

Pigeon and Pet Stock Department,

—CONDUCTED BY—

H. B. DONOVAN.

Parkdale, Ontario,

To whom all communications, items of news, &c., on these subjects should be addressed.

Questions and Answers.

Can you kindly tell me what is the disease affecting my young Fantail pigeons. They appear to prosper very well until about to fly, when a yellowish lump, of very offensive smell, forms in the throat, stopping it up, and after a few days they die of suffocation. I lost over twenty birds in this way last year, and I find the same thing is commencing this season. Could you give a cure for this you would greatly oblige.

R. E. K.

Kingston, June 20th, 1885.

Ans.—This is the third enquiry we have had this month with reference to "canker," which, no doubt, is the disease with which this gentleman's birds are troubled. In almost every case it can be traced to foul water, and impure air, through lack of sufficient ventilation. We make it a point to see that our birds get clean, fresh, cold water twice a day, and on very hot days three times, and the crocks scalded out once a week. The water crocks are placed in such a position that the birds cannot foul the contents. Green food will be found beneficial in all cases of cankerous growths, supplied twice daily, and the old taken away. This is of course, assuming that the birds are confined.

We append Louis Wright's definition of canker, in the *Practical Pigeon Keeper*, where he goes rather fully into the subject:

"Canker is a general term among pigeon breeders for an ulcerous or foul growth, which may assume different forms and appear in different places. The matter is usually yellowish, and wattled pigeons are peculiarly subject to have it in the ear and about the head, whilst all varieties are subject to cankerous or foul growths in the mouth and throat. Carriers are also liable occasionally to outbreaks on the wattle.

"General experience seems to prove that many forms are contagious, out it is possible the fact may simply be that similar conditions cause the same ailment more or less through a loft. Canker of some form or other has repeatedly been traced to foul, neglected water, either in bath or fountain. This should, therefore, never occur, though cases often happen where the greatest cleanliness has been observed.

"We have already expressed the opinion that the deprivation of green food has probably much to do with the disposition of this type of disease, and we

have also reason to believe that scraped cuttle-fish is of the greatest value as a preventive.

"For external cases the most valuable application is carbolic acid. To cankered spots on the wattle, in those malignant cases sometimes called "small-pox," the acid may be applied in full strength with a camel hair pencil, at intervals of twenty four hours till checked, afterwards cleansing with diluted acid, one part to a hundred. In this form two or three purges of epsom salts often assist a cure. For canker in the ear, about the head, or in the mouth, it is better to apply a dilution of one part saturated acid to eight parts of glycerine, twice in twenty four hours, till the diseased secretion is evidently checked. Another method of treatment, recommended by Mr. Betty, for canker in the ear, is to inject for several days solution of sugar of lead, three grains to an ounce, followed by a solution of sulphate of zinc of the same strength. To the more virulent forms of canker which sometimes appear near the joining of the mandibles, especially in Tumblers, either the undiluted acid or the glycerine dilutions may be applied, according to circumstances. Some breeders cut off the affected parts and apply lunar caustic to the healthy surface left by the cut; but, after prescribing for many cases, we can recommend the carbolic acid application, as—if not infallible—it is far the most generally successful.

There is, however, one most important circumstance to add as bearing on internal treatment. Many post mortem examinations have revealed the fact that fatal cases of canker are very often associated with scrofulous or tuberculous diseases of the liver. Guided by this indication, when canker has largely affected young birds in a loft, as it often does, we have prescribed the administration of three to ten drops (according to size and age of the young bird) twice daily of syrup of hypophosphite of iron or soda with the best effects. It should be given just after each feed, as soon as the young squeaker is old enough to bear the administration of the bread or oatmeal pill, in which it must be mixed, and is the nearest to a specific for scrofulous or tuberculous constitutions that we know of."

Here the writer goes on to speak of a form called diphtheria, and winds up by saying:—"Mild cases of canker in the nest can often be cured by an ordinary rhubarb pill, or perhaps a second may be needed, such cases being often really due to improper food and consequent indigestion. Sometimes the tongue is too long for the mouth, and the constant irritation causes canker of the lower mandible. In such cases cutting off the tip of the tongue, and dressing the affected parts twice daily with salicylic acid, will almost always effect a cure."