

larger amount of yolk upon which its life in the shell is supported, the chick will be larger when hatched and possess more vitality, and its chances of surviving the ills of chickenhood will be correspondingly brighter. To insure a good growth there is nothing like having a good start. This increased vigor and size at the start will follow the chick all through its course, and the matured fowls will be larger and stronger therefore.

It is the practice of a well-known breeder of Light Brahmas to keep over year after year his strong, robust hens. So long as they lay enough eggs to produce a good brood of chicks they are considered worthy of preservation. This breeders strain of Light Brahmas is noted for its great size, and while it may well be doubted if it would be profitable to keep hens until they are five or six years old, it would be profitable to follow his example to the extent of only breeding from matured hens.

The experiments of the late Dr. Stonebraker, of Waco, Texas, will not be forgotten in this connection. He set a number of eggs from pullets, and from hens, repeating the experiment several times, and arrived at this result, from the eggs of the hens he hatched, to wit: a larger percentage of chicks from the eggs of the hens lived and grew to maturity than of those from the eggs of the pullets, and, at the end of the season, the chicks from the eggs of the hens were larger, stronger and finer in every respect than those from the eggs of the pullets.

It is not to be denied that pullets often prove fine breeders, especially where they were hatched early in the previous year, but probably these same pullets would prove still better breeders if used for that purpose the following year. It is reasonable to expect that such should be the fact, and the observation and experience of poultry breeders generally will tend to prove that such is the fact. The wise breeder

will not kill off his old hens, but will retain the best of them for his choicest breeding pens, using the finest pullets for laying stock and reserving them for breeders when they are two and three years old. He will practice what he preaches and his text will be, "Pullets for layers, old hens for breeders, and strong chicks as the natural outcome."

Pigeon and Pet Stock Department

FOOD FOR HOMERS.

BY J. W. C.

I think there is hardly any difference of opinion on the head of the best food for a Homing pigeon, for all agree that for birds that have hard work to do there is no food so good for them as the very *best tick beans*, and this is the food I advise fanciers to have before their birds in a hopper from May to January. But as it is necessary for them to have a change of food, I generally throw mine whenever I go into the loft a handful or so of wheat, grey peas or tares, and now and then a few grains of Indian corn; this latter they are very fond of, but I cannot think it is very good for them, for it is too fattening, and many fanciers have objection to it, although there are many who use it largely. During the latter part of February, March and April I feed mine on tares, for it seems to me that the young birds do better on this than on beans. Two thirds of the fanciers feed their birds by hand, that is, they throw food on the ground two or three times a day.

In the loft fresh water should be left all the time; one of the stone fountains for pigeons is the best thing I know of for the purpose. Pigeons are very fond of water to bathe in, and it is certainly good for them although not absolutely necessary, for of the many hundreds of lofts that I have visited I never came across one where a bath was supplied, and whenever I inquired the reason they had not a bath, I was always given

the same answer, namely: that they preferred letting the birds bathe outside whenever it rained, to making their lofts damp by having a bath always for them, and there is no doubt that a damp loft is very bad indeed for them. If a bath is given the water should be changed very frequently, for the birds will drink out of it; or better still, adopt my plan of having a fountain constantly playing, so that the water never gets fouled.

I need hardly point out to beginners the advisability of *keeping their lofts thoroughly clean*. I have mine cleaned out every morning, a little clean sand spread on the floor, and it is lime washed two or three times a year. A lump of rock salt and a little mortar and broken brick ends in the loft are both necessary and good for the birds. Before concluding, let me impress on the minds of the beginner one thing above all others, namely: that without clear weather the very best birds in the world cannot do well, for the pigeon sees and does not feel its way home.

In conclusion, I would advise the young starter when he has got over his first year and begins his second, to breed only from proved workers, and when he has a pair that are producing good young ones, never to separate them as long as they are able to breed, and never fly them a yard, but keep them solely for breeding. He should also remember that the great secret of success in flying is, first and foremost to get the best birds that love or money can procure.

SALT CAT.

(Continued.)

For all practical purposes it will be sufficient to strew the floor of the pigeon loft with old mortar and the lime rubbish from dilapidated buildings which contain a salt almost equal to saltpetre, —or it may be placed in a box or pan in one corner,—in another corner a box or pan should be kept supplied