

and comfortable. In dealing with the important matter of diet, it is useless to attempt to breed these birds unless you can succeed in bringing them into fit condition for parental duties. It is advisable to begin dieting gradually with nourishing food; so in February, their ordinary supply of Canary seed and rape can be supplemented twice a week by a teaspoonful of best Dutch hemp seed for each bird; after a fortnight increase this to hemp seed on alternate days; then, when March arrives, egg-food and hemp seed on alternate days for two weeks; after that the birds should have both every day. During this time the sexes are better kept in different rooms, but at the end of March pair them, and you will find by that time that they are quite ready for married life and its responsibilities. A popular theory as to the white of egg is that it is utterly indigestible—so much so that not even the ostrich can eat it with impunity. I can only say that when I used fresh eggs in my bird room the white was never wasted and the birds eat it freely. A curious confirmation of the digestibility of the white of egg will be found in Huxley's "Elementary Lessons in Physiology," where it is specially selected as a suitable matter for experiment in artificial digestion, and as it may interest those who have not come across the passage, I propose, as it is very short, to read it. (Page 146, Section 19, edition 8, 1874; publisher, Macmillan). "It is easy to ascertain the properties of gastric juice experimentally by putting a small portion of the mucous membrane which contains the peptic glands into acidulated water containing small pieces of meat, hard-boiled egg or other proteid, and keeping the mixture at a temperature of about 100 degrees. After a few hours it will be found that the white of egg, if not in too great quantity, has become dissolved, while all that remains of the meat is the pulp,

consisting chiefly of the connective tissue and fatty matters which it contained." I have not tried this experiment, so content myself with quoting my authority, a particularly high one. The egg-food I make is composed of three parts of dessicated egg to nine parts of Elfick's or Welham's egg-food, or twelve parts of powdered biscuit; these are not weight measurements, of course. Grind the ingredients dry in a mortar, to thoroughly incorporate them and make it impossible for birds to pick out the egg and leave the biscuit, and make the mixture crumbly moist with water or milk, giving it to the birds in clean white porcelain pans. An alternative recipe is that of Mr. Thos. Heath, the founder of the London and Provincial Ornithological Society, the ingredients being: To three biscuits (cracknels) add one egg, and mix well with a teacupful of crushed hemp seed; make crumbly by moistening, and give to the birds in addition to their other food. I am not at all satisfied with the method of moistening egg-food usual in England—that of adding water—fearing that it produces a scouring effect, and I know that some of our most experienced raisers of Canaries have discontinued the use of water for that reason. Were I putting up any birds this year I should feel inclined to experiment with scraped raw carrot as a moistening agent, this root being largely used by the owners of delicate foreign birds for dampening food.

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