banded as directed. At the age of six weeks these youngsters should be taken out and placed in a separate coop, and in this coop none but young stock should be kept. All young birds, before being put thus in the separate pen, should have all tail-quills plucked out, because there is less mortality among birds so treated while attaining their growth.

It is well for a beginner to keep a record of the squabs as produced, numbering each nest, and entering in the records the birds working in each nest, and the number of squabs produced. Some pairs will produce ten pairs of squabs a year, while others may yield only five. The record will enable the breeder to save young breeding stock from his prolific breeders only. If the bands are numbered consecutively and the birds are banded before leaving the nest, the nest-mates will always have consecutive numbers. It sometimes happens that a nest will have only one bird in it, in which case the record should indicate that fact. A very simple way is to underscore after the record of each nest is made, thus:

478—B. B. cock.

479—B. B. hen.

480—B. Ch. cock.

481—R. Ch. hen.

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This means that 478 is a Blue-Barred cock and the only occupant of the nest; 479 and 480 are nest-mates, the hen being Blue-Barred, and the cock Blue-Chequered; 481 is a Red-Chequered hen from another nest, and the only occupant of the nest.

### INBREEDING AND CROSSING.

Care must be taken not to inbreed. Under no circumstances permit 479 and 480 to breed for they are nest-mates. If they should mate they must be separated until a new mate is chosen by each. Numbers 478 and 479, or 478 and 481 can be safely mated.

When increasing stock, it is a good plan to get a few pairs of mated Homers from a different source, as this may afford an excellent means of bringing in a different strain of blood.

Do not buy any cross-bred birds if possible to avoid it, unless you know exactly what you are getting. If desirous of increasing the flock, when it is impossible to procure straight Homers, the next best plan is to get some Dragoons of pure blood and mate with young straight Homers whose records have been kept as directed. Such crossing ought to give fair results. The offspring of these birds may be mated with full-blooded Homers, making squabs of three-fourths Homer and one-fourth Dragoon blood. Squabs from birds of half blood should not be mated with each other, but with full-blooded mates as directed. These quarter-blood squabs will be a little larger than straight Homers, and will be ready for the market almost as soon. In making this cross, however, much care must be exercised to have very carefully selected Dragoons with good squab-producing records.

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### FEEDS AND FEEDING.

Though the houses may be well constructed and the birds well selected and properly mated, no success can be expected unless proper kinds of feed are procured and the birds are regularly fed. While it is true that some breeders have had fair success for a while by feeding only cracked corn and wheat, long-continued feeding on these two staples alone invariably fails to produce as good squabs or as many as when a further variety of grains is fed. In their free state, pigeons can select a variety of grains, avoiding one kind and choosing another, as their appetites dictate, but when they are kept in a small inclosure they must, of course, take what the breeder gives them. Hence, it becomes highly important that the breeder have good judgment as to kinds and quality of food to set before them, and that he have interest enough in his flock to avoid stinting the quantity, or feeding too largely of one kind because its price happens to be low.

**THE FEED-ROOM.**—As already suggested, a room should be set apart for a store-room. It should be supplied with a feed-bin divided into the proper number of sections to hold each variety of feed used; or, instead of such feed-bin, small barrels with lids may be used.

**FEEDS AND OTHER SUPPLIES.**—In these receptacles should be kept a generous supply of sifted cracked corn, Canada peas, wheat, German millet, Kaffir corn, and hemp. These are the six principal feeds.

On the floor of each pen keep about a peck of clean sand evenly spread. Procure three boxes about the size of small cigar-boxes; fill one about one-third full of fine table-salt, the second with cracked oyster-shells, pigeon size, and the third with ground charcoal, about as fine

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as ground coffee. These three substances are very essential to the health of pigeons. Clean out and replenish each of these boxes weekly. Do not fail to keep the salt-box filled and before them all the time, for the health of pigeons demands it.

**FEEDING-TROUGHS.**—In each pen is placed a feeding-trough, made of inch stuff, 10 inches wide, 4 feet long, and with side  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches high. This trough is placed in the middle of the pen to avoid feeding in the open fly, where the birds and grain would both be subjected to the weather. In feeding, a tin pail holding a peck is convenient, as is also a grocer's tin scoop No. 3, which holds about three pints.

**RATIONS.**—For the morning ration give equal parts of cracked corn, wheat, and peas, well mixed, using two scoopfuls of the mixture to each pen of fifty pairs of birds, and taking good care to see that all droppings are cleaned out of the troughs before feed is put in.

The ration for the afternoon is composed of cracked corn, Kaffir corn, millet, and peas in equal parts.

If at any feeding-time any of the previous supply has not been used, reduce the quantity. If, however, the troughs should be entirely bare, slightly increase the quantity. When a number of squabs are in the nests the birds will feed more freely and need a more liberal supply.

**SPECIAL FEEDS.**—On Thursdays and Sundays use hemp in the ration instead of millet. Care must be taken that the birds do not get this feed too often, nor in too large quantity, as it is very fattening and if fed in excess has a tendency to give the birds vertigo. For the same reason caution must be used in feeding millet. A small quantity of rice may be fed once a week with advantage.

**TIME OF FEEDING.**—Regularity in time of feeding

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should be strictly observed. The morning feed in summer should be given at 6.30 and in the winter at 7 or 7.30. The afternoon ration should be given at 4 o'clock in the summer and 3 in the winter. The afternoon hours are quite important, and must be adhered to in order that the birds may have ample opportunity to fill themselves and feed their young before nightfall.

Be sure to attend to the feeding yourself. Always go alone; never permit anyone to accompany you, for birds are often very timid of strangers, and chilled eggs may result if a stranger should remain in the fly at feeding-time. Go in quietly, making no noise or sudden movements; and, after the feed is placed in the trough, always leave the birds alone for a full hour that they may be absolutely uninterrupted in feeding themselves and the squabs.

FEEDING INDOORS.—Never feed out of doors under any circumstances in either summer or winter. Besides the loss occasioned by sparrows taking advantage of the opportunity to help themselves, in summer the heavy dews and hot nights will cause any feed left over to sour, and in winter storm and sleet will prevent birds from feeding.

A FEW CAUTIONS.—Cracked corn must be sifted, for fine meal can not be used by the birds, and in hot, muggy weather it will sour over night, necessitating extra trouble in cleaning out the troughs.

Be sure that every grain is sound and strictly first-class. Do not feed new wheat until it is thoroughly dry, usually not sooner than October 1st, and do not feed new corn until Christmas. Especially avoid musty grain.

Because one of these feeds mentioned may sometimes be quite cheap, do not be tempted to feed largely of it,

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thinking to save money thereby. This practice so often causes trouble that caution is urged in departing from the proportions named.

Too much wheat in the ration will almost always cause looseness of bowels and make the squabs skinny and dark.

Birds need a variety of feed, and it would be as injudicious and disastrous to feed exclusively on peas, a high-priced food, as on wheat alone or some other cheap food.



FIG. 9.—Squabs ("peepers"), 12 hours old.

HOW THE SQUABS ARE FED.—Some wonder why squabs die in the nest or get on the floor or do not fatten up properly. Very frequently the reason is simply because the old birds are not properly fed. We should constantly bear in mind that a squab is very different from a chick. A newly-hatched chick can run about and help itself to food and water. The squab, on the other hand, is utterly helpless at birth (Figs. 9 and 10): it is unable to walk and must be fed in the nest with what-

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ever the parent-bird brings to it. For about five days nature provides a special food commonly called "pigeon milk," a creamy substance contained in the crops of the pigeons and which they have the power to eject from their mouths into the mouths of their tender young. After a few days of such feeding the squab is fed on such grains as the pigeon gets, and by the same process of transfer from the parent's mouth to its own; hence, it is essential that proper food be given the pigeons.

**COST OF FEEDING.**—The cost of feeding the kinds and quantities of grain recommended will be of interest to novices. With wheat at 80 cents a bushel, sifted cracked corn at \$1 per hundredweight, Kaffir corn at 90 cents per bushel, millet at 90 cents, hemp at \$1.30, and peas at \$1.10 per bushel, the cost will be one-seventh of a cent a day for each bird, or about 52 cents a year. Feeding at such cost, I have never failed to realize an annual net return of \$1.50 per pair, but I was never able to secure such returns when feeding steadily on a wheat and corn diet.

**WATERING.**—A generous supply of fresh, pure water for drinking purposes should be supplied. The flock should be watered each morning before the supply of feed is given. The water supply should be near the feeding-troughs. Two-gallon stone fountains may be used in summer and galvanized iron ones in winter. These fountains are placed on the floors of the pens, one to each pen being sufficient. They should be thoroughly cleaned out each morning and filled with pure, fresh water, which will last all day, although during the heated spell of summer it is better to put in a fresh supply of water before the afternoon feeding. For thoroughness in cleaning the fountains, it is well to use a small brush. About twice a week place a piece of stone lime about

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the size of a hickory-nut in each fountain. At least three times a month the fountain should be disinfected by using ten drops of carbolic acid to a two-gallon fountain, leaving the acid in the water for the birds to drink that day, as it will do them no harm.

### OTHER DETAILS OF MANAGEMENT.

No success can be achieved in squab raising even with the best of houses, fine, well-mated stock, and proper food, unless the flock is given good care and management.



FIG. 10.—Squabs ("squeakers"), 24 hours old.

**BATHING.**—Birds should always have a supply of water in which to bathe. Bath-tubs made of galvanized iron or zinc, 3 inches deep, and about 30 inches square, and set in an open boxing of inch stuff, are placed in the end of the fly opposite the coop. These furnish convenient bathing-places for the birds, which are much used and enjoyed by them. Some use these bath-tubs instead of fountains for the supply of drinking-water, but when a bird bathes a milky scum appears on the surface of the water and it soon becomes quite foul, and

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unless changed several times daily is surely unfit for drinking purposes. After the birds are through bathing the tubs should be emptied and turned upside down.

An excellent way to manage the water question is to provide a trough to run through the flies across the ends. This trough can be made of inch stuff, 12 inches wide, and 3 inches high; and, when city water or other running supply is available, a small steady stream can be allowed to flow in at one end and out at the other, which should be slightly lower to cause a current. The escaping water should empty into a barrel sunk so as to bring its top level with the ground.

WHITEWASHING.—A first requisite is that the new house should be thoroughly lime-washed inside before occupancy. Carbolic acid should be used in the preparation of the wash in the ratio of a teaspoonful of the acid to two gallons of wash. The crude dark acid is as good for this purpose as the refined article, and costs much less. The acid serves to repel lice. This wash should be thoroughly spread over the entire surface of the inside of a new coop, and this whitewashing should be repeated once a year thereafter. Besides adding to the appearance of the house and making it lighter, it sweetens and freshens the interior and destroys any lice or mites. To make the application more effective the wash should be carefully worked into the corners and crevices.

CLEANING.—Some breeders do not clean out nest-boxes and pens more than twice a year, and often only when they need some manure for gardening operations. It is a very dangerous practice to allow the droppings to accumulate, and, in protracted damp weather, a decided menace to health. I invariably clean all my houses regularly once a week. I take out the movable bot-

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toms of the nest-boxes, and with a large butcher-knife or steel scraper remove all excrement, letting it fall to the floor of the pen. If a nest-box contains young squabs or eggs or a freshly-made nest it is not disturbed, but is left to take its turn at a subsequent cleaning. After all nest-boxes are well cleaned a spade is used to loosen the droppings on the floor, and all are shoveled into a wheelbarrow in the passageway and the floor is swept clean.

The flies are cleaned out from four to six times a year. I use about four inches of clean sand in the flies, the sand being sifted and furnishing a soft floor on which the birds alight. With this there is no danger of the birds laming themselves or breaking their legs, and the sand is always free from mud. A pinch of air-slacked sifted lime (carbulated by the addition of a scant teacup of crude carbolic acid to a peck of lime) is scattered in each nest, a peck of dry sand is scattered on the floor, and the coop is ready for another week's run.

Objection is made by some breeders that the weekly cleaning out unnecessarily disturbs the birds, compelling the timid ones to leave their nests, causing eggs to get chilled, etc. It certainly is possible to make a great uproar in the coop during the cleaning, but this I never permit. The cleaner should enter the pen quietly, making no violent or sudden motions, and dispatch the work as quickly as possible. The birds should be so treated that, when it is necessary to enter their quarters, they know that no harm is intended. In this weekly cleaning the supply of salt, oyster-shells, and charcoal should be renewed and a fresh supply of tobacco-stems, cut into six-inch lengths, put into each pen.

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**LIGHT-WEIGHT SQUABS.**—If squabs at the proper age for market are of light weight—six and one-half or seven pounds to the dozen—they are not profitable, for they will always bring lower prices when sent to market. Such squabs indicate either that the parent-birds are poor feeders or that the breeder has fed improperly. If a record has been carefully kept, as suggested, an inspection of it will show whether a particular pair of birds regularly produce poor squabs. If so, and the food given has been suitable in quantity and variety, this pair of birds should be disposed of at once. During the molting season the squabs may be expected to be less plump than when the birds have less strain on them. These light-weight squabs cut down the profits more than some think. I have frequently seen a lot of nearly one hundred sold for \$4.25 per dozen straight, while another lot sent at the same time and to the same buyer has brought \$4.25 for some, \$4 for others, and \$3.50, and even as low as \$1.75 for others. Frequently this difference is directly traceable to the kind of feed given.

**TRANSFERRING A SQUAB.**—Sometimes, even with right feeding, a squab will be observed to be of light weight, being much smaller than its nest-mate. If there is in the pigeon-house a nest with only one young squab of the same size as the weakling, it is a good practice to transfer the latter to this nest, when the parents of the younger squab will feed both, usually with good results. It must be remembered, however, that no change of this kind should be made until after the squab is a week old, or during the time the parents are furnishing the "pigeon milk."

### KILLING AND DRESSING.

The squabs should be killed before they get so large that they leave the nests. The standard size is eight

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pounds to the dozen. With properly kept birds this weight is usually attained in four weeks with straight Homers, and five weeks with Dragons.

PREPARATION.—The producer should have a regular shipping-day, selecting such as best suits his convenience, and on that day he should kill all squabs which are of proper size (Fig. 11). The squabs should be caught in the morning before the feeding and watering are done. This assures empty crops. Judgment must be used in selecting the squabs, or some which are too light may be taken, causing a cut in the price. As caught, the squabs should be placed in pigeon-hampers and taken to the killing-room, which in cool weather should be heated to be made comfortable for the picker. An oil-stove lighted at the time of beginning to catch the squabs, will temper the room nicely by the time the squabs are all brought in if the flock is large. Place the hampers within easy reach of the chair in which the picker is to sit, and have a basin of water close by. Directly in front of the picker, suspend in a horizontal position a ring of wood or iron, about a foot in diameter, and hang from the ring four cords 8 inches long, terminating in slip nooses.

KILLING THE SQUABS.—Catch a squab from the hamper, and suspend it by passing one of the nooses around the legs, tail, and wings, letting about 2 inches of the ends of the wings project beyond the noose, and tighten it well. Insert the killing-knife (sold for such purposes) well into the back of the mouth and draw it forward cutting clear into the brain, hang a weighted wire in the bill and let the bird bleed. The wire is 6 inches long, hooked and pointed at the upper end, and weighted at the lower end with a piece of lead the size of a hulled walnut. Four birds are killed in turn, and picking be-

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gins on No. 1 as soon as dead. Novices may kill and pick but one at a time until some speed is gained, but an expert picker will kill four and "rough pick" them all before they get too cold.

DRESSING THE SQUABS.—Allow the birds to remain suspended, but release the wings, grasping them both in the left hand back of the bird. Moisten the thumb and forefinger of the right hand in the pan of water, and begin picking the neck, leaving about three-quarters of

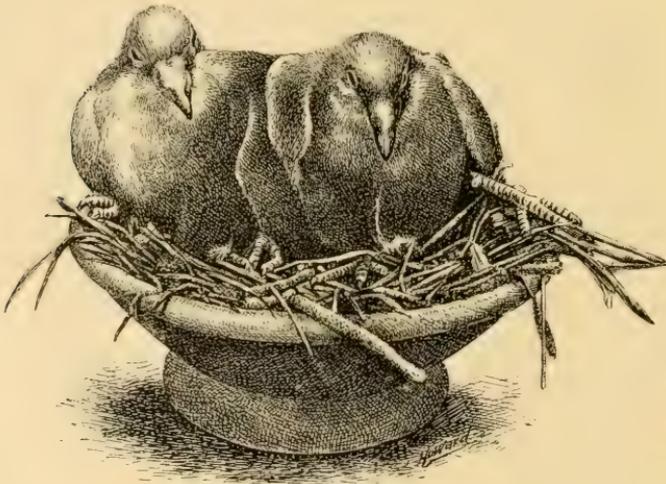


FIG. 11.—Squabs ("squealeis"), 28 days old, ready for market.

an inch next the head unpicked. Still hold the wings in the left hand until the entire front of the bird, legs included, is picked. Then bringing the wings in front of the bird, hold in the left hand as before, and remove the balance of feathers from the body. Now, with wings still in left hand pluck quills from both wings at once, and also the larger feathers, and then finish each wing separately. This completes the "rough picking," after

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which they must be pinfeathered, in which operation a small knife is helpful. An expert picker, when he has finished the third bird, kills three more so that they may be bleeding while he is at work with the fourth. As soon as finished each squab is dropped into a tub of cold water to drive out the animal heat and make the birds more firm and plump.

An expert picker can kill and "rough pick" twenty squabs an hour or completely dress twelve to fifteen in the same time.

It pays well to use care in picking not to tear the skin or leave any feathers on the birds. Well-fattened birds are seldom torn by the expert picker. The weighted wire is of advantage in slightly stretching the skin and making it less liable to tear.

When all the squabs are dressed, the feet and mouths must be thoroughly washed of all filth and blood; they should be placed again for a few minutes in clean cold water, and then hung on a drying-rack for five minutes to drain.

MARKETING.—If the squabs are sold to a local dealer, they may be taken from the rack at once, placed in a suitable basket, and delivered immediately. If they are to be expressed to a distant market, packing in ice is necessary, and a box or barrel must be used. Place a layer of cracked ice at the bottom, alternate with layers of birds and ice, and finish with a generous topping of ice. Only in quite cold weather is it safe to omit ice. Place a secure covering on the package and mark full directions to whom shipped, as well as your own address, and the number of birds.

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### DISEASES, PARASITES, AND REMEDIES.

With good, wholesome food, proper housing and care, very little disease is usually encountered. The best preventives of disease are: (1) A dry house, free from draughts; (2) untainted grains; (3) pure water; (4) regularity of feeding; and (5) cleanliness.

#### DISEASES.

GOING LIGHT.—This disease is characterized by moping and drooping of the bird, which, when examined, will usually be found to be thin in flesh. Diarrhea is frequently a first symptom, which may be checked by a dose of sweet-fern tea. If the discharge is slimy give a dropperful of cod liver oil and creosote every night and morning until improvement is noticed. This remedy is prepared by mixing 10 cents' worth of the oil and 5 cents' worth of creosote in a two-ounce bottle. By a dropper is meant the little instrument which is used in filling fountain-pens, and which is very convenient to use in giving drops or small doses.

If the disease has so far progressed that the bird breathes heavily or gasps for breath, use what some have designed as the "hatchet" remedy; that is, kill the bird. This disease usually manifests itself only during the molting season, and in all cases the tail-quills should be plucked.

I think the disease is often due to unsound grain or permitting feed to lie on the ground and sour. In light attacks three drops of compound tincture of gentian are sometimes sufficient to effect a cure, if the tail has been plucked. Too hard driving by the cock-bird may cause the trouble, by preventing the hen from getting full quantity of food. The first diarrhea may be caused by

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feeding too much wheat or grain that is too new. A good remedy in such cases is to give two dropperfuls of sweet-fern tea at once.

ROUP.—Roup may be known by a discharge from the nostrils and a very offensive breath, and is probably the sequence of a neglected cold, coupled with a diseased condition of the bird. It is very contagious and requires careful treatment. Fill a small oil-can with camphorated oil, and after washing the nostrils well, put three or four drops in each of them and one or two in the mouth. Another remedy is to use two drops of kerosene oil in the nostrils and one or two in the mouth. Watch birds carefully until cured. If the birds are well taken care of, this remedy is a sure cure.

VERTIGO.—When afflicted with vertigo the bird turns its head over its shoulder and seems dizzy, frequently falling down. It is probably an affection of the brain. I have known a bird with vertigo to live for two years, always having a spell when I entered the coop. I have never known a case to be cured, and the best treatment is the "hatchet" remedy.

LEG AND WING TROUBLES.—In some cases, the legs of the bird seem too weak to support its body. Homers and short-legged varieties very seldom have this trouble. Inbreeding I believe to be one of the chief causes. Do not inbreed, always keep a record, and mate carefully, and you need not fear this trouble.

Birds sometimes may strike their wings in going in or out of the entrance, or may hit each other with their wings in fighting, and such blows may cause lumps to form. Some advise opening such a lump with the knife, but this treatment, in my experience, has always caused a stiff joint, and I can not recommend it. The only remedy I have found effectual is to paint the part oc-

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asionally with tincture of iodine. I have successfully treated several cases in this way, but never had a successful one with the knife treatment.

A swelling sometimes forms on the wing-joint next the body. All varieties are more or less subject to this. The swelling has no corruption in it. The remedy is to paint with iodine tincture, and, if the wing droops, lessen the weight by plucking the wing-quills.

CANKER.—The appearance of canker is indicated by a profuse discharge of cheesy matter from the side of the mouth. As soon as noticed, treatment should be given. Prepare a solution of bluestone, and with a small camel's hair brush swab well the part affected. Do this two days in succession and then with a match-stem carefully remove the cheesy growth, being very careful not to draw blood, and then put a small quantity of powdered sulphur in the throat. Do not attempt to check the discharge as it first appears except by treating as mentioned. If the bird is badly cankered before treatment begins, and the mouth well clotted, or if there is a large cankerous lump well down in the throat, treatment seldom is of any avail, and usually such a case is best remedied by killing the bird. In the case of valuable birds the knife may be used as a last resort.

To keep the flock free from this disease feed only sound grains and give the purest of water. Never place newly purchased birds in the flies until first inspected thoroughly by opening the mouth to see if any canker exists. When any is found, they should be handed back to the seller, for canker is one of the most dreaded diseases.

When the disease is mild in form, by the prompt use of the remedies recommended here, favorable results are almost always secured.

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CHOLERA.—This is the worst of all diseases with which the breeder contends, and more loss is occasioned by this complaint than by all others combined. It runs its course with fatal rapidity, and, when once present in a flock, may quickly decimate the pens. Happily, however, the cause of cholera may almost always be traced to bad management and bad feeding, so that a careful and intelligent breeder seldom is called upon to carry out dead birds by the bucketful, as sometimes happens with flocks poorly kept.

Usually when first affected the bird mopes about with a full crop, which if examined will be found to be full of water with a very offensive smell. When this is observed the bird must be carefully caught, the water gently squeezed from the crop, and a dropperful of cod liver oil and creosote administered.

If the whole flock is diseased, put ten drops of carbolic acid to a gallon of their drinking-water for two mornings. Be very careful what you feed, and watch the flock very closely, because if this trouble gets a foothold the entire flock may die in a short time. After having used the carbolic acid, use a tablespoonful of tincture of gentian to the gallon of drinking-water three times in succession.

If birds are well cared for this disease need cause very little anxiety, but lack of cleanliness and unsound food and impure water invite the disease in its worst form.

### GENERAL REMEDIES.

In addition to the specific remedies already mentioned, there are two general ones which are most useful in squab raising.

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GENTIAN AS A TONIC.—For a tonic, after trying everything recommended, I find nothing equal to gentian. I use the compound extract, giving a tablespoonful to a gallon in the drinking-fountain. During the molting season in September, October, and November, I use a tonic every Sunday morning, and for the balance of the year only when the birds seem to be out of condition.

SWEET-FERN TEA.—Whenever it is noticed that the birds have looseness of the bowels, I use sweet-fern tea, a teacup of the tea to two gallons of water in the drinking-fountain. The tea is prepared by boiling a good double handful of the dried leaves in about twelve gallons of water, letting it boil down one-half. Strain and put in bottles or jugs and set away for use, out of the reach of frost. Sweet fern is botanically known as *Myrica asplenifolia*.

### LICE.

There are two kinds of lice which infest pigeons: (1) The long variety, which confines itself to the wings and is seldom troublesome; and (2) the small round louse, which preys on the head and body of the bird, and, if allowed to increase, will deplete the blood and cause death.

These pests breed at so astonishing a rate in warm weather that, if they once get a foothold, vigorous measures must be promptly used, or all weak or ailing birds will be literally eaten up. If a loft becomes infested, clean out thoroughly and use kerosene oil freely in nests and perches, seeing that the oil saturates all surfaces and gets into all cracks and crevices, and that the corners are not forgotten. Then at the weekly cleaning scatter

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powdered lime well saturated with crude carbolic acid in the corners of all nests.

Sawdust should not be used for the bottoms of nests and on the floors, as is sometimes suggested, unless it be first treated well with carbolic acid, and even then the propriety of using it is doubtful. The worst affliction of lice the writer's pigeons ever suffered was when he used sawdust. The nest-pans fairly swarmed with them. When he got rid of them, which required heroic treatment with kerosene and dusting the birds with Persian insect-powder, after thoroughly cleaning the house, he never used sawdust again.

Attention to cleanliness and regular baths for the birds are essential in avoiding these pests. Birds that have three baths a week, houses well cleaned weekly, carbolated lime scattered in nests, and tobacco-stems for nests will not be troubled with body-lice.

In buying new stock carefully examine for lice, and if any are found dust with Persian insect-powder or snuff, keep them separate, and be sure that you have killed all lice before placing them with the breeding flock.

### SUMMARY.

It will pay to go into the pigeon business for squabs only provided one gets the right kind of stock and gives careful attention and proper management.

The best breed to use for squab raising is straight Homers or a cross between them and Dragoons. Successful breeders use Homers almost exclusively, because they are the best workers and feeders, and raise larger squabs in four weeks' time than any other variety. By a cross of straight Homers with Dragoons you get a larger squab in four weeks' time than with straight

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Dragoons. A pair of straight Dragoons requires five weeks to bring squabs to market size, but the cross will result in a larger squab which can be put on the market in a little over four weeks.

One large pigeon-house is better and more economical than several small ones, but in no case should a house be built to accommodate more than 250 pairs. If larger numbers are to be kept, more than one house should be built. A room 8x10 feet will accommodate fifty pairs very comfortably. The fly should be extended thirty-two feet if possible.

Pigeons should be fed twice a day—in the summer-time at 6.30 a. m. and 4.30 p. m., in the winter at 7.30 a. m. and 3 p. m.

The best kinds of feed to use are cracked corn, red wheat, Kaffir corn, millet, peas, hemp, and rice. In the morning give wheat, cracked corn, and peas in equal parts; in the afternoon give equal parts of cracked corn, peas, Kaffir corn, and millet. The birds should be fed in the pen rather than in the fly.

Water the birds every morning before feeding, using nothing except fresh pure water. Always clean out the fountain before filling.

Bathing is very essential to the health of pigeons. In summer they should have an opportunity to bathe at least every other day. In winter the bath should be given only on bright, sunny days. It is essential to clean house once every week. After cleaning the nests, put powdered carbolated lime in all cracks, corners, and damp places. Sprinkle the floor with lime and sprinkle a bucket of sand evenly over the lime.

The author's 425 pairs of pigeons produced in one year 4,400 squabs for market. Anyone with good stock and giving as good care and feed ought to do as well.

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### SOME POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND.

Look out for lice.  
Beware of bad grain.  
Avoid overcrowded lofts.  
Never frighten your birds.  
Give bath every other day.  
New wheat will cause sprouts.  
Hulled barley is a good feed.  
Wash fountain out once a day.  
The more squabs, the more feed.  
Keep your houses dry and clean.  
Begin small and grow gradually.  
Never feed sour or musty grains.  
Do not worry over small matters.  
The busy birds are the healthiest.  
Rape-seed is a good thing for birds.  
It is difficult to tell the age of birds.  
Clean house every week regularly.  
Always have a regular killing-day.  
All pigeon diseases can be prevented.  
Clean your breeding-pens every week.  
Cholera never appears without a cause.  
Keep your birds working all the time.  
Weed out all birds that do not work.  
Close all doors on the windward side.  
Wheat screenings are dear at any price.  
Hardy parents produce hardy offspring.  
Peas are the best muscle food for birds.  
Neglected birds cause nothing but loss.  
Keep your birds tame; fright injures them.  
Cholera never breaks out without a cause.  
Place the coops on high ground if possible.

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Inbreeding invites disease. Do not inbreed.  
It costs one cent each week to feed a bird.  
Hulled oats are good to use for a variety.  
Don't breed lice; there is no profit in them.  
Get a supply of sand on hand for winter use.  
Keep the pigeon manure dry. It is valuable.  
Put all diseased birds in a pen by themselves.  
Draughts through the house cause sickness.  
Empty bath-tubs as soon as birds have bathed.  
Watch out for that odd bird in the mating-coop.  
Use plenty of powdered lime and carbolic acid.  
If you have a little bad luck don't get the blues.  
Too much wheat causes looseness of the bowels.  
Young birds are not as profitable as two-year-olds.  
Kill off all the runts; they are not worth saving.  
An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.  
Do not pin much faith on the man who knows it all.  
You can always learn something; no man knows it all.  
Do not feed too much corn during the warm weather.  
Purity and cleanliness are two things to be regarded.  
Watch your birds closely during the molting season.  
Keep the floor of the aviary clean and well sanded.  
If your birds have not molted out right help them  
do it.  
Get your birds and houses in good shape for winter  
work.  
Profit by your own experience, as well as that of  
others.  
A few pairs to begin with will give you some good  
points.  
It does not pay to feed birds that do not produce  
squabs.

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A squab four weeks old should be in condition to market.

Look out for rats; they are cute, and will cause much trouble.

Master your birds; your judgment controls your success.

Clear grit and perseverance make a good squab breeder.

Don't leave any cold draughts through your coops at night.

Dampen the grain when feeding any kind of poultry-powders.

Always band your birds, so you can keep a record of them.

Air-slaked lime and carbolic lime are good preventives for lice.

A good squab breeder never learned the business in one year.

Use common sense in your feeding, and save a lot of trouble.

Do not feed the birds outside in the flies; the feed may sour.

Disease lurks in the dirty drinking-fountains and bath-tubs.

A fussy cock-bird without a mate will cause a lot of trouble.

Always have oyster-shell, grit, and charcoal before your birds.

Pure-bred stock will always give you better squabs than scrubs.

Fifty pairs of birds to each pen, 8x10, is about the right thing.

Catch all birds to be killed before feeding-time in the morning.

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Twenty-five pairs of birds are enough for the novice to start with.

Buckwheat is another good feed if you can get the birds to eat it.

See that your flies are all cleaned up before the winter weather sets in.

Be regular in all things; the birds know when it is time for a meal.

It is not costly houses that make success, but the man behind the birds.

Too many breeders use inferior feed and get poor squabs in return.

See that all broken windows are replaced before cold weather comes on.

Know your birds; it will do much toward your success in handling them.

Keep your feed-troughs inside of the houses twelve months of the year.

Keep all young birds to be saved for breeders in a coop by themselves.

Cholera! Look out for it. Excessive dampness is the cause in most cases.

Do things on time. Do not let the birds go wrong by being neglectful.

When entering your houses go in quietly. Do nothing to startle the birds.

There are too many who go into the squab business and make a failure.

Do not forget that disease lurks in a filthy drinking-fountain or bath-tub.

The birds crave green food. Try them on a head of young, tender lettuce.

Keep new comers in a pen by themselves until you find out what they are.

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Get together enough birds to ship your squabs to the big markets. It pays.

The number of birds you can keep depends on how many you can care for.

Keep your birds working. A self-feeder and a lazy keeper make poor birds.

Keep a good watch-dog, and if you have many out-buildings a good rat-dog.

Keep your flies clean. They should be well sanded at least four times a year.

Do not feed corn exclusively; give the birds several different kinds of grain.

Never neglect placing a piece of lime the size of a hickory-nut in the water.

Keep drinking-fountains and feeding-vessels and coops scrupulously clean always.

A big squab-breeding plant does not necessarily mean a good many acres of land.

To go into the squab business and be successful requires a good bit of practice.

May and June are good months in which to save young squabs for breeders.

Runts are slow breeders, and Duchesse Pigeons are not good for squab breeders.

To go into the squab business and be successful requires a good bit of patience.

Most of the diseases that affect pigeons are due to the carelessness of the keeper.

Be regular in your work about the birds. They know when feeding-time comes.

The price of feed should not be considered, when the profit is proportionately greater.

Your bill-of-fare should not be too extensive, but give the birds a variety of grain.

## The Feather's Practical Squab Book.

Watch for barren birds; they are found in every fly. To keep birds of this kind is a loss.

Cure colds in the head. This prevents roup. Two drops of camphorated oil is a cure.

Breeding squabs for market is about the most independent occupation one can take up.

Keep tobacco-stems and a little hay by your birds at all times, so they can build their nests.

Have all birds banded. In this way you will make no mistakes, and know what you are doing.

Never allow a stray cock-bird in the house; it will cause much damage if allowed to remain.

Heavy storms are hard on birds. Some breeders keep them inside during very severe weather.

Go through your houses every day, watch your birds carefully and see if everything is all right.

Keep the food from snow and dirt, and leave no food exposed after the birds have finished eating.

Keep your birds confined in a fly. They will do better work than when allowed their liberty.

Mate your best workers. There are always some lazy birds; to mate these is showing poor judgment.

Feed only what the birds will eat up clean. To feed more is a loss to both the bird and its keeper.

For lump on the wing, let Nature take its course. If you try to effect a cure, you will have a stiff wing.

Look out for your grit-boxes. See that the birds have a full supply of oyster-shells, salt, and charcoal.

Put six drops diluted carbolic acid two or three times during the summer in the fountains to clean them out.

Remember that odd birds are not profitable. Dispose of such stock or buy whichever sex are lacking.

One person should be able to care for one thousand pairs of birds, with some one to assist on killing-days.

## The Feather's Practical Squab Book.

When you buy birds, if you are a novice, always take some one with you who knows something about them.

Look out for the birds that rattle in the throat. Cure this with two drops of camphorated oil up each nostril.

For sniffles or cold in head, two drops camphorated oil injected in nose. Sponge well before you drop the oil.

Get clear of any rats that might be around your premises. The birds will not do good work if rats are around.

Do not use any grain that is not sound and sweet; musty grain has thrown many a man down in the squab business.

When you buy birds, place in a separate coop and be sure they are mated before placing them in regular quarters.

Give the birds their bath at least twice each week, and do not allow the water to stand after feeding-time at night.

The Homer makes the best squab breeder. The Dragoon crossed with the Homer also makes a good breeder.

I am learning something every day about the business. I<sup>+</sup> has taken years of labor to accomplish what I have attained.

Failures in the pigeon business are due mostly to starting with poor stock, and poor judgment behind the birds.

Mice are expensive things in a pigeon-house. They nest near the birds, causing chilled eggs and killing your squabs.

When you find a bird going light, pull tail and first two flight-feathers. This will start the bird on the road to recovery.

## The Feather's Practical Squab Book.

The feed question is one that many fail on. Good feeding is absolutely necessary in the raising of squabs for market.

Pigeon-houses should be of wood and have water-tight roofs. Floors should be raised from the ground about 10 inches.

Do not expect the birds to do it all. A great deal of labor and common sense are required to make the squab business a success.

Twenty-five drops of tincture of nux vomica in one quart of water makes a good tonic; given once a week will not hurt them.

Look out for scrappers. Take them from the house at once, even if mated. They will cause trouble and loss if allowed to remain.

September and October are two hard months on birds that are in their molt, and during these months you must not expect many squabs.

Watch your birds for canker. When found, scrape with a match, and put a little sulphur down the throat every day, and a cure will result.

If you are going to build a house, have it at least twelve inches from the ground, so as to allow a cat or rat-dog room to go under without trouble.

Squab raising for market and raising birds to fly is a separate business. Do one or the other; you can not succeed in making a combination of the two.

Never let your young birds grow up with the old ones. Always take the young birds from the old ones as soon as you can and put them in a pen by themselves.

Common pigeons are no good. Do not have them on your place. I never knew a squab breeder who had common pigeons and Homers mixed to have any success.

## The Feather's Practical Squab Book.

Use common sense in all your methods. Have a system and follow it faithfully until you learn better. It is not how much you read, but how well you digest it.

A spray-pump is just the thing to whitewash with. Strain the whitewash first, so as not to clog up the pump. All cracks and crevices should receive an extra squirt.

Beginners should read carefully the experience of those who are at the top. They will then, by carefully following, avoid many hard knocks that come to the know-it-alls.

It is interesting to watch young birds mate. If you are a close observer, you will notice that there is much human nature in their actions, they acting much as a pair of lovers of the human race.

There is only one way to feed market birds, and that is feed all they will eat up clean, and feed the best. Remember that water—fresh water—is what the birds must have before them at all times.

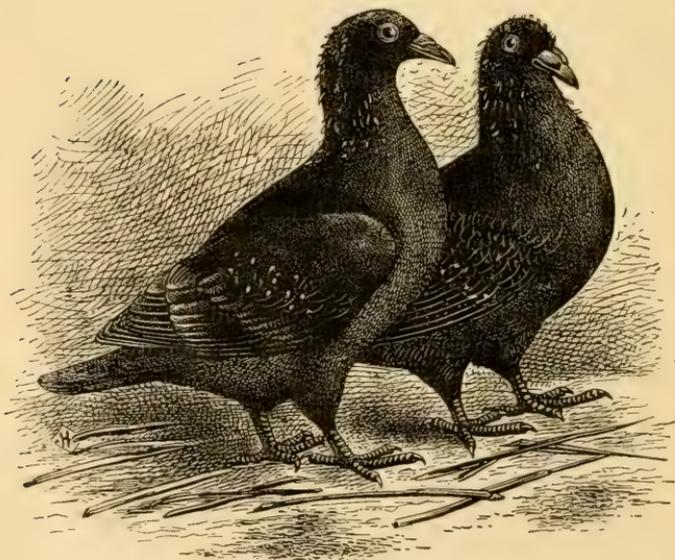
For every pair of birds you wish to house it will cost \$1.00 to build the house; thus, for twenty-five pairs of birds it will cost \$25.00 for the house. A house 40 feet long and 12 feet wide will accommodate 250 pairs of birds and will cost \$250.00.

After feeding the birds morning and evening don't disturb them. Do not permit visitors in the feeding-pen; it makes the birds wild and sometimes they injure themselves in crowding the exit-hole at such time. Always keep them as tame as you can; enter the coop when necessary as quietly as possible.

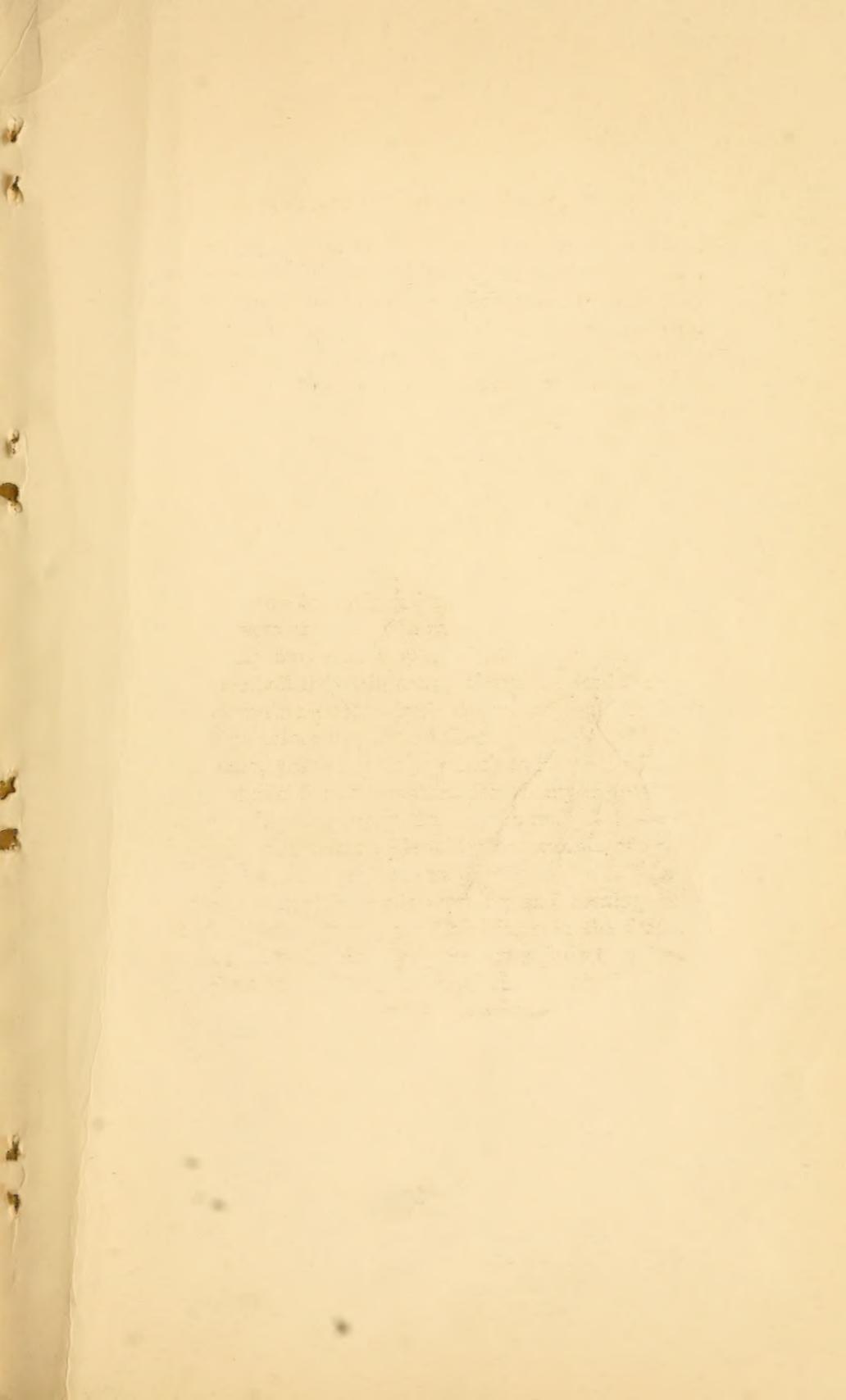
How is it you do not get \$3.75 per dozen for your squabs? Because you do not know how to raise eight-pound birds. If you want success in the squab business

## The Feather's Practical Squab Book.

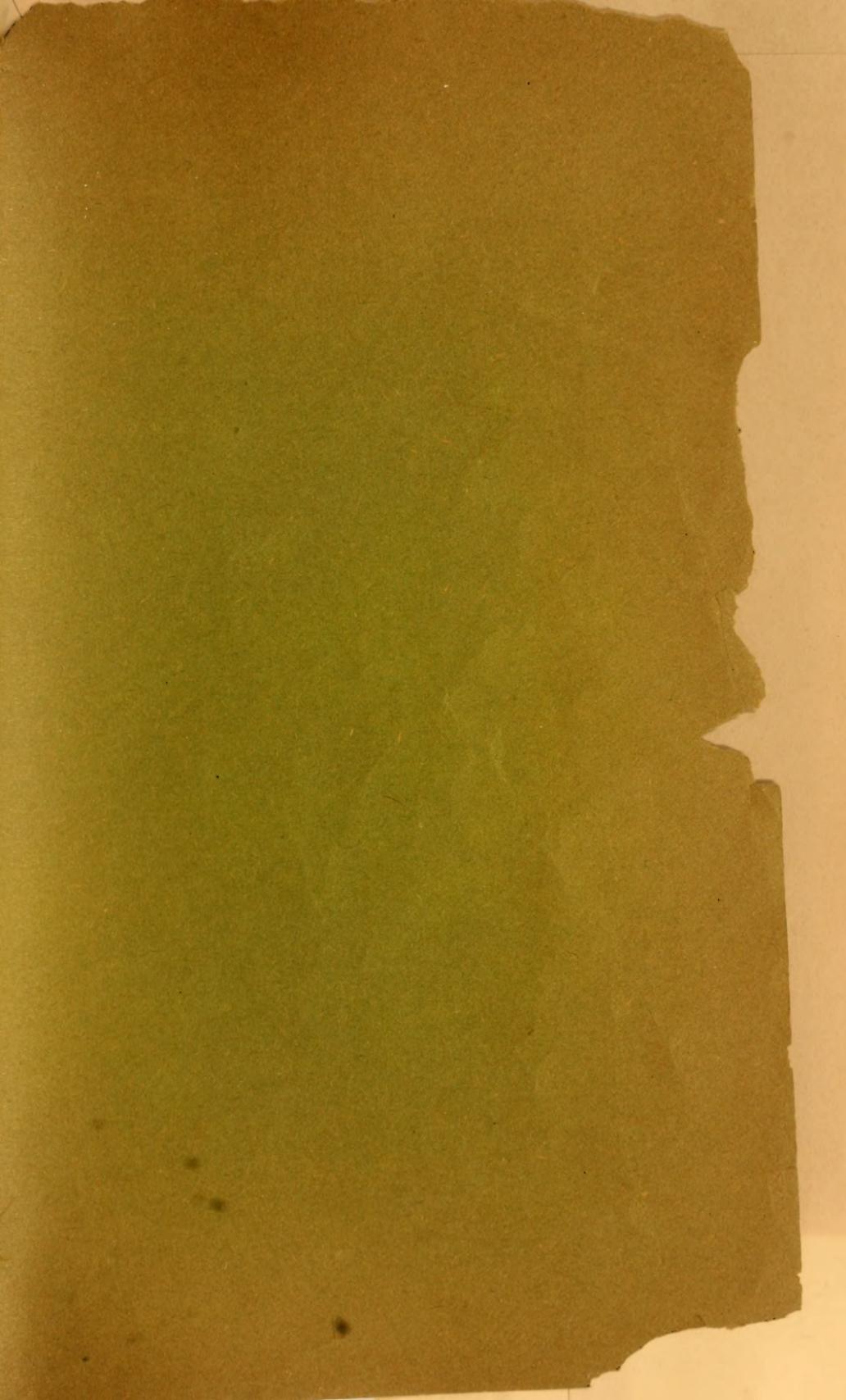
have nothing but the best of breeders. Weed out all birds that do not pay their feed-bill. Take out that extra cock-bird that races around in the coop. He is doing you damage every day. See if you have any extra hen-bird in your coop; if you have, remember that she is capable of doing as much mischief as an extra cock-bird.



Three-Weeks-Old - Homers.



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