

consistency of pap by being mixed with old brine in which meat has been pickled, or water if that cannot be had, to which is added a gallon and a half of the coarsest sand, two gallons of bay salt and a little salt petre. More salt must be used if the brine cannot be had, and if the loam is sandy less sand will be required. Clay may be used instead of loam, but then more sand must be added. The finest "cat" of all is said to be a goat's head stuffed with salt, cummin, hemp, and anise seed, and boiled in urine! The fact is, salt and carbonate of lime, which form the chief portion of "Salt Cats," are essential to the health of pigeons, which are so fond of them that they will have these luxuries at any risk or trouble. Those living in the vicinity of the sea will drink large draughts of salt water, and if the soil is chalky, supply themselves with chalk. They will also swallow small snails for the lime which forms the shells. Their habit of pecking out mortar from the roofs of buildings is well known; indeed, it is necessary to supply a substitute or they will often greatly damage buildings near their abode; and it is also essential to prevent their being enticed away by the "Salt Cat," which too many dishonest fanciers keep as a bait for other peoples' birds.

(To be continued.)

SWALLOW PIGEONS.

BY J. W. C.

Among the toy varieties there are no more handsome, hardy or prolific pigeons than the swallows; they can compare in any beauty of form with any of the higher class toys (so called) and they can be bred to much greater perfection; yet it is astonishing how few give them a place in their lofts.

There are several varieties of swallows, although the best known are the four standards, black, blue, red and yellow; but there are the plain and the barred black, the wings being barred with white bars. Blues are bred in plain

winged, black barred, and white barred reds and yellows being plain. At all events we have not seen them in any other form. In addition to these there are the Fairy Swallows, which while extremely rare, are the handsomest of all and especially admired by some of the older judges. Plain swallows are long feathered birds of medium height, with dove like heads. The wings (shoulders and flights) are colored rich even in shade, and cut clean showing a sharp line between the shoulder and back. The feet are feathered as heavily as possible, the feather being of the same shade as the shoulders. The head again is colored from the base of the mandible well back to the shell, the line running level with the centre of the eye and the division of the beak, the upper mandible being dark in the dark colors. The shell at the front is similar to that in the Nun, long in feather, nicely raised not so close as the hood of the Jacobin and free from colored feathers. That portion of the bird, in fact, is the head or pate, the feet and the wings, the rest being white and brilliant white, it should be in condition being one of the chief items in a Swallow. In a good loft they are easily kept in condition, and are strong birds, resenting any handling so that whoever takes them in hand is lucky if he does not cause them to pull out many feathers in their attempt to escape. The black barred Swallow is identical with the bird described, except for the bar as is the blue, but the latter when plain has darker flights than the color of the shoulders. When barred the bars should be quite black and not brown, as is often seen. White barred Swallows are scarce, but very beautiful. In some the bar is plain, in others it is edged or laced with black or dark blue. Where there is such scope for breeding it is strange that fanciers do not take up such a bird as the Swallow and improve it still more. The yellow variety is ex-

remely rare good specimens being seldom seen the color especially being difficult to obtain in richness and softness. For this purpose they are crossed with reds but reds resulting from the cross are almost useless for breeding reds again. Some of the Fairies are blue, heavily feathered with handsome bars, and without colored crowns, others are black and similarly marked. The Fairy of Fairies is, however a bird marked on the shoulder something like the Suabian. The ground is a pale blue, the feather having a sort of half diamond marking at the top of each of dark blue, the feet are similar, and the head either plain or marked with a blue spot.

PARROTS.

BY J. P. SCHILLING, M.D.

The Red-Tailed African Grey.—This bird is a little larger than an ordinary pigeon. The wings and back are of a slaty grey color, the head and breast a little lighter and a larger circle about the eyes almost white. The tail is short and as already intimated of a bright scarlet color. The bird is a native of Africa, and reached us through the vessels trading with that country. They are captured while very young and have their wings clipped, and those that reach us by the steamers are usually quite young and in bad condition. They are captured in large numbers, packed in cases and badly cared for, so that when they reach us they are nearly all victims of blood poison, and but few of them live. In fact so large is this fatality that a very intelligent gentleman remarked to us one day, "I would never buy a parrot at Messrs. A. & Co's bird store because they poison every one of them. I know quite a number that were purchased there in apparent good health, and they all died in less than two weeks. They put something in their food after they sold them that kills them." As we are personally acquainted with the dealer re-