

### The Pigeon Fancy.

Editor Review,

DEAR SIR,—Having returned from an extended tour of the principal cities of the United States, and having seen some of the most prominent fanciers, and their various lofts of fancy pigeons, I will endeavor, if you will allow me a small space in your journal, to give your numerous readers my ideas of the pigeon fancy, commencing with the breeding and exhibiting of high-class fancy pigeons, the various points and qualities of the leading varieties, the method of matching in order to produce strong and well feathered birds by crossing, and closing with the disease to which our well bred birds are subject.

I would advise all who wish to begin the business of keeping fancy pigeons, to consider first of all with some care, the variety they select, for pigeons differ, and some of them require so different management from others, that perseverance seldom holds out in the case of a breed not really admired. But above all things, let the new beginner avoid keeping too many varieties at any one time. He had better keep one or two varieties and have them good in all their points, and capable of holding their own at the various exhibitions at which they are shown, than to have more on his hands than he can well attend to, and at the same time become disappointed because he was not successful at the exhibitions. And again, those having too many birds hardly ever attain a sound knowledge of any one, and when they do happen to possess good specimens, are not aware of the fact unless informed of it by some more skilful friend. I would strongly advise the amateur to attend the first and every public exhibition, known to be a good one, and there take particular notice and carefully study the winning birds, picking up as much as he can from either the judges (as the management of the different poultry exhibitions throughout Canada and the United States make it their business to obtain the best judges on fancy pigeons) or some friend known to be posted. By thus noticing the best birds, and all that can be said against them, the young beginner will find he has gained a great deal which it is difficult to pick up in any other way. I will say that it is impossible for a young fancier to become in any moderate time a good judge of a lot of different varieties.

As soon as the amateur knows his birds to be good, I would strongly advise him to exhibit in good company, supposing he has no real chance of winning—if he has so much the better, but even if not, it is still of importance to him to see his own best specimens close to the best birds, that he may compare them and learn their good and bad points.

If the pigeons have space, air and exercise, they

will almost always be in good condition and hard feather, and will need no special preparation beyond careful cleaning, and dressing such parts as wattles, &c. Pigeons shown in pairs should be separated about two days before the show.

The birds being got into condition the next thing to be done is to get them to the show in good order. I have tried several methods, and find it best where the society provides coops for the birds, to have made a basket, measuring inside 32 inches by 13, and 8 inches deep, dividing it into six compartments, with a cover for each, and with a small fastening so that when one bird is put into its place it remains secure while the others are being attended to. When all are in place the outer lid covers the whole, which should be fastened by a small brass pad-lock. It will not be necessary to make holes in the basket for ventilation as the birds will have plenty of air without. It will be necessary when carrying fantails to line the basket with canvas in order to save the tail feathers, as their appearance depends entirely upon the condition these are in. The size I have given will do well for carriers, pouters, fantails and runts, but for the smaller varieties, or toy pigeons, I would recommend it to be made smaller; or the birds will carry well by placing two in one compartment. It will be found that the basket being made of willow will be light for transportation and easily handled.

Many valuable birds perish from being exhibited, that is being kept in too small coops, not having the proper food; and it will be readily seen that when carriers and barbs, or birds with heavy wattles, are on exhibition, they do not get the proper attention. I have often seen good carriers return from exhibitions perfectly starved for food. The cause is this, the feeding and drinking tins are always placed on the outside of coops, it will then be impossible for a good barb or carrier to put its head through the wires and feed. As for the smaller birds, I think it is best. The food as a general thing, is thrown to them and not put into proper tins; there it becomes mixed with the excrements, and the birds will begin to purge and get sick, and at the same time the owners do not know the real cause.

I will, in closing this letter, give my idea of handling or holding a pigeon, that is, with the breast across the palm of the hand, the head towards the little finger or body of the holder, the legs should be allowed to pass through between the first and second finger, when the thumb can be brought over the back, and will hold the bird perfectly secure. In catching a pigeon, the best way, if possible, is to get the hand over the back with the fore finger in front of the neck, and the thumb under the breast.

Yours respectfully,

H. COOPER.

Hamilton, June 5th, 1880.

(To be continued)