

to vital force than to actual strength; comparing to the horse, we want racers, not draught horses. Our racers have their own weights alone to carry—the heavier the bird, the more to carry. We would not pick a heavy, broad-shouldered man for a pedestrian—rather an active, wiry build.

I would say, in conclusion, that even could we judge the heads by the size or shape, there is the temperament to be taken into consideration, as well as the relation existing between the body and the brain. For instance, take a precocious child, and we get the best results by encouraging the bodily growth; otherwise, the brain will weaken. I believe such conditions are liable to occur in all living kind—the greater the intelligence, the greater liability. Therefore, a healthy bird, a proportionately healthy brain; they must work in unison, as they are dependant upon each other.—J. R. Hussox, in *Homing Pigeon*.

### The Fantail.

First among Toy fancy Pigeons seems naturally to come the Fantail. It is *the* Toy Pigeon *par excellence*. Who does not know what a fantail is, though ignorant of the names of almost all other distinctive breeds? Few too, there are who have not as children kept a few Fantails, often very bad ones from a fancier's point of view, yet none the less petted and delighted in. There is no breed more suited to confinement—indeed it is scarcely safe to let fine specimens loose, so easily from the incumbrance of their tails do they become a prey to cats and the sport of high winds. We scarcely know a harder kind; certainly there is none more quaint and attractive in its ways. Fantails, as we now breed them in England, are of two kinds, or rather of two styles—the English and the Scotch. The fancier may smile at this elementary piece of information, but we here write for novices and not for old hands who need no such instruction. This diversity of taste as to what a Fantail should be often leads to trouble and disappointment when not properly understood. This need not be, for the difference between the two styles is very comprehensible and easily described. The first point thought of in an English Fantail is its tail; the first in a Scotch bird its "carriage" as it is called—i. e. the bearing of the bird, and the tremulous motion of the throat intimately connected with that bearing. Trouble arises in this way from this divergence of taste. Often a young fancier has a pair of birds from the lofts of an admirer of one style; after a while a fresh bird is required to mate with some odd one; it is procured by chance from another loft, and turns out to be one of the older type. The inexperienced breeder is much disappointed

and thinks it altogether a bad bird. We well remember a case in which a Scotch cock of very high carriage went from our own aviary to recruit a nondescript lot of Fantails, chiefly of English type. We were at once told, "He is such a foolish little bird, always twisting about and cutting antics when he ought to be eating or attending to his parental duties." This very "folly" would in the eyes of a connoisseur be a high merit.

For these reasons it is particularly necessary that the difference between the two styles should be carefully explained. The young fancier can then choose for himself which he prefers, or if sufficiently enthusiastic in the matter he can in time try to produce a strain combining to some extent the beauties of them both. This has been successfully done by some experienced hands, but can only be attempted by such. We will begin with the English Fantail. Tail, as we have said, is its first point, and this must be both large and flat. The pure English Fantail is rather a large pigeon, and the tail feathers of a good specimen are very broad and long. They must be evenly arranged, not in bunches here and gaping there, but each fitting nicely over the edge of the next, and not set sideways. One of the greatest points in the shape of the tail is that the side feathers should come well down, and so that it should form as nearly as possible a perfect circle, looking from behind like a saucer set upright. One of the greatest and commonest faults in the shape of the tail is a gap in the centre, or at least some misformed feathers there. Such a blemish is sure to be hereditary, and birds with it should be rejected if it is desired to breed a really handsome strain.

Such should be the shape of tail. Its carriage is of equal importance. In a perfect English Fantail it is carried perpendicular: neither inclining backwards nor forwards. Of course perfection in this point, as in most of others, is very difficult of attainment; but on the one hand we much dislike to see a tail tilted over the back, the whole balance of the bird is then spoilt, and often the head actually comes through the tail and is seen behind it. On the other hand, a well-balanced bird may carry its tail so far back that it looks simply like a funnel: this is the most common fault, and not to be tolerated in a strain with pretention to an exhibition standard. As to the number of principal tail feathers, this point matters little so long as the tail is well shaped and well carried. There are generally from 28 to 36, in the best birds, at times 40, but when they are so numerous they are apt to lie in bunches. There is a difference in the quality of feathers; some are much stronger than