

course brings laziness, so that they care little to fly; if they do, it is only round the chimneys, then you may be sure that the difficulty in training commences, and if you frighten them to make them fly, it works against their entering their place to catch them after their return from a race. Many a race has been lost in that way. One must be very gentle with this race of birds, as they are very susceptible of affront. I need not describe the hopper, as any pigeon fancier ought to know that from books on pigeons. I need not say give them good fresh water every day, and if nails or scraps of iron are kept in the water, it will keep off many complaints. Salt is also a requisite, and should be kept in a small box with a cover over it, so that dirt may not get in.

In training young birds, say three or four months old, see that they fly well and strong round their place. A very good way at first is to take some of them out a quarter of a mile and let each out singly, then one can see his performance, whereas in a lot flying round the place it is difficult to judge them. Do not let them out near a house or a tree, as being young and not knowing what is up, they may pitch, which is a bad lesson for them to learn.

When the strong ones are well known, take them out a mile and let one off at a time, and watch his performance; when he is off home and out of sight let off another. The next day let them off in the same way another mile or two. This is to teach them what you require. After that give them five more, letting off three at a time, not more. I never had the patience to let birds off singly after the first two lessons, nor do I see where any good is derived from it. When they have done five miles, give them ten more, let them have two days rest, and repeat this from the same place twice, by which means they will know that part of the country better. After this give them fifteen miles more, then thirty and forty mile stretches, which is quite far enough, although in Belgium they give them much longer stretches. They have the best of birds and theirs is a better atmosphere, and not so chilly as in England, the latter being terribly against birds doing good work.

After birds have done some eighty miles they ought to have a week's rest, so up to 150, after that a fortnight's rest.

When one begins training, go right through with it, and not work by jumps and starts with long intervals between, so that the birds may be in good condition. Always toss birds at early morn, say five or six o'clock or earlier if possible. The sun then does not get up too high to dazzle them. A cloudy day is better for the same reason than a clear bright one.

After they have done a sixty miles fly, I would rather send the birds over night to be tossed by

some one, and early too; in that way, I have often had birds sent to me. I had a nice, large cage to put them in, and gave them food and water before starting, but not much. They were not then cramped in box or basket all night, and were ready for the work in the morning. Birds have hard work at any time, but from inattention it is often made harder.

Of course, in writing this I suppose the birds are good, but am ignorant of what distance birds can do in this country with the advantages of a clearer atmosphere and a more regular climate.

The amateur will soon learn from experience what his birds can do, so my advice is to begin cautiously with the stages. To get birds home quickly, send them in the same direction. To chop them about is too much for a young bird.

For this country, I should fancy that light made birds, with little wattle, would make better work than heavy ones, as the summer climate is not so inclement to contend against as that of Europe. I have always found that light birds would beat the heavy ones, as when the latter get age upon them they get very heavy and lazy, and fly lower.

Some amateurs turn their birds out twice a day, some let them have their liberty to go out and in as they like. I prefer the latter, but their place should be shut up every night and opened at early morn; then they ought to take long flights around, often out of sight from the distance they fly. The better plan is to let all the young that are strong out first, as old birds will not fly so long, as they want to get back to their young ones. When the young ones have pitched, let out the old ones.

I may remark that wheat or buckwheat is not good food; a little hemp seed when moulting is advantageous.

I. B. K.

Toronto, Dec'r. 29th, 1879.

We have been permitted to copy from the letter of one of our Belgian fanciers as follows; "I think it is foolish to make up matches through the winter season, particularly after the ground is covered with snow. When the Americans will have been longer on the flying fancy, they will be less enthusiastic. In Belgium, where there are thousands of fanciers, they never challenge each other. They wait until the regular races commence, then each has a chance to try his birds. They also arrange pool prizes aside from the entry prizes, so those wishing to fly for more money can be accommodated.—*Fancier's Journal.*

Those who contemplate training Homers next spring, should now be making their arrangements for the tossing of the birds at different stages. Add to our list of Homing stations as many good names as possible.