

In its earlier lesson—up to, say, 50 miles—a young bird may occasionally miss returning to its loft for many days. If on reference to the stock book it be found that birds of the same pedigree have turned out badly, the bird should be got rid of. On the other hand if the stock book reference shows nothing adverse, then the training of the bird may well be continued, for the delay in its return may have been due to accidental hindrances of wind, weather, injury, &c., and its ultimate return strong evidence of its being possessed of highly valuable dogged perseverance. Birds have been known to return when deprived of the use of one wing over long distances.

Such a pigeon might afterwards be invaluable for breeding purposes.

The loft is an exceptionally good one. In a few respects, however, it needs improvement.

At present, entrance to the loft is obtained through a floor trap door. This arrangement is very objectionable.

Avoidance of alarming the pigeons is always to be observed, but, just at the very time when this is most essential, when the loft-keeper is entering to make notes or to get some particular birds for training, the mysterious lifting of a part of the loft floor and the intrusion of a man's head and body set the whole of the birds in a flutter.

The defect may be simply and easily remedied by making a doorway through the partition wall, and moving the ladder a few feet from the present floor trap door so as to give approach to the new partition door. In this new door there should be a window, wire net covered on the inside, both to enable the loft keeper to see into the loft, and to allow of the birds observing that they are being visited before the door is opened.

The roosting places were not suitably arranged.

Messenger pigeons, if not all pigeons, claim individual property in roosting places; but those I found in the loft, contrary to the explanations and drawings I had supplied, were made as continuous rails supported by uprights from floor to ceiling. This arrangement not only leads to constant and bitter fighting amongst the birds, but makes it extremely difficult to get hold of the birds when they are being checked or sent out for training, and exposes them to injury when flying in the loft.

These uprights and rails should be entirely removed, and perches 5 inches long by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches broad secured to the walls and other available points, avoiding doorways, &c., substituted.

There should be at least two-thirds as many perches as there are pigeons in the loft.

The supply of suitable earthenware nest pans was insufficient. The nest boxes should be in readiness at all times.

Straw has been used for the birds' nests. No straw should be admitted into the loft. A liberal supply of sawdust should be substituted.

Straw is unnatural nesting material for pigeons—harbours vermin and is otherwise most uncleanly, for it mats and decomposes when affected by the bird's droppings—adheres to their eggs and to the nestlings, causing many casualties amongst them.

Sawdust, although not a natural nesting material, is acceptable to pigeons—harbours no insects, is cleanly and wholesome.

Both the floors of the nest boxes and the floors of the whole loft should be also well and liberally covered with sawdust. A light superficial raking of the sawdust once a week serves to clear off the birds' droppings and to maintain a pure atmosphere in the loft.

The omission of this precaution results, as I found, in the droppings becoming firmly adherent to the loft floor, and offensive.

The loft should be whitewashed once a year, in autumn.

The airing cage in connexion with the prisoners' compartment of the loft needs raising and being made accessible from the interior of the loft, for cleaning. It is also necessary to arrange for the interior of the cage being visible throughout from the interior of the loft. This may be done by the insertion of a pane of glass in the wall of the loft.