

course of pairing—the first essential being an accurate knowledge of their pedigree, best known to their owners—I can and do urge breeders to be careful in retaining birds with massive beaks, and heads round and wide all over, for stock purposes, all other points desirable being made easy of attainment by reason of the vast number to select from, and the cheap rates now ruling, never before so favorable to the purchaser.

What we miss most in birds used in stock is the width of gape and full cheeks, without which I fear we shall look only too long for the production of cocks fit to win.—*Stock-Keeper.*

THE SEX OF PIGEONS.

The prevailing idea that the sex of pigeons can be told by the distance apart of the bones of the ossacrum or vent is an erroneous one. There is no certain way of telling male from female, except in watching their movements; and the man does not live, who can select with certainty, from a promiscuous lot of pigeons he is unacquainted with, the males and females. A man of experience can guess pretty closely, but the best of them make frequent failures. A sign we have found to be a good one is to seize the bill of the pigeon with the fingers of the left hand, and the feet with those of the right, stretch the bird held in this way from left to right, and the tail will invariably either be thrown up over the back, or else hugged tightly towards the feet. As a rule those throwing the tail up will be found to be females, and those throwing it down to be males. But even this test fails at times in determining the sex. Experienced fanciers or breeders can tell by the expression of the eye and a certain unexplainable action of the birds, which seems to be an intuition only gained by long experience. In many varieties the characteristics of the male are so prominent that it is easy to select

him from the females. But take a lot of Fantails, Swallows, Trumpeters, Magpies, and that class of birds, and we will defy anyone to select at a first attempt all the males from the females.

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RABBITS & PETS

RABBITS AND PETS.

The fondness of boys for rabbits is proverbial, and this is a feeling which ought to be encouraged rather than repressed. There can be no question that lads often cause great annoyance to those around them by either their care for or neglect of the pets they keep, and frequently a not unnatural feeling on the part of parents is to sweep away the whole lot and have done with them. A better plan is to take an interest in the pursuit, and by a word of advice here and a hint as to better methods there the objectionable features can generally be removed, and the pride in the pets thus engendered is an almost certain cure. The advantages of giving boys and girls an interest in pets must be apparent to everyone who thinks about the matter. It teaches them to care for and regard animals with affection, it provides that recreation which is essential to every life under the right conditions, and it frequently is the means of keeping them at home when they might be wandering off no one knows whither. Parents will be doing a kindness to their children and themselves if they encourage a love for pets, and rabbits, especially in the case of boys, seem naturally to be the first kind kept. They are cheaply bought, easily housed, and readily disposed of. But whilst it is desirable to give encouragement to the lads in this way, the proper feeding of and care for the animals ought to be insisted upon as a condition of their being permitted upon the premises.

BROWN TABBY CATS.

As a rule, the short-haired varieties of cats are preferred for ordinary purposes as they do not take the same amount of attention as do the long-haired kinds, nor are they likely to become matted in the hair; to prevent which a constant combing and brushing is necessary in Persians and other long-haired cats. Of course when the owner is willing to take the necessary trouble, the long-haired varieties are very handsome, and when exhibition is regarded other considerations come in. Of the short-haired cats the tabbies are the most popular, though in this respect the tortoiseshell would compete for the first position were they as numerous as are the tabbies. There are three distinct varieties of the tabby, namely, the brown, the blue or silver, and the red. All are, if well fed and cared for, large, handsome animals, most intelligent and affectionate, and, as a rule, very gentle. The rich brown-grey ground color, marked with stripings of black, are very pleasing, though these markings are not so distinct as in the case of some other varieties. The face is, perhaps best marked of all, which gives the countenance a very happy expression. The under parts are usually a paler color than the rest of the body, but there should be no actual white about a tabby cat.

DISEASES OF THE EAR IN RABBITS.

Domestication generally results in the development of some form of trouble, to which the animal then becomes more or less subject, unless it can be remedied by the natural powers adapting themselves to the changed conditions. In the case of rabbits there seems to be a special liability to ear affections, and as the point attacked is usually that which is weakest, we assume that for some reason or another the ear of the rabbit is the most tender part of its body. Perhaps the breeding for ear points, which has been so much