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**Squabs**  
**..for..**  
**Profit.**

...BY...

J. A. SUMMERS.

PUBLISHED BY  
C. E. TWOMBLY,  
BOSTON.

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# Squabs For Profit.

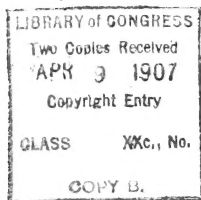


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J. A. SUMMERS.

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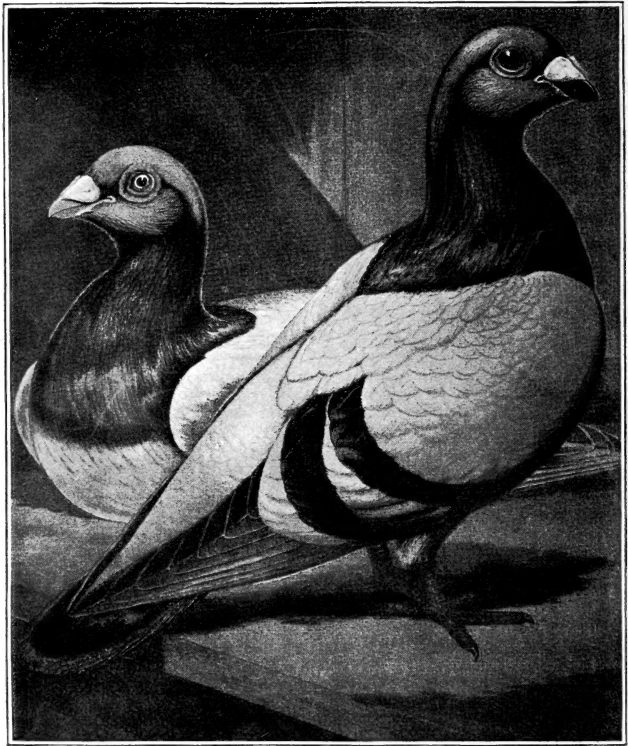
# PREFACE.



The author of this little book has been a successful squab raiser for a number of years, but the same as others found many obstacles when commencing business. I felt in need of reliable information myself, and it is for those in the same predicament, and those who made inquiries, that I publish this book.

J. A. SUMMERS,

CHALFONT, PA



ENGLISH RUNTS.

(Reproduced from Fulton's Book of Pigeons.)



# Squabs for Profit.

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## BREEDING HOUSES.

**I**N commencing this work a few points in reference to the proper location and building for raising squabs, might be worthy of mention, particularly for the benefit of those commencing business. The most expensive buildings do not necessarily bring a success in the squab business, but the one I here describe I have found after experimenting with many houses to be as cheap as any, and answering the purpose just as well. If one has the capital, tongued and grooved boards can be used, and the heating system adapted. This has the tendency to lower the death rate of squabs frozen in the Winter, but at the same time it appears to be detrimental to the old birds health, for if the buildings are heated inside, the birds are very liable to contract a severe cold when coming out into the cold atmosphere in the runs. I have not as yet adapted the heating system, but some large squab dealers have and claim benefit from it. The following description of building I find the best for this purpose and the cheapness of the same might be a great advantage in the start.

The location of the breeding house is one of the first to be considered. The house should be erected upon a dry surface, face the South, and should be built if possible next to some larger building, such as a stable or barn so as not to be too much exposed to the cold winds of the North and West in Winter. The most expensive houses are of not much account if they are not built in the proper location, and kept in a good sanitary condition at all times. Particular pains must be taken in the construction of buildings, and care of the birds and the results will be favorable and encouraging. Squabs bring high prices in Winter, and as it is the hardest time of the year to successfully raise them, to select a good warm place for the building is one of the main points to be considered.

In constructing the breeding house use only good lumber, Hemlock boards 12 inches wide, 16 feet in length and an inch in thickness I find the best for making pigeon houses, cheaper lumber can of course be used for the roof, as felt roofing should go over it. Hemlock scantling 2x4 should be used in making the frame work.

The building should be 32 feet in length, 10 feet in width, 8 feet high in front and 7 feet high in the rear. The roof can be made of hemlock boards 1 inch thick, tongued and grooved, 1 foot wide over which tack three ply felt roofing. This felt lasts a great while, but the two ply may only last a season or two, so it will be more economical in the end to purchase the former. To preserve the roof a coat of tar and sand or

slag cement can be applied over the felt every Spring and Fall at least.

Never use slate for roofing breeding houses, for in Winter it gets exceeding cold, and in Summer extremely hot, endangering the lives of the birds building in the higher nests. A good plan is to have a double roof, i. e. have an inner one built a few inches below the outer, leaving an opening at the ends to allow a draught to pass through in Summer. This will keep out a great amount of heat from the sun's rays. Have several transoms near the roof, at the ends of the house, which should be left open in Summer. Four windows 2 x 3 feet should be put in the front, and one of the same size at the East end, all to be midway between the roof and the floor, thereby admitting plenty of sunlight, of which the birds are exceedingly fond. Have the windows put in so they can be slid back on the inside for the hot weather. The house should be divided into four compartments, using lath or wire netting for making the partitions.

The interior of the building must have boxes or nests on all sides, which should be a foot square with a strip three inches wide nailed in the front to prevent the squabs from falling out. Never have the nests made less than 1 foot in height for if any lower, the birds nesting in the higher ones will be continually picking at the heads of those in the row underneath, therefore make them plenty high and avoid considerable disturbance. If birds nesting side by side are constantly fighting from the front of the nests, nail a

small board outside and between the nest so they cannot see one another. Allow two nests for each pair of birds, for good breeders will have built a new nest and oftimes have eggs again, before the squabs in their other nest have attained marketable size. The use of nest pans I do not fancy and think it a waste of money, for most of them are entirely too small, and the squabs are liable to tumble out and perish, but if the proper size which is 10 inches at least across the top and 3 to 4 inches deep can be had, at a reasonable outlay, they may prove an advantage. A building of this size will comfortably house 100 pair of birds; and of course can be made any desired length at will.

The floor should be made of the best hard lumber, yellow pine boards 1 inch in thickness being preferable. They should be put close together so no draught or dampness can get up between the cracks. Never make cement or concrete floors for pigeon houses as they are entirely too cold in Winter and cause more or less dampness to arise. Board floors I find the healthiest and easiest to clean, particularly if coarse pine saw-dust is strewn upon it. This makes cleaning easy, for what is more detestable than to undertake to clean a pigeon-house, when the droppings have adhered to the bare boards and become as hard as cement. One tenth of the labor at cleaning is saved by using saw-dust, which is also the best absorbent known for this purpose.

As rats are a great annoyance and are very detrimental to the success of the squab raiser to a certain

extent, they should never be allowed any means in which to enter the breeding house. A good plan is to have the house raised 6 inches from the ground and board up all around with the exception of a small opening in one end large enough to allow the admittance of the cat. Since adopting this plan the author has not once been troubled with these destructive creatures. Mice do not do any particular harm, but they too should be kept from the loft as they will annoy the birds in many ways.



## RUN OR WIRE FLY.

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**T**HE run or fly is built in the front of the breeding house and for the above described building should be 25 feet in length, and as high as the building. The birds require plenty of room in which to exercise themselves and the larger the better. For this purpose I find the 1 inch mesh wire netting the most suitable, as this size will not admit the pesky sparrow, which otherwise would gain entrance into the building and consume large quantities of feed.

In making the run use good cedar posts and 2x3 hemlock scantling. Plant the posts deep into the ground ( after coating with tar to prevent premature rotting ) for if planted too shallow they will be heaved up more and more each Winter by the frost and after a few Winters have passed, your run will have the appearance of ocean waves. After the frame-work has been completed, nail a board 1 foot wide around the bottom, then apply the netting all around and over the top.

The run to correspond with the house must of course be divided into four compartments, gates being made at the lower end to get into each compartment.

Several perches running from side to side are placed in the run for the birds to light upon. On the ground put a layer of gravel or coarse sand to the depth of several inches, which is very essential to the health of the birds, and should be loosened up occasionally. This should be taken out every few months and replaced with a fresh supply.

If a part of a barn or any warm building is unoccupied and will answer the purpose of a pigeon loft, of course the expense of erecting a building expressly is not necessary, but one thing is necessary if they are to thrive and do their best, they must in some way have access to the ground. One can make a run outside of such a place and have almost as good a breeding house as the one above described.



## BREEDERS.

---

**I**N my experience I find the Homer i. e. the working Homer the best alround bird for breeding squabs for market. The squabs they produce are always plump, fat, and have a nice light color.

Common pigeons are generally good at breeding, especially if given their freedom, but when housed up do not thrive so well as the Homers. A fact I might mention at this time, is that the diseases such as Going Light and Canker, attack the common variety and Duchesse sooner than the Homers, according to my experience, when the former were housed up. Many starting in this business buy large numbers of the common birds, as they are so much cheaper in price, but in the long run, Homers will be found the cheapest by far. Their squabs are usually larger and bring higher prices, and I have raised them to weigh 14 ounces each, while common ones seldom weigh over 10 ounces each. By crossing the Homers with the common variety a large squab is also often produced. Take a Homer cock, and a large common hen (light color preferred) for this purpose. Never allow small birds room in your lofts or birds which have dark squabs, and there will be fewer second class squabs when shipping to market.



Some fanciers claim a good profit by raising pure white pigeons exclusively. They are sold to Taxidermists in large cities, who stuff them and in turn sell them for funeral purposes. Common birds can be used for this, and the smaller the variety the better.

The Duchesse is a fair breeder, producing squabs nice in size, color, etc. but in my estimation are not so active as Homers. They are I think more delicate and more subject to disease than other varieties, but of course all fanciers have different views on this subject. If they are to be tried as breeders, buy the very best variety, the largest birds, as there are quite a number of different kinds of Duchesse, and some almost as worthless as common pigeons.

Runts practically belong to the fancy variety and are the largest birds known. Their squabs are exceedingly large too, but I would not advise their use in this industry on account of their first cost, unless one could be fortunate enough to buy a lot cheap of fanciers, ones which are little off in style, color, etc. in the fancy, they of course will come of good advantage, and by saving a squab or two occasionally will in time make a loft of fine large stock. Chances of purchasing these birds cheap however are rare. Runts however if pure blood are poor breeders as a rule and a better bird will be found in one of its crosses. For instance, the Runt Homer cross is conceded to be the best.

## PURCHASING.

---

**I**N purchasing stock, always go to parties making a special business of breeding pigeons alone, their addresses can be found in all Fanciers' papers in which there are numerous advertisements. Many have been unsuccessful in the squab business, become discouraged and disgusted simply because their first lot of birds were not as represented. Some dealers will try and pan off on the inexperienced, old worn out birds only suitable for shooting matches, but the purchaser will soon learn the art in procuring good birds after in business a short time. The main secret in buying stock is to be sure and get large young bird in age from 1 to 2 years, of parties having good reputations.

Never keep too many old birds in stock, in fact none is better. Sell them off if possible, as free boarders are of no use. What I mean by old birds are the ones which have been worked hard, have lost their ambition and vigor and seldom have squabs. Some as far as their age is concerned are excellent breeders yet at the age of 7 or 8 years, in fact I once saw a Homer cock whose owner claimed was 16 years old, lively as a two year old and a good breeder.

An excellent plan to be sure of having young birds is to have an extra pen for young ones alone and when you notice a fine large pair of squabs in Summer, when prices are low, let them fly in this loft. At 6 months of age they will usually mate up, and if you are sure they are mated to stay, put them to work in breeding house. Sometimes they undertake this step when but 4 months old, but Homers to do their best and to be strong and healthy in after years should not be allowed to mate until the age above mentioned. Many have adopted this plan, and by the time Summer is over their stock is largely increased with good young birds for Winter breeding and at little extra expense.



## MATING.

---

**A**LWAYS see that the birds are well mated, and if purchased of good reliable fanciers, they will be mated when sent you. Never allow an odd cock the privilege of flying loose amongst the others as he will invariably do more harm by fighting with them and also by killing more young squabs than many diseases will. It is a good plan to have a special box for the purpose of mating, with a partition in the centre; place the cock in one side, the hen in the other and after a few days draw out the partition etc. To distinguish the sex is often a hard task for many with experience, but by closely watching the birds one will readily observe that the cock does considerably more cooing and has generally more life about him than the hen, and in flirting with the hen often turns around several times a hen seldom turns more than half way around. The hen is usually smaller than the cock and has somewhat a different shaped head. To tell the sex without seeing their actions in the loft is however not an easy task, and oftentimes one purchases a bird supposed to be a hen and when at home finds it to be a cock. Mistakes are often made in this way. The only true way to dis-

tinguished the sex (and one which stands to reason) is to catch the bird and hold it in one hand, and with the index finger of the other hand pass it gently between the vent bones. You will soon notice in so doing that the bones of the hen are much farther apart than those of the cock and after a little practice one can soon learn to tell the sex accurately and make very few mistakes if any at all. This I have found the best and only common sense way of distinguishing the sex, the vent bones of the hen gradually becoming farther apart by laying eggs. Oftimes the sex of squabs can be told in this way also.

When one bird is constantly chasing another all around the building and outside as well, the last one is the cock and the former his mate and that they are ready to build a nest will be proven in a short time afterwards. The cock will continue to drive the hen in this way for several days until their nest is finished and eggs are laid.



## FOOD AND FEEDING.

---

**M**ANY fanciers prefer feeding their birds by the hand i. e. throwing out their feed upon the ground or loft floor, in such quantities that will be eaten up at one meal. I differ with them in this respect for in this way they eat too hurriedly and swallow more or less dirt with their food. The most customary at the present time and the best possible way of feeding is with hoppers or trays. Make them 10 or 12 feet in length, about 6 inches wide, and a good plan is to have a top made. On the sides have strips so nailed that the birds cannot get into the trough and yet can get their heads through and eat. In this way the troughs or hoppers are always clean. Give at each meal a little more feed than will be eaten up clean, the extra amount given will be eaten up by those birds on the nest at the time of feeding, as some birds do not leave their nests and otherwise would go hungry until their next meal. Birds that are breeding should be fed but twice a day, early in the morning and about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. They will then have ample time to feed their young before dark. As far as can be done allow only

one person to do the feeding and the birds will soon become accustomed to their entering the loft and grow quite tame, when if different ones feed them they will be frightened at each feeding, wild birds will not breed as freely as tame ones and less accidents will happen, such as broken legs, chilled young etc.

When birds have their freedom they fly around from place to place and gather for their living what suits their tastes. In the country they frequent newly harvested grain-fields, and eat all manner of new grains, which would cause sickness if they were given it when housed up. This no doubt is from the fact that when at liberty they have better exercise. Birds in confinement have no choice but are compelled to thrive upon the food put before them. Good food, good stock; poor food, failure. The best food is the cheapest by far. All grains fed should be well dried, as much loss and disease has been endangered from the use of green grain. The latter produces diarrhoea and the birds emaciate until death relieves them.

Birds require a variety of food same as persons, and ones fed upon the same kind of food for any length of time will not thrive and soon become lazy and unprofitable for the squab-raiser. A large variety of food is not at all necessary but to change it often is essential to their health.

Red wheat (never use white) is, taking it the whole year around, about the best food, although the author often gains excellent results from the use of good screenings. With this besides the wheat it contains, the birds get tares, different other seeds etc., but

one objection to the use of screenings and one which causes the death of many birds is the rye which it contains. Rye is as poison to pigeons and in fact poultry also. If they should eat the smallest quantity diarrhoea will set in, and if the cause of birds being scoured is not known and the food changed at once they die in a comparatively short time. I once lost nearly a whole flock of birds in this way before discovering the real cause, but soon as I changed their food giving wheat instead, the remainder of my flock entirely recovered. After I examined the screenings I had been feeding I found some rye, but not in such very large quantities either, so this is proof that it requires but a small amount to cause the death of birds even if healthy.

Corn is the next best article of food. It should be given to them cracked and very dry. Never feed whole corn to birds that are breeding as it is as hard bullets in the tender crops of the little squeakers. Cracked corn is preferred and should be purchased in only small lots and often, for it is a great absorbent of moisture and soon becomes mouldy and unfit for use as food. Using old stale cracked corn is one of the causes of sour crop in birds. It should not be cracked too fine and should never be fed in connection with wheat or peas. If a change in food is thought necessary always wait until the morning meal then their crops are entirely empty and the change will be less liable to cause the birds illness. It is much better to feed screenings or wheat one meal, buckwheat, millers wheat one meal, screenings or cracked corn the next etc., than to give a mixture all at once. Bear in mind feed only



the red wheat and this should be of the very best quality. Scorched wheat which is so often purchased of dealers who claim it grand food for poultry, and which is too often used by the fanciers on account of its cheapness is not fit for food, for its nutriment value is not worth speaking of. This wheat sometimes, but very seldom, comes from grain elevator fires, and the best is taken out and dried, after which it is sold for poultry. The majority I find after investigation is nothing more nor less than wheat which has been stored away for a considerable length of time, and has become mouldy. This then is put through a process, by which the grains are somewhat charred, evidently to lessen the smell of the mould. It is then claimed to come from elevator fires. If all the burnt wheat had come from these fires not an elevator would be standing. The secret of this process was given the author by an intimate friend, a wealthy miller. One of the most nutritious foods for pigeons is oats. It contains a great percentage of starch and they are valuable on account of the great amount of mineral material they contain. The proteine and fats are however in smaller quantities, but on the whole oats will be found a very valuable food. The only objection to its use is that of the extremely sharp hulls. The only safe way to feed oats is the hulled i. e. with the outer shell removed. Rolled oats answers the same purpose, but for the squab raising business where the expense must be kept down as far as possible, it will be found too dear to feed regularly, but will be a relish very highly appreciated.

Millet especially the German millet is another valuable article of food but on account of its stimulating qualities, a little goes a great way. Feed it occasionally mixed with wheat as a relish. Caraway and canary seeds can also be given in the same way. Sunflower seed if hulled makes an article of food very valuable during the moulting season, and in the dead of Winter. It resembles Hemp seed which is also highly concentrated, heatening and fat forming. It has been decided that the black seed is far superior to the Russian. These seeds put an elegant gloss to the plumage, and will be found very beneficial in assuming the proper condition of the feathers of birds for the shows. A fine lustre will be established with only a few fed. A new variety of corn has recently been grown here which will grow into favor with breeders. It has a small kernel the size of a small pea. It is called the Kaffir Corn, has all the qualities of the Indian Corn and will answer the same purpose. It can be swallowed very easily by the smallest of birds, and may be fed on the same principle as the large corn.

The food should be varied according to the seasons for instance in Winter when the nights are cold, and the birds quiet, a required amount of heat must be supplied. It is then the time to feed corn. Always feed it at night, and cut the amount down to mere nothing during the Summer months. Many fanciers resort to nothing but corn for their birds on account of its cheapness and there are many birds raised upon nothing but corn, but these are not hardy.

An occasional cupful of buckwheat and hempseed mixed is a luxury for the pigeons, but the latter should be fed very sparingly as it is entirely too rich and fattening for healthy birds, but is an excellent article to always have on hand for sick or run down birds, and very nourishing food for those suffering from the disease known as Going Light.

Canadian peas are relished by the birds and are also very nourishing but for this industry, in which expenses must be kept down as much as possible. Peas will be dear as the price is very high. Scraps from the table, such as pieces of bread, cakes, etc., will be eaten with relish. Sometimes stale bread can be purchased at the bakeries at a very small figure, but it must not be at all mouldy. Soak it first in warm water before feeding and then watch how greedily they devour it.

Green food is not as necessary for pigeons as for poultry, but an occasional bunch of salad is good and also chick weed if the latter can be found. Ground oyster shells must be before them at all times, as it aids in the formation of shells. Lime they must have in some form, and besides oyster shells they may be given plaster from old buildings or from old mortar beds.

## WATER.

Pigeons require a greater amount of water than poultry, and good fresh water in suitable fountains should always be kept before them. Excellent receptacles for this purpose can be made from a molasses barrel by sawing the top and bottom off above the second hoop. Two nice tubs four or six inches deep will then have been made, which should be filled full with water. Scrub these tubs out every morning before giving fresh water, especially in Summer and when the temperature rises from 85 to 100 degrees the water must be changed often and the tubs scalded out occasionally.

Always allow your birds to bathe freely when they wish, in Winter as well as in Summer, they in this way rid themselves of much dirt and sometimes lice. After all have finished their bath throw away the water and give them a fresh supply. Never allow the birds to drink of the water after bathing in it.

## SALT.

Salt is as essential to pigeons as bread is to mankind. Care must be taken however in giving it them for birds not accustomed to it will often eat entirely too much at one time and die from the effects. Give only a small quantity at first to such birds, and gradually increase the amount day after day until they become used

to it when it can then be given them in hoppers and should be before them at all times. I always use the coarse or ground salt (same as used for cattle) in preference to rock salt and never experienced bad results as birds after becoming accustomed to it will never eat too much.

Birds are exceedingly fond of codfish and a small piece tacked up against the side of their lofts will be highly appreciated by them. I have heard of parties putting this fish in boxes outside their barns and strange birds would come in large numbers and make their abode there.

Salt Cat is recommended by some fanciers to promote the best health in pigeons, and given to breeders will be found a good tonic and preventative of disease to a certain extent. It is made by taking coarse sand two pecks, slacked lime one peck, salt one pint, ground oyster shells one-half peck, crushed cumin and caraway seeds each one-half pound, mix well. Then take Sulphate of Iron one-fourth pound, Sulphuric Acid one-half ounce and dissolve in two quarts of water. It will take about two quarts of water to mix the above ingredients and to each quart add several tablespoonfuls of this mixture. Lay away to dry when it can be readily broken up in fine pieces and given the birds in a corner of the feed hopper.

## CARE OF BREEDERS.

---

**Y**OUR best birds require your best attention. See that they are well mated and if one should die, at once replace it with one of the same sex. Many make great mistakes by crowding their birds in the lofts. Birds to do their best must have plenty of room, and fanciers putting too many in one compartment find in the end they do so to their own sorrow. Twenty-five pair in each pen is sufficient if partitions are arranged so that only eight or ten pairs are kept together the results will be better.

Diseases such as Canker, Going Light, etc. are sure to arise in overcrowded lofts. Heating the breeding house in Winter is not at all necessary as good healthy birds are not affected by the cold weather. Ones which are accustomed to warm compartments invariably catch cold more readily when flying out in the cold run where a sudden change is met, than those without heat. The sun's rays, if the building is in the proper location furnishes all the heat necessary. The lofts should be well ventilated in Winter same as Summer but always avoid draughts in cold weather.

During the moulting period extra pains must be taken to keep the birds in a healthy condition for at this time they are more sensitive to diseases than at other times. Never work them too hard at this period and if given a rest by separating the sexes for a month or so then returning them to their lofts they will be more vigorous and breed surprisingly afterwards. A small supply of hemp seed is good at this time given in connection with wheat, etc. and green food is very beneficial also. Very often young birds when moulting droop, waste away and die. This is called Distemper and if no diarrhoea exists, can often be cured by pulling out with one sharp jerk all the tail feathers. Some might think this cruel, but I think they are not so sensitive in this respect at this period. This is practiced among all fanciers.

Fanciers who make it a business to breed nothing but the fancy varieties of pigeons will find it to their advantage to separate the cocks from the hens during the Winter months. This will give the hens a rest and their breeding qualities better for the next season. Put the cocks in pens by themselves, and the hens likewise in one by themselves, but have solid partitions so they cannot see each other all the time for if otherwise they would most likely keep up their relations and cause both cock and hen to worry and flutter all the time trying to get together. If new pairs are to be used in breeding the next season, it will become a task for the owner for they will invariably mate up again with the old mates.

## MARKING EGGS.

The hen will lay but two eggs, generally a day or two apart. I find it a great advantage to keep a close watch on all the boxes and mark the date on the front of each box when the eggs were laid. By so doing one can almost tell to a day when they will hatch, and another advantage, can readily tell if they will hatch or not. After the birds have been setting upon the eggs, say for three or four days take the eggs gently out of the nest and hold them up towards the sunlight or window and as the shells are very thin the eggs are almost transparent, and infertile eggs you will observe on one side a number of veins all coming together at one point in the centre, the whole resembling in appearance, a spider. If after five or six days these veins do not make their appearance the eggs will not hatch and might as well be thrown out for what use would there be in having birds setting upon them their full time if one knows they will amount to nothing. Throw them away and in a week or so they will have laid others. If only one egg is hatchable it may be taken out and put in another similar nest where only one will hatch and where the eggs were laid about the same time. One will readily see that this plan is saving and adds a little more profit, but never make birds hatch more than nature requires them; two eggs. If three or four eggs are hatched by the same birds, only two squabs will amount to anything probably as is often the case none are first class, but puny and unsalable.



The question often arises: Why are there more cock pigeons than hens? The author thinks that as the cock bird is most always hatched first, the parent birds show partiality towards him in the way of attention and feed him more, and in this way neglect the hen. Oftimes the hen squab from this neglect becomes poorly nourished and too often dies. Another reason might be that the hen has not so strong a constitution as the cock, and more susceptible to malignant diseases, and one peculiar to their sex.

## INCUBATION.

The cock takes up nearly as much time in setting upon the eggs as the hen does, both taking part. The cock is a relief for the hen and sets from about ten o'clock in the morning till four o'clock in the afternoon, sometimes in between times also. It usually takes eighteen days for eggs to hatch and as one is laid a day or so before the other, one will hatch before the other, the first hatched being the cock.

## ATTENTION TO SQUABS.

Much can be done in the way of attending squabs which many neglect doing and a few points might be of interest to those who have not had much experience. Squabs when young receive proper attention from the parent birds but the fancier often increases his profit to some extent by using his birds to their best advantage i. e. making them do all that nature requires of

them. Each pair of birds are capable of rearing but one pair of squabs at a time, but as often only one egg hatches in a certain nest look through your loft and usually you will find another nest with but one hatched also. If the squabs are of about the same age, one of them can be put in with the other and the one pair of birds will have to rear them both. This can be done until the squabs are quite large and the old birds will not know the difference thinking both their own. Again if both eggs do hatch and one squab grows and thrives better than the other (which is too often the case as parent birds show partiality towards the male squab and feed it more) take the poorly nourished one away and do as above mentioned, and nine times out of ten it will grow surprisingly.

## LICE.

Lice have caused the death of many valuable birds and great numbers of squabs are annually being tormented to death by these pests. Whitewashing and the use of kerosene oil are of little or no value to prevent lice from forming. The best way of prevention is to allow the birds nothing but tobacco stems or ribs with which to build their nest always having a good supply of strong fresh ones before them and lice will be scarce. If they should appear in spite of every precaution, as they sometimes do especially when the stems have lost their strength sprinkle a little crude carbolic acid around in the nests. This sometimes rids them and is an excellent disinfectant if nothing else. The main

way to prevent lice from forming is to keep the breeding houses and nest as clean as possible. Nests when occupied by squabs soon become very offensive and unhealthy from accumulation of the soft excrement, and is sure to breed lice. By removing the nests every week or so, and replacing with fresh stems makes a better appearance and is certainly much healthier for the squabs, allowing them to grow and thrive well. Squab raisers must pay strict attention in every way to keep their breeding houses in a good sanitary condition if they wish to become successful. Occasionally throwing a handful of slacked lime in each nest is another excellent way of pervention but never put it upon the floor as I once heard of a fancier doing, he had it to the depth of an inch or so at all around the floor of his loft and in consequence lost all his flock of costly birds from strangulation by dust which the birds raised when flying about. Clean the houses well at least once a week especially in Summer and by following the above precautions lice will be of no consideration whatever.



## DRESSING SQUABS.

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**S**QUABS fit for market purposes should not be under four weeks old and it often pays the raiser better if he will allow them to get a week older for they will fill out considerably more in that much extra time. Squabs are generally killed too soon, that is before they have attained their full growth. Never kill them when their hind part is yet soft as many do but wait until it hardens even if they fly out of the nest a week or so, then the pin feathers will have attained a good length and renders it less tedious to pick; and the breast of the squab is filled out properly.

Go through your breeding houses the afternoon of the day previous to the day you intend shipping and collect the squabs you think suitable and place them in boxes until the following morning then their crops will be entirely empty and you thereby save much labor and time in extracting the grain, although this can be done after a little practice in a very short time. Never ship squabs to market with full crops for by the time they reach there the food which they contain will cause them to look dark and poorer prices will be realized.

When ready to kill, after having baskets for feathers, buckets, etc. handy by your side, take a squab in the left hand and hold it up by the wings and feet so as to allow all the blood to enter the head, then with a very sharp bladed knife make a deep incision into the jugular veins, never sticking them in the upper part of the mouth as some do, as they do not bleed so well. Commence picking as soon as the blood is done flowing whether the bird is dead or not, as the feathers are more easily pulled than after the squab has gotten cold. Some might think this is cruel but I think they are insensible of pain after sticking and bleeding. Pull the tail and wing feathers out first and then the others being very careful not to tear the skin on the breasts and near the head. This the best pickers will do at times, but after a little practice anyone will become accustomed to picking and will tear but few and do the feathering very quickly, the author having picked as high as seven pairs in an hour but would not like to undertake to work a whole day at that rate. Five pairs an hour is good enough time at picking. Have a bucketful of cold water (in which there has been thrown a good handful of fine salt) nearby and immediately after picking throw the squabs into the water. It brings out the animal heat and the salt improves the color of the skin, removing the greater part of darkness often seen in squabs that have been improperly stuck and that did not bleed freely. Squabs naturally dark are greatly improved also in this way. Wash the dirt off their feet, the blood out of their mouths, fold back their wings, tie up

in pairs birds of the same size and fatness and hang up till shipping time.

## SHIPPING.

Another important part in this business is to find the best purchasers for your stock. Many ship their whole supply to game dealers in New York City and other large cities who pay them very fair prices, but what is better if residing near a city is to have your own private customers, who often if they are sure you can supply them regularly the whole year around will pay high prices. Get the best parties, always, in private families as well as in hotels and restaurants and deliver them yourself. If you are not in close proximity with a large city and are compelled to ship them away always get a good game dealer to take your squabs as they always pay better prices than commission men. The reason for this is that the former retail their goods to the hotels, etc. while the latter only wholesales.

When ready to ship pack the squabs in layers in a box of the proper size for the quantity of birds you wish to ship and pack with their breast down, keeping the best birds for the top of the box. In Summer always put ice in the box or boxes. Crack it in small pieces about the size of a walnut and put in the bottom of the box several inches of it, then pack your squabs, and after all are in, put several inches of the ice on top of all. Fill in the remainder of the box with nice white paper. In Winter pack the same only the ice is not necessary. In shipping never send by freight, always by express as this is the quickest way of getting your

goods to their destination and the companies are responsible for all damages inflicted.

### FEATHERS A PROFIT.

Everything must be taken into consideration in this industry even down to selling feathers and manure. Each will add something to the other profits. Where large numbers of squabs are killed weekly the feathers will accumulate in great quantities. Save all excepting the wing and tail feathers and after baking in an oven several times can then be sold. Many claim them almost equal to goose feathers.

### MANURE A PROFIT.

Have barrels near the building expressly for the manure and by cleaning the floor each week also throwing in all stems and excrement from the unoccupied nests, barrels will be collected. Farmers during corn planting time will be only too glad to buy it and will pay excellent prices for they claim it to be the best of fertilizers.

### 70 PER CENT PROFIT.

The squab raising industry without doubt pays a larger percentage of profit on the capital invested than many kinds of business at the present time, but much depending upon the care and management of course. Take for instance 500 pairs of birds i. e. good breeding ones. The average cost of feeding one pair each week is about 1-2 cents. Good breeders will have at least

8 pairs of squabs per year and some average more. Taking it at the low average of 8 pairs per year, 500 pairs of birds would have 4000 pair of squabs. Supposing 500 pairs of these would die which most always happens to a certain extent and at the close of the year 3500 pairs of squabs will have been sold. At an average price of 35 cents per pair for squabs the whole year around the receipts would amount to \$1225.00 and subtracting the cost of feeding your birds which would be about \$390.00 (at the above rate per week) your profit would amount to \$835.00 or about 70 per cent figuring in the profit on manure, etc. What better employment can anyone find where the profit is so large, but no one can expect to succeed in this business (the same as in any other) unless he puts his mind down to it and pays all attention possible. Every one can learn many different things from experience, but as the foregoing pages are written from years of practical experience, by so following, success is found to reign supreme. The following pages on the Diseases of the Pigeon will be found valuable to every breeder, and the prescriptions given therein for the various ailments are altogether harmless and have been used by the author with the very best results. Above all do not place too much confidence in advertised nostrums, as many of the proprietors have never had any experience whatever in the pigeon business.



HOMER SQUABS JUST READY FOR MARKET.



## DISEASES.

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**I**T is hardly necessary for the author to enter into detail with every disease to which the pigeon family may fall heir, but I will treat only upon the most common and dangerous diseases with which the squab raiser must contend. A few hints as to the care and feeding of sick birds might also be beneficial. Anyone can readily notice when a bird is not well, they are apparently lazy, droopy, generally off their feed, and in other words all out of sorts, but to know the true nature of the disease and to have the proper remedies at hand is one reason I treat on the diseases for it takes an important part in this business. When birds are ill the selection of proper food is of main importance, hemp, canary seed or wheat in the right proportions should be placed before it, to tempt it to eat although in most diseases owing to a fever they prefer drink. In such a case use oat meal water i. e. water in which several handfuls of the meal has been soaked. Keep those sick in a separate pen or box and give them all attention possible.

Diseases as a general rule originate in some negligence on the part of the fancier feeding poor grain, impure water or want of cleanliness.

## GOING LIGHT.

The most troublesome and dangerous disease to which breeding birds are subject is Going Light or in other terms consumption. It is a tubercular disease and very contagious, the disease germs being taken in food or water. It is often caused by a sudden chill, taking cold or from some irritating food or water. The disease generally commences with diarrhoea or inflammation of the bowels which sooner or later reaches the lungs. The birds lay around with ruffled feathers and have a very miserable appearance. The discharges are very slimy and frequent, and if proper attention is not paid the bird weakens and dies, having wasted to a mere skeleton. Unless your bird is of special value kill it at once for this disease is very hard to cure and being exceedingly contagious whole flocks sometimes die. The old saying an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, I have found good policy and when this disease is once noticed, use the following precautions to prevent others from getting it. See that there is no cold draught in the house, although well ventilated as it often originates in a cold. Next give only good food and fresh water, whatever food having a tendency to cause looseness of bowels to be discontinued at once. Give feeding hoppers and water tubs a good scalding out, and add a tablespoonful or two of the tonic made as follows to each tub of water, never using this prescription in anything but wooden receptacles. In making this tonic which is very useful in treating many other diseases also, take Copperas  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce, Sulphate of

Soda 4 ounces, Gentian Root  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce, Phosphate of Soda 2 ounces and pure Beechwood Creosote 1 dram. First take the Creosote and rub well into 20 grains of Calcined Magnesia (otherwise it would not mix in water) add it to two quarts of warm water, and follow with the other ingredients. This I find the best tonic and is an excellent thing to prevent disease, it having the best antiseptic properties known for pigeons. If this cannot at once be made up, a teaspoonful of Tr. Chloride of Iron may be used but is not so good. This is the best preventative of Going Light and most all other diseases and is harmless.

### CANKER IN THROAT.

This is by no means an uncommon disease especially among squabs at an age of a few weeks. It greatly resembles diphtheria and some authors claim it to be the same. It is caused by contagion and usually comes in Winter when the thermometer is low and the air moist. The symptoms are fever, swelling of throat after which appears ulcers on either side, forming a yellow cheesy matter very offensive. This disease is hard to cure among squabs especially, and too often cannot be cured, but the whole flock must be doctored and prevention used to keep the others from catching it. I put a small piece of common alum about  $\frac{1}{4}$  the size of a hickory nut, in the drinking water for several weeks and the disease will not spread in fact I was never bothered with it after once using. Do not give too long, and every other week give the tonic.

My profits in the Winter have been largely increased by the above method, when others around me lost nearly all their birds. When old birds are afflicted, they can often be cured by removing the cheesy matter and applying a small quantity of burnt alum to the throat. Never use turpentine as some do, for it has a tendency to elevate the temperature of the bird which has at that time a high fever, as it is. After applying the burnt alum, which is a powerful astringent and eats away the false membrane, some mild oil should be used to encourage healing. A few drops of sweet oil or Cod Liver Oil is good for this purpose. Excellent results have been obtained by painting the throat with a mild solution of Permanganate of Potassium (10 grains to an ounce of water being used.) As this disease is claimed by some to be diphtheria, great precautions must be used in treating not to inhale the breath for it has been contracted to persons. I once read in a valuable medical book, where a family were all taken with diphtheria, there being no other cases in the neighborhood, it also being a healthy locality. They had recently purchased a lot of turkeys from a far off state. These turkeys seemed ill and died off occasionally. The physician in charge of the family made an examination of the turkeys and found many had canker which he termed was diphtheria, and was the cause of the family's affliction. To go farther, they afterwards learned that where the turkeys were bought diphtheria was a raging epidemic. Therefore use all precautions when treating, and above all remove the birds afflicted to other quarters.

## SOUR CROP.

Sour crop is nothing more nor less than indigestion very often produced by feeding wheat and cracked corn together. If one grain is fed at one meal sour crop will not prevail. It is something similar to the disease crop bound, where the crop becomes overloaded with food hard to digest and eaten hurriedly, or something of an indigestible nature. The crop becomes purple in color and is very hard, soon endangering the bird's life if assistance comes not. Both can be readily cured by administering a few drops of Castor Oil, and not allowing any food for a day, after removing some of the food from the overdistended crop.

## INFLUENZA OR CATARRH.

Birds suffer as much from this disease as human beings do. It is caused by a peculiar miasma in the atmosphere and is often epidemic afflicting many birds in a whole community at one time. The symptoms are fever, eyes swollen and watery, and a sticky gummy discharge from the throat and head, forming on their bills. It is not dangerous to the old birds only causing weakness, but when squabs contract it, often ends fatally. Alum in the water is the best treatment and prevention.

## ENTERITIS.

This is an inflammation of the bowels caused by the bird having eaten some powerful irritant or caught severe cold. The bird will stand all huddled up in a heap,

feathers standing out and tail down. Diarrhoea of a severe form is always present, the excrement being composed of nothing but mucous and blood. Give tonic in water to which has also been added a small quantity of laudanum. Worms are often the cause of this disease.

### CHOLERA.

This disease is a kind of malarial affliction caused by too many birds being kept in one loft, and at the same time negligence on the part of the owner in keeping the house and surroundings in a good sanitary condition. This disease is never seen in a good healthy breeding house. The symptoms are violent diarrhoea with rather greenish discharges, containing some mucous. It usually comes in hot weather, so by carefully watching the water, giving fresh at times, and good feed (never corn in Summer), this can be prevented. Using the tonic in the water will effect a cure.

### WORMS.

Pigeon raisers are often troubled with birds, that although they eat healthy, do not thrive, and are always moping around, and seem lazy. Oftimes their intestines are packed full of worms. Only one kind afflicts pigeons, and they are from 1-4 to an inch or two in length. The presence of these parasites often set up a violent enteritis as seen by the slimy discharge voided. Examining the excrement is the only sure way of detecting worms and if found give the bird or birds afflicted 1-2 grain of Santonin every morning for three days following with a dose of Castor Oil the evening of the

third day, when they will generally be relieved and cured if taken in time.

### VOMITING.

Birds are sometimes seen to vomit up a certain amount of their food. This is caused by indigestion and very often by feeding whole corn the large grain variety. It is generally caused by not having enough grit or gravel in the loft. This must be supplied at all times, and diseases which they often get will be somewhat lessened.

### LUMP IN THROAT.

This is of frequent occurrence especially in squabs from two to four weeks of age. It is by no means a common malady, and is nothing more nor less than the lodgment of coarse grain in the throat. After a day or so it seems to change in appearance and adheres to the membrane of the throat causing an inflammation giving many fanciers and squab raisers an idea it is a growth of some nature. This however is false and is only grain lodged in swallowing. The best way to prevent this disease or in other words a condition as it is not a disease, is to feed only small grains such as wheat etc. If corn is used have it cracked or else use the small grained corn raised especially for birds. This lump is hard to cure and a bird once afflicted can only get relief by a surgical operation. Cut the skin, remove the lump and stitch up again. This can sometimes successfully be done after a little experience. This condition is frequently mistaken for canker by ama-

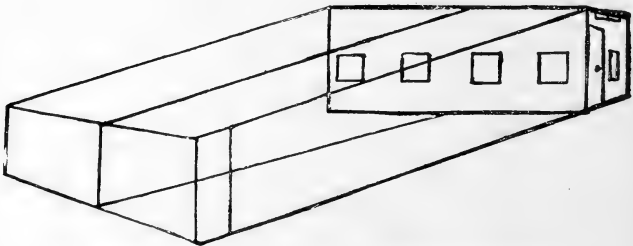


teurs, but as there is some resemblance, it will be found that canker mostly affects the sides of the throat, where the lump is usually farther down the throat.

### DISTEMPER.

This disease usually afflicts squabs and young birds, and may be divided into three distinct classes. First, when squabs attain the age of about a week, the natural milky food is checked and they are fed upon coarser food which is harder to become digested. This often causes a crop disorder, and the little squeakers die for lack of nourishment. At about three weeks the food still becomes coarser, and in fact is fed the young almost immediately after eaten by the parents. This hard food often remains in the crop undigested, and becomes fowl and poisoning by the fermentation going on. The breath of the squab becomes foul, and the old birds neglect them, and the young gradually perish. A small dose of Castor Oil often cures this condition. Second, when about three weeks of age the old birds often build new nests, and lay other eggs, and commence setting before their other squabs are able to feed themselves. They of course do not pay the attention to them that they did before, and immediately after eating the food they feed it to the young before it has had proper time to become predigested as it were or softened. This likewise remains in the crops undigested and finally causes anatomy of that organ. In a few days if a remedy is not given to remove the undigested food the squab dies. Diarrhoea is often caused by this condition and likewise causes the birds death. A dose

of Castor Oil should be given, enough to act as a gentle physic. The old birds will then commence to feed them again, and it is always best to give the oil several times thereafter until the squab becomes able to digest the food and to prevent a reoccurrence of the malady. Third, squabs at the age of six weeks, about the time they begin to fly out of the nests and forage for themselves, are afflicted with another stage of distemper. They have diarrhoea, are mopish, and emaciate very rapidly, finally dying without any apparent cause. In these cases it will be found beneficial to pull out all the tail feathers with one sudden pull, and give a dose of Phosphate of Soda to cleanse out the bowels of all mucous etc. Give only plain soft food for a few days, and at the same time a dose of Cod Liver Oil to help strengthen. Birds when afflicted about the time they shed their nest feathers can be treated the same way.



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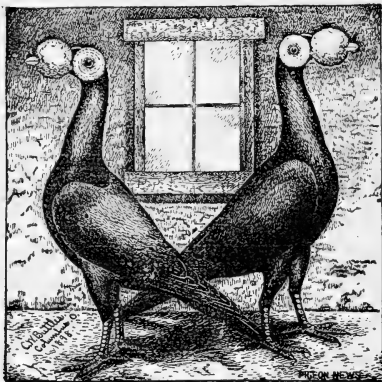
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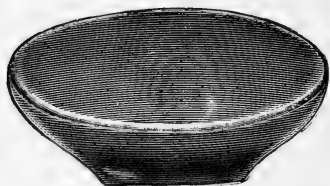
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