

and its wing and tail plumage as well, it can be counted on being at least five or six months old. It younger than this some of its nest feathers will be found in wings and tail. A young bird can also be told by its feet and bill. Where an adult bird's feet will usually be bright red and firm in texture, the young bird's will be of a bluish red cast and soft and fine. Many young birds are very "precocious" or forward, that is, mature very early, and I have known them to mate and breed at the age of six months. But the breeder for fancy does not want to permit this where possible, as it is better for his purposes that they be allowed to become fully mature before entering upon the duties of raising a family. Consequently he needs to keep them apart, that is, the sexes, until time for spring mating. When the proper time arrives to mate birds for the season's work, which in the latitude of New York should be about the 14th of February, the fancier should look his stock carefully over and endeavor as far as possible to put such birds together as combine the qualities he is seeking for. If he still has the original stock birds he purchased the preceding year, he knows what they have produced, and if their young proved to be good specimens he can mate them again. If their progeny proved unsatisfactory, it will then be necessary to give them other mates. Sometimes mating a son to his mother or a father to his daughter will strengthen and help to improve qualities peculiar to the variety. Brother and sister I would never where possible put together. But a young cock put to a young female of another pair, although there may be close relation between them, is preferable to mating brother and sister. What we want to aim at in breeding is a proper balancing of all the fancy points, so as to have them as near perfect as possible, not to mate so there shall be an excess of quality at one particular point to the exclusion of some other quality equally as necessary. For instance, take Turbits (a hard variety to breed perfect by the way), I would not want to mate two birds fine every way in head and beak, but deficient in frill and color, for the natural inference would be that their progeny, while they might be splendid in head and beak, would be almost void of frill and so poor in shoulder coloring as to be disqualified for an exhibition bird. The proper mating would be to take a young cock bred from well mated parents, with say good quality in head

properties, and cross him with a hen lacking in such properties, but possessed of good shape, good frill, and good color. This would be equalizing the properties possessed by the pair, and the results would probably show that a step nearer the desired point of combined excellence had been made. While the young might not show the perfection of the male in beak qualities, for instance, they would still be likely to be good in this particular, and combined with this have good frills, shape, and color. I know with Turbit breeders at the time I am writing everything is sacrificed for head qualities, but I cannot acknowledge these alone to constitute a perfect Turbit, and believe if judges do their duty they will insist on perfection in frill, shape, color of shoulders, and cleanness of thighs, as well as shortness of beak, shape of head, and perfection of shell or crest, in the make up of an exhibition specimen.

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Be sure and see the article next month on, some British Columbia Pigeons.

Pigeon raising like other kindred pastimes in the province is in its infancy but many good birds have been imported during the past six months and their effects will soon be felt.

Mr. H. R. King, a popular and efficient knight of the bell-punch on the interurban tramway, has recently taken to breeding homing or carrier pigeons, a variety that, apart from its usefulness, has a curious interest attached to it. He has brought up several fine pairs, one of which, young birds, being given a trial the other day, reached home from Steveston, eighteen miles within eight minutes; remarkable good time for a third trial.—*Columbian*.

The homing pigeon owned by James Gardner, sen., of Toronto, liberated at Montreal at 5.30 a. m. on Saturday, reached Gardner's loft at 4.30 p. m. the same day, making the 333 miles in eleven hours. These are the first birds to make this journey in one day.—*Victoria Times*.

—Mr. W. McKeon, of the Oriental hotel, has twenty carrier pigeons, some of which have made remarkable records. A pair of five months old birds were sent to Duncan's station yesterday, and flew home, a distance of thirty-five miles, as they fly, in 53 minutes. This morning they were sent over to Point Wilson on the Rosalie and let loose. They returned about noon. This afternoon the same birds made a trip from Sidney. Mr.

McKeon has in his coop one five hundred mile bird and several others that hold California records. Another pair are now on their way from the east for him.—*Victoria Times*.

Twelve carrier pigeons belonging to the freight clerk of the City of Kingston brought up from Tacoma on Thursday evening were given their liberty yesterday at 8 o'clock by Mr. H. P. Johnson from the Hudson Bay wharf. The birds are becoming quite famous on the Sound for their performances, their record for flying from Port Townsend to Tacoma being one hour and nineteen minutes, after getting their freedom yesterday morning they flew up in two circles and then headed straight for the Sound.—*Colonist*.

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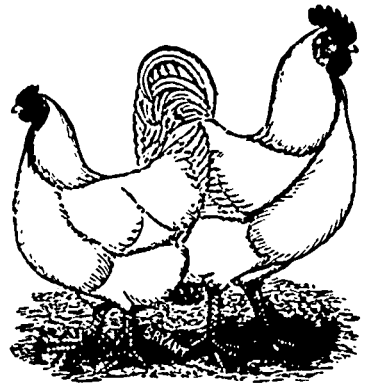
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