

Before leaving I had the good fortune of receiving a pair of young birds, which turned out all I desired. Many a time I was desired by my captain to give an exhibition of my birds when he had visitors on board. Unfortunately, one day at Bassora I was exhibiting my pets by allowing them to perform in the air, when a hawk flew out of the woods close by and carried one off. The other I fondled for years until it died.—*Feathered World.*

PIGEON HINTS.

BY W. FELLOWS.

For the first time since the beginning of the season the reports from the breeding lofts have been generally favourable. Eggs have been more numerous; young ones have been more plentiful and hatched out without much trouble, while those already in the nest are thriving apace. The chief cause of this improvement, without doubt, is the departure of the dreaded East winds, for which all good fanciers have prayed, and the short spell of warm weather we have recently experienced. Let us hope that the former have quitted us for good—at least, for this season—and that the present state of the weather will continue. Since last writing I have heard of some very good results from a number of fanciers who have delayed mating up until what would generally have been called very late in the season—viz., the end of March and the beginning of April. That they were right this year has since been abundantly proved by the results attained, for in the first round the eggs were, on the whole, well shelled, the young ones hatched out fairly well, and the second are doing remarkably well. How, then, can this state of things be explained? To my mind the explanation is simple enough. The extra rest has helped the birds to cast of the enervating-effects of the mild and muggy weather of the late winter, and enabled them to put on strength and stamina sufficient to withstand in a great measure the after effects of the blighting east winds. Besides this, the stock have not experienced the strain consequent on the early breeding, and will be fitter and stronger in the succeeding nest than those mated up a month or two earlier in the year. Those fanciers whose stock had become weakened by the continued laying of soft or partially shelled-eggs, and separated them for a time, will by this have seen the wisdom of their action in the restoration of strength and condition, and may now return them to the breeding loft with every chance of success, provided the weather continues favorable. For those who have delayed doing this there is still time to do so. A week or two separation, with plenty of exercise

in the fresh air and sunshine, will work wonders and enable them later on to have at least one nest of good strong youngsters before the season closes.

Cleansing the Loft.—Now that the hot weather has set in it would be well to think about giving the lofts a good clean out, and this is especially necessary where the cleansing operations before the mating up were only partially carried out. Where paint is the medium the boards should be first well brushed, and then washed down with hot water in which a little of some disinfectant has been dissolved. This will not only sweeten the place, but also tend to destroy the eggs and larvæ of those insect pests whose presence in the loft is so undesirable. Where lime wash is used the lime should be fresh and active, and the mixture used as soon as it is made and while quite hot. If this is done it will be more effectual in destroying insect life, while the addition of some disinfectant to the mixture will prove a still further advantage in bringing about the desired result. I have tried several kinds of disinfectants, but after all I consider carbolic acid and copperas the best and most effective one to use. The best time to commence operations is after the morning meal, when the young ones have been fed, the hen has come off the nest, and the cock settled there for the day. First turn out into the flights or otherwise remove the hens and those pairs not sitting or rearing young ones, then clear out the floor covering, well sweep down the walls and ceiling with a hard brush so as to remove all loose particles of the former coat, and remove all rubbish and dirt. While this is being done the lime can be slaking, and by the time you have finished it will be ready for mixing and can then be put on hot. Where the lofts are at all large it is best to divide the labour, on one day doing down the walls, ceiling, and the occupied nest boxes, and leaving the remainder for another day. This gives the place a better chance of drying before it is time to let the birds in again for the afternoon feed and the change of the birds on the nest. Another thing I have found very useful is to give the flooring a coat of limewash, as well as the other parts of the loft, and this can be done whether it consists of wood or concrete. Even where sawdust or sand is used on the floor there is always the danger of it becoming foul with the droppings, and where no such covering is used this is done to a much greater extent, and in the very hot weather is apt to give out a very offensive odour. A coat of limewash has a very sweetening effect on this, but it should only be put on in the hot weather, and should be allowed to dry thoroughly before the covering is put down. After a good many years' experience I have come to the conclusion that paint is, after all, the best covering for the inside as well as the outside of