

such an enterprise as the formation of a Canadian Poultry Association should recommend itself as worthy of the best efforts of every one of them.

P. Cock.

Halifax; August 25th, 1880.

Fancy Prices.

Perhaps there is more money fooled away on fancy stock than on any other one thing. But this is not to say that those purchasing fancy things always pay more for them than they are worth. The true value of fancy stock depends much more on its real quality than it does on the figures paid for it. I mean by this that a chicken or a pigeon might be sold for one hundred dollars and possibly be cheaper at that money than one out of the very same nest would be at one dollar and fifty cents. I believe few fanciers view this matter in the same light as I do, and hence so many fix the price themselves which they are willing to pay for what they want. This price is generally a low one. The consequence is they do not get what they want; they get second or third rate stock instead of first, consequently they fool their money away.

No real fancier will sell his best stock at low figures. He may advertise at low figures, but it is invariably the poor stock and culls that go. No careful, honest fancier can afford to sell his choice stock at low figures, such as is usually paid for poor specimens. No one knows so well as successful breeders the difficulty of breeding fancy stock up to a high standard, and none know the value of them better than they do when they get them. If amateurs would just watch the successful breeders they would see they are the very men who themselves snap up the very best specimens offered for sale at our shows, paying sometimes such prices as almost scare young fanciers. And this, mind, is no bulling the market, for pigeons, poultry, &c., sold at these fancy figures to experienced breeders are all bona fide sales—the cash is paid and the property change owners; and very often too the purchaser gets the best of the bargain.

Many people do not seem to understand how it is that a man can follow one fancy for perhaps a lifetime, and every now and again pay for particular specimens what seems almost ridiculous figures. He is laughed at by those who think they know all about it, but really know nothing. I have a fancy which I have followed for years, and have paid such figures for specimens that suited me as caused some of my friends to think I was mad. Subsequent events proved that they were more in danger of going to a lunatic asylum than I was. None know so well the value of really first-class specimens of fancy stock as a successful breeder

does; it is he who knows the thousand and one disappointments to be met with before he can point to any single specimen of his stock and say: "There is my standard." It is comparatively easy to breed specimens that will score seventy-five to eighty-five per cent. of perfection, but to put five or ten per cent. on the latter is not easily done. And as to perfection itself, that is something that few fanciers attain at all; certainly those who buy second-class stock to breed from never do.

At the present time there is a great interest being taken in homing pigeons, and we occasionally hear of very high prices being paid for birds that have performed their 300 to 500 miles fly. I do not keep homing pigeons; if I did I would rather pay \$200 for a pair of breeding birds that had flown 500 miles than I would have 25 or 30 milers at 10 cents each; and I could prove in figures that, barring accidents, I could make more money out of them. Perhaps the greatest pigeon fly on record, taking the distance and difficulties of the route into consideration, was that from Rome to Brussels. £75 stg. was offered for the third bird home in the last race—dear knows what would have been paid for the first. Now, supposing a fancier had purchased the first cock and first hen bird home in that race, he could have said what no other man in the world could: "I own the two best proved homers on earth." This, mind, is the pinnacle of the homing fancier's ambition; none can get beyond that. Some may think they have as good, and perhaps have, but they lack the diploma—they have not the proof.

All true fanciers have an ambition to possess the best, and it no doubt is this which in a great measure causes such prices to be paid for specimens which so many are anxious to obtain, but outside of this wish to have and own the best, there is a true value in a first-class specimen that an ordinary one does not possess, and no successful fancier can afford to sell his choice stock at anything but fancy prices, and none who know their business will do it. No matter how careful breeders are there are many poor specimens crop up. To fanciers these are really worthless, and should never be sold or bred from, but, stupidly enough, there are those who always want cheap stock, and they buy such, and perhaps think it is cheap, but it is not. There is an old and true saying, and it applies to fancy pigeons, poultry or any other fine bred animals just as well as to any other one thing, it is, "the best is the cheapest;" and speaking as a successful breeder, and I believe I have been that, I would to-day rather pay fifty times the price of an ordinary specimen for a first-class one. In short, I would pay anything in reason, and to some ideas, out of reason too, for a really first rate individual; while an ordinary one I would not own any