

dark as possible. I like what is termed the "damson cere." The best illustration I can give you of the colour I so much admire is to compare it to the bloom on a damson freshly gathered. In silvers it is also desirable to get the eye-cere as dark as possible, and in that direction there is, gentlemen, an opening for an enthusiastic fancier with time and money at his disposal. The majority of silvers are too light in colour of eye-cere. The best and darkest coloured cere I ever saw on a silver was produced by that enthusiastic fancier, Mr. R. Woods. This bird was exhibited at the Palace and other leading shows, and was afterwards, I believe, purchased at a big price by Mr. WALLACE SMITH in whose hands it had a most successful show career.

The eye-cere of yellows, reds, and whites is light in colour, but must be hard in texture, and as nicely laced as possible.

Colour.—In blues, the general body must be of deep sound blue, as uniform as possible throughout, *i. e.*, on back, shoulders, rump and thighs; the neck should be iridescent, or the colour of the rainbow; the bars should be moderately broad, black in colour, and well defined. Silvers, as the name indicates, should be silvery in colour, of a uniform tint, with bars as dark as possible. Nothing gives so great a finish to a silver as a deep rich well-defined broad black bar. The ground colour of chequers should be blue, of a sound and uniform shade, with markings even and well defined. Grizzles I consider are the most difficult colour to produce. They are extremely handsome, each feather showing a peculiar admixture of blue or grey-and-white, which can perhaps best be described as a mixture of pepper-and-salt. There are various shades of grizzles, all of which may be tolerated so long as the markings are good, and there is an absence of white bellies, rump, and thighs. Yellows and reds should be deep, rich,

sound, and uniform in colour. The general structure of a Dragon should be short, thick, and cobby, commencing with a well-shaped full neck, free from gullet, widening boldly to the shoulders, which must be prominent, and gradually tapering off to the tips of the flights and tail. In a few words the wings must be strong, back flat, legs short, thighs stout, flights and tail short and well carried off the ground. These, gentlemen, are my ideas of a perfect Dragon.

The second part of this paper will relate to the breeding and management of the Dragon. I wish especially to urge the importance of commencing with thoroughly good and well-bred birds; by all means purchase the best obtainable. I think it is utterly useless breeding from birds you know nothing of. I will now point out a few defects to be avoided, giving, as far as I am able, my reason for this advice. Sound-coloured birds cannot be produced from light-coloured parents, therefore, avoid such as are other than of the proper shade of colour. Soft, fleshy, cored birds are utterly useless in the breeder's loft, as are also blues or chequers possessing light-coloured beaks. Another great point to bear well in mind is length of feather. Eschew birds, with excessively long flights and tails. The *tout ensemble* of a Dragon should be, as I have previously said, short and cobby, whereas long-faced or long-feathered birds have the very opposite appearance. In breeding blues, chequers, and grizzles, I would recommend you to pay particular attention to the colour of the iris of the eye, as this is a strong hereditary point. Strive to produce and perpetuate that beautiful adornment a good damson cere; as a rule birds possessing this property are well up in other Dragon points. It is possible to breed dark-cored youngsters from parents that do not possess this attribute in a marked degree, provided, of course, that the breeding birds come of a good strain,

noted for this amongst other valuable properties. To my mind the eye-cere of a young Dragon of the colours just specified cannot be too dark; in fact, I regard the dark cere as a cardinal property.

In breeding silvers I would recommend the occasional use of a light but even-coloured blue as tending to increase the density of the bar, and iridescence of the hackle.

In breeding yellows it will sometimes help to improve the colour by crossing a yellow cock with a red hen, but on no account must the produce of such a cross be resorted to in breeding reds, as the yellow blood will have impoverished the density of the red. Reds are not yet equal to the other colours in many properties, and I think they may be improved by judicious crossing with a black (if it can be found) of rich lustrous colour, and possessing a white beak. Never use a dull smoky bird with a dark coloured beak. Such a cross would only result in disappointment, and be time lost. There is great room for improvement in whites and considering the fact that there are no points of colour and marking to breed for, I am surprised they have not been more carefully bred for head properties and general contour. Many of the whites of the present day are much too long in face and feather, and sadly deficient in Dragon shape.

It has frequently occurred to me that there is an opening for an experimentalist to try and produce a good silver chequer. With the material at hand, I am surprised a thoroughly good Dragon of this colour has not yet been produced.

A few words on the fixity of type will suffice to conclude my second portion of the paper. I can fancy some of the younger members whom I have the pleasure of addressing, will be wondering how they are to maintain the perfect bird I have endeavoured to pourtray. Do not be startled when I say "breed in." For instance, suppose