



PIGEON DEPARTMENT.

Performing Tumblers.

Of actual tumbling pigeons there are many varieties, even in performance, notably those of Birmingham. The "tumble" is a complete backward somersault made while flying in the air. Those throwing only one tumble at a time, but frequently repeated during flight, are named "tipplers." Tumblers make two, three, and sometimes more without stopping; and lastly there is the true "roller," which rolls over with great rapidity, almost like a ball, for a considerable distance. This performance is gone through frequently when the birds are in mid-air, and often at a great height. There are others, called house tumblers, which fly or spring up a few inches from the floor, turn one somersault and alight again. Many of these birds will also tumble when flying in the house or aviary.

It is a disputed point whether the act of tumbling is the result of a disease, where the birds have no control over their movements, or if it is a voluntary source of pleasure. I incline towards the latter view myself, as a well trained flock of birds will go through their performance so close together that it is almost impossible to conceive how they could escape colliding unless they had complete control over their movements.

Tumblers are of all shapes and all colors. Of course, in breeding for performance, two birds of known powers should be mated irrespective of color or shape.

There are also some so-called performing tumblers bred for the show pen, but they are rarely of any value as performers, being bred altogether for fancy points.

The best performers are generally wide at the shoulders and narrow rumped, short in the back, which is sometimes slightly hollow. The eyes should be pearly white, though I have seen good birds with "bull" eyes; the forehead should be high and ought not to have the abrupt stop of the Short-face.

Don't let your birds have entire liberty or they will shortly lose all their tumbling properties, and sit all day around the house tops. Give them a flight on clear bright mornings, and in summer during the long bright sunny afternoons. If your young birds turn half over and seem unable to turn a complete somersault, pluck the centre feathers from the tail; this gives less resistance, and probably, as the feathers grow, the birds will gain confidence and be able to get over the difficulty. Start your birds, before feeding, by clapping, and feed well when they get down. See that they are at work all the time they are out. A handful of corn thrown to them when they get into the loft will induce them to come down at any time in obedience to a whistle or bell, if you do it regularly. When a flying tumbler is sent up with its crop full of food, and gets a habit of sitting on the roof, good-bye to its performing; it can never be cured, and if put among good birds will surely spoil them also. From this remark it may be seen that these birds should be hand fed, not hopper-fed. You may let them out late in the evening, when they will pick up gravel, &c., and if well trained you may be sure they won't stay out too long.

Do not fly during snow, rain, foggy or very windy weather. It is also well to keep a few birds at home to decoy the others in in case of accident; if poor flyers so much the better, as they will not leave the vicinity of the loft.

If you go in for showing, the chief points are purity and richness of color and regularity of marking.

I know of no more interesting variety than tumblers. They are amusing and lively both in the house and out, are mostly bright in color, and of great variety of markings. They are hardy and easily bred and can be safely kept in a smaller house or loft than many other varieties. This fact alone recommends them to many who have no room for those requiring larger space.

They were my first fancy, and I shall always regard them with feelings of love and pleasure. They require little care and can be made quite tame, though when left loose they seem to go wild, and often take considerable flights and at a great height, in fact I have seen them fly and tumble incessantly for three hours, and have heard of them doing even better. If you have little room, little time to spare, and don't care to go to much expense, get half a dozen flying tumblers. They will afford you more amusement for your time and money than anything I know of. Try them.

H. B. DONOVAN.

Toronto, Sept. 13th, 1883.