

is to obtain a long, straight, and thick beak, and they will sacrifice everything else to accomplish the purpose.

I have tried a number of experiments on beaks, and have come to the conclusion that the least done artificially to increase the length the better. One thing, however is very important—the young birds should be fed by the old ones, that is, the old Carriers, for no other variety has mouth large enough to feed the young without compressing the soft, cartilaginous bones of the beak, and interfering with its growth. This is a very simple thing, but to any observer it is very suggestive, for not even Dragoons can feed Carriers satisfactorily.

The beak must be long and straight; for crookedness, even of the slightest, is a disheartening eyesore; crookedness either lateral or downward. The curve downward is very obnoxious, and some of the Roman-nosed birds look more like voracious vermin than "kings of pigeons."

Thickness is necessary to preserve the proportions of the beak and prevent its becoming spindling. The mandibles must also fit, the lower within the upper, that the bird may not be open-mouthed or distorted. The fitting of the parts of the beak is seldom perfect; by efforts to increase the length, or by the compression by the smaller beaks of feeders, a deformity consisting of a pinching-in of the sides of the upper half near its point is produced, and the shape of the part is destroyed. One hundred years ago an inch and a half was considered a long beak, but in those days more attention was given to the other properties; now the same measurement is thought useless, and from one and three quarters to two and a quarter are the extremes which contain the average lengths. The measurement is from the tip of the beak to the centre of the eye. Very long measurements can sometimes be obtained from the Roman-nosed birds by using a tape around the curve, but it is fallacious, as honesty determines the direct line as the standard.

The wattle is a wearisome thing to wait for; it is seldom of much importance until the bird is two years old, and it continues to improve to the fourth year. I have bought a good many Carriers, of which it was said, "When they get a little older the wattle would be very large." After watching three years I turned out one old bird to fly with the commons, and ten years afterwards his wattle had increased so much as to entitle him to rank with Dragoons. By the way, that bird was, to my knowledge, thirteen years old, and he must have been a year old when I bought him. I also know of a Horseman that has been in the same loft nine years—pretty good specimen of longevity in pigeons. The wattle must be broad across; an English walnut, with the long diameter across the beak,

would be a fit illustration; broad from side to side, short from before backwards, high and tilting forwards. It looks like a cauliflower, or fungous growth, is pinkish red in color, and hard to the touch in old birds, but like velvet in the young. When the bird is diseased, it becomes white or very dark red, the latter being the condition when the bird is gorged by overfeeding and suffering from vertigo. When the birds are moulting, or in bad health, the wattle shrinks very much. Some fanciers desire the wattle to extend under the lower beak, but it is generally preferred that this should not be. The circumference of the wattle of the beak should be over $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The eye is an exceedingly important point with the Carrier. Upon it depends much of the impression the bird makes on his admirers. A dull listless eye will doom the best bird in other respects. Like the same organ in man it is the sentinel of the brain, and upon its alertness depends the judgment passed of the general physical powers. Its glance should be quick, comprehensive, and confident. The color is a bright orange red, the redder and more fiery the better. It is surrounded by a broad cere, which is of the same nature as the wattle of the beak. This cere must be smooth, regular, and of equal width all round the eye. It is exceedingly difficult to develop it perfectly at all points, and it is most apt to become thin at the posterior part of the circle, thereby winning the name of pinch-eyed. A cere the size of a silver quarter is a good one.

The skull has only of late years commanded attention. At first the fanciers were indifferent whether it was short and thick, or long and narrow. Good taste, however, prevailed, and the demand is for long narrow heads, flat on top or with a slight depression in the centre. Between the wattles of the eye, as they appear above the head, the distance must not be over half an inch.

Carriers are of two colors, or rather of one color—black, with the adjunct color, dun, by the aid of which the deeper black is maintained in its purity, a cross being often necessary to prevent the black from becoming rusty or washed out.

Reds, whites, yellows, and blues, have been bred, but they are not of much account, and have ranked little better than Horsemen or Dragoons. They occupy about the relative position that paste diamonds do to the genuine article.

I have been in the habit of judging Carriers by the following standard:—1st, size; 2nd, shape; 3rd, style; 4th, color; 5th, head; 6th, eyes; 7th, beak; 8th, wattle.

I use more points than the writers recommend, and place the most neglected first, as it is now easier to obtain a good head-and-beak bird than one of good style and shape.—*Fanciers' Journal.*