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THE  
NEW AND COMPLETE  
**PIGEON-FANCIER:**  
OR,  
*MODERN TREATISE*  
ON  
**DOMESTIC PIGEONS:**

CONTAINING  
THE NATURAL HISTORY OF PIGEONS.—DESCRIPTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF ALL THEIR VARIOUS SPECIES.—DI-  
SEASES AND REMEDIES.—INSTRUCTIONS FOR STOCK-  
ING AND MANAGING A PIGEON-HOUSE.—LAWS  
RELATIVE TO PIGEONS, &c. &c.

The whole being  
AN USEFUL, INSTRUCTIVE, AND COMPLETE  
**GUIDE TO PIGEON-FANCIERS**

By DANIEL GIRTON, Esq.  
*Of the County of Bucks.*

**A NEW EDITION,**

Revised and improved by Mr. W. THOMPSON, Author of the *New and Complete BIRD-FANCIER*, and the *GARDENER'S CALENDAR*.

**Embellished with**

Correct Portraits of Twelve of the most choice Pigeons, drawn from Life; and, also, the improved Pigeon-Houses and Nest-Apparatus, by Dr. DICKSON, copied, by Permission, from his *Live Stock and Cattle-Management*.

**London:**

PRINTED FOR T. KELLY, 17, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

*[Price only One-Shilling.]*



FRONTISPIECE.



1 The Trumpeter.....	3 The Fowler.....	5 The Barb.....	7 The Lace.....	9 The Owl.....	11 The Fantail.....
2 The Jacobine.....	4 The Jeshorn Runt.....	6 The Nun.....	8 The Turbit.....	10 The Almond Tumbler.....	12 The Carrier.....



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Harry Soane. 1882.

W. HILL, Printer, Bank-street, Maidstone.

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PREFACE.

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AMONGST the various domestic animals, kept either for the service or pleasure of mankind, there are few that have more admirers than PIGEONS; those pleasing companions of a leisure hour being kept by persons almost of every situation in life. The Author, therefore, in order to render this new Treatise as complete as possible, has, after consulting the works of all the modern and most approved writers in this valuable branch of literature, with great labour and expense compiled a most useful, entertaining, and instructive, Natural History of Pigeons; which, though a very essential article, has been wholly untouched, or but very superficially handled, by every preceding writer on this subject.

There is, also, in the course of this little work, every piece of necessary information relative to the choice, breeding, and management of all the various species of domestic pigeons known in England. The interest of those who keep and breed these birds to supply the market, has been particularly considered, and every useful method pointed out for their advantage and benefit.

The most indefatigable pains have been taken on the present Edition, which, having been carefully



revised, embraces every modern discovery, and several valuable improvements and additions, All the distinct species of these domestic birds are accurately described, their defects clearly laid open, and their true properties justly fixed; their various disorders attended to, and the most safe efficacious methods of cure prescribed; and, to render the whole complete and perfect, the assistance of the Engraver has been called in who, from the most correct drawings, has presented the reader with the best set of engravings that ever appeared in a book of this kind.



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THE  
NEW AND COMPLETE  
PIGEON-FANCIER.



*The Natural History of Pigeons.*

THE pigeon has, from its great fecundity, been, in some measure, reclaimed from a state of nature, and taught to live in habits of dependence. It is true, indeed, its fecundity seems to be increased by human assiduity; since those pigeons that live in their native state, are not near so fruitful as those in the pigeon-houses. The power of increase in most birds, depends not only upon the quantity, but also the quality of their food; consequently, the tame pigeon is more prolific than the wild: the latter usually perch upon trees, and are seldom seen on the ground: they breed in woods, sea rocks, &c. All the birds of the pigeon kind, except the dove or common pigeon, build like rooks in the highest branches of the forest, and make their situation as remote as possible from man.

Pigeons will live eight years, but they are only prolific for the first four years; afterwards they are worth nothing; for when they are once past that age, all they do is, to prevent the profit that might be reaped by others that are younger.

The pigeon lays two white eggs, which produce young ones in different sexes. When the eggs are laid, the female sits fifteen days, not concluding the three days she is employed in laying, and is relieved at intervals by the male. The turns are generally pretty regular. The female usually sits from about five in the evening till nine the next morning; at which time the male supplies her place, while she is seeking refreshment abroad. Thus they set alternately till the young are



hatched. If the female does not return at the expected time, the male seeks her, and drives her to the nest; and should he in his turn be neglectful, she retaliates with equal severity. When the young ones are hatched, they only require warmth for the first three days; a task which the female takes entirely upon herself, and never leaves them, except for a few minutes to take a little food. After this they are fed about ten days, with what the old ones have picked up in the fields, and kept treasured in their crops, from whence they satisfy the craving appetites of their young ones, who receive it very greedily.

This way of supplying the young with food from the crop, in birds of the pigeon-kind, differs from all others. The pigeon has the largest crop of any bird, for its size; which is also quite peculiar to the kind. In two that were dissected by an eminent anatomist, it was found that, upon blowing the air into the wind-pipe, it distended the crop or gullet to an enormous size. Pigeons live entirely upon grain and water: these being mixed together in the crop, are digested in proportion as the bird lays in its provision. Young pigeons are very ravenous, which necessitates the old ones to lay in a more plentiful supply than ordinary, and to give it a sort of half maceration in the crop, to make it fit for their tender stomach. The numerous glands, assisted by air, and the heat of the bird's body, are the necessary apparatus for secreting a milky fluid; but as the food macerates, it also swells, and the crop is considerably dilated. If the crop were filled with solid substances, the bird could not contract it, but it is obvious, the bird has a power to compress its crop at pleasure, and by discharging the air, can drive the food out also, which is forced up the gullet with great ease. The young usually receive this tribute of affection from the crop three times a day. The male for the most part feeds the young females, and the old female performs the same office for the young male. While the young are weak, the old ones supply them with food macerated suitable to their tender frame; but, as they gain strength, the parents give it less preparation, and at last drive them out, when a craving appetite obliges them to shift for themselves: for when pigeons have plenty of food, they do not wait for the total dismission of their young; it being a common thing to see young



ones fledged and eggs hatching at the same time and in the same nest.

Though the constancy of the *turtle-dove* is proverbial, the *dove-house pigeon* is not so faithful, and, having become subject to man, puts on incontinence among its other domestic qualities. Two males are often seen quarreling for the same mistress; and when the female encourages the freedoms of a new gallant, her old companion shews visible marks of his displeasure, quits her company, and never approaches except to chastise her. Many instances have been known, when two males, being dissatisfied with their respective mates have thought fit to make an exchange, and have lived in peace and friendship with the new objects of their choice. So rapid is the fertility of this bird in its domestic state, however incredible it may appear, that, from a single pair, fourteen thousand seven hundred and sixty may be produced in the space of four years. The stock-dove, however, very rarely breeds oftener than twice a year; for, as the winter months approach, their whole empyoy is for self-subsistence, so that they cannot transmit a progeny. But their attachment to their young is much stronger than in those which often breed. This is wing perhaps to their affections being less divided by so great a number of claims.

Pigeons are very quick of hearing, have a very sharp sight; and, when pursued by the hawk or kite, and obliged to exert themselves, are exceedingly swift in flight. It is the nature of pigeons to assemble in flocks, as they love company, to bill in their courtship, and to have a plaintive note.

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### THE COMMON PIGEON, OR DOVE.

This pigeon weighs about thirteen ounces; from the tip of the bill to the end of the tail, it is thirteen inches long: and the wings, when extended, twenty-six inches broad. The bill is slender, pointed, and soft; rather white above the nostril, but the rest brown. The tongue is sharp and soft; and the iris of the eye of a yellowish red. The fore part of the leg is covered with feathers, as far as the toes, and the feet and toes are red, with black nails. The head is of a



blueish ash-colour, and the neck is adorned with variable shining feathers. The part over the crop is redish, but the rest of the breast and belly, are of an ash-colour. The lower part of the back is white, but ash-coloured near the shoulders; the rest is black with a few shades of ash-colour. There are twenty-three large feathers in each wing, of which the outermost are brown, and the others blackish at first sight. The feathers that cover the first, are large; ten large ones of the wings are of a darkish ash-colour, and the points of the rest, almost as far as the body, have their inward webs near their shaft ash-coloured, but the outermost are black. The under-part of the wings, towards the roots of the great feathers are very white; and the tail consists of twelve feathers four inches and a half long; but those in the middle are a little longer than the rest, and the tops of all are black. The two outermost below, are black and white on the external side of the shaft; the rest are all ash-coloured, but a little darker above. The crop is large, and the female has a shriller cry than the male. The varieties produced by pairing a male and female of different sorts, are both numerous and beautiful. This species of pigeon is easily brought to build in artificial cavities, and readily submits to the subjection of man. It retains its native colour for a long time, and is more variegated in proportion, as it removes from the original simplicity of its colouring in the woods.

The dove-pigeon breeds every month; but, when the weather is severe, and the fields covered with snow, it must be supplied with food: at other times it may be left to itself. It generally repays the owner for its protection.

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### THE STOCK-DOVE OR WOOD-PIGEON.

From this species all the beautiful varieties of the tame pigeon derive their origin, and have the English name of Stock-Dove, it being the stock or stem of the other domestic kinds. This bird is of a deep blueish ash-colour; the breast dashed with a fine changeable green and purple; the sides of the neck with shining copper colour: the wings are marked with two black bars, one of the quill feathers, and



the other on the coverts. The back is white, and the tail is barred near the end with black. It is larger than the common pigeon; but the shape of the body is the same, nor is the colour much different. The changes in their feathers are occasioned by different lights. They are more glossy, and sometimes appear purple, sometimes green.

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### THE RING-DOVE.

This pigeon is much larger than the stock-dove, and may in general, be distinguished from all others by its size; it builds its nest with dry sticks in the branches of trees. Many attempts have been made to render it domestic, which have always proved abortive, by setting their eggs under the tame pigeon in dove-houses; but, as soon as they could fly, they always returned to their state of nature. As soon as winter begins, they assemble in large flocks in the woods, and leave off cooing, which note of courtship they do not resume till the entrance of spring, which renews their desires, by supplying them with food, and which they continue to practise till the approach of winter; it weighs nearly twenty ounces, measure eighteen inches in length, and thirty in breadth. The head, back, and coverts of the wings are of a blueish ash-colour; the under side of the neck and breast are of a red purple mixed with ash-colour: round the neck, near the back-part of the head, is a semi-circular line of white, (hence the name of *ring-dove*.) above and beneath which the feathers are bright and glossy, and of changeable colours as opposed to the light.

The belly is of a light straw-colour, the large quill-feathers are dusky, and the rest of an ash-colour, except the bastard wing, underneath which is a white stroke pointing downwards.

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### THE TURTLE-DOVE.

This is a smaller, but a much shyer, bird than any of the pigeon kind; it frequents the west of England during the summer months, breeding in thick woods, generally of oak: it is easily known from the rest by the iris of the eye, which



is of a bright yellow, and a circle that surrounds the eye-lids, which is of a beautiful crimson colour. The top of the head is ash-colour, interspersed with olive, the chin and forehead white; there is a spot of black feathers on each side of the neck curiously tipped with white: the back is ash-coloured with a tincture of olive brown: the scapulars and coverts of a redish brown, spotted with black: the quill-feathers of a dusky brown, the breast of a light purplish red, the extremity of each feather is yellow: the sides and inner coverts of the wings are blueish, and the belly white. The length of the tail is three inches and a half, has two feathers in the middle of a dusky brown; the rest are black delicately tipped with white: the end and exterior side of the outward feathers are wholly white. It is a bird of passage, and does not stay in our northern climates during winter. They come over here in large flocks in the summer to breed, and though they delight in open mountains and sandy countries, yet they build their nests in the middle of the thickest woods, choosing the most unfrequented places for incubation. They feed upon all sorts of grain, but the millet-seed is their favourite repast. This pigeon commonly measures twelve inches and a half in length, from the tip of the bill to the end of the tail; and when the wings are extended, the breadth is twenty-one inches. Some naturalists affirm, that this bird lays its eggs twice a year; and, if this assertion may be depended on, which is very probable, as it is a bird of passage, it is once when it visits us in the summer, and once when it migrates to some warmer climate in winter. The turtle-dove is the symbol of fidelity and constancy; and a pair being put in a cage, if one die, the other seldom survives. The male and female usually fly together, and if she lose her mate, she will pine away.

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### THE ENGLISH POWTER.

This pigeon derives its name from being originally bred in England, and is a cross-breed between a horseman and a cropper; and frequently pairing their young ones with the cropper, which has rendered this bird more beautiful, and raised its reputation among the fanciers.



From the point of the beak to the end of the tail, this bird measures eighteen inches : it has a fine shape and hollow back sloping off taper from the shoulders, for when it has a rise on the back, it is termed hog-backed ; the legs, from the toe-nail to the upper joint in the thigh, is seven inches. The crop ought to be large and circular towards the beak, rising behind the neck, so as to cover and run neatly off at the shoulders. The colours most esteemed are the blue-pied, black-pied, red-pied, and yellow-pied. All these properties rise in value, according as they agree with the above description ; for example, if the blue-pied and black-pied be possessed of the other qualities, the black-pied, on account of the plumage, will be the most valuable pigeon, and if the yellow-pied have these marks, it will be far preferable to any. The following is the manner in which a powter ought to be pied, according to the fancy of the best judges. The front of the crop should be white, encircled with a shining green, interspersed with the same colour with which he is pied, but the white should not reach the back of the head, for then he is ring-headed. There should be a patch, in the shape of a half-moon, falling upon the chop of the same colour, with which he is pied, and when this is wanted, he is called swallow-throated. The head, neck, back, and tail, should preserve a uniformity of colour ; and if a blue-pied pigeon, he should have two black streaks or bars near the end of both wings : but if these chance to be of a brown colour, it greatly diminishes the value of the bird, and he is then termed kite-barred. When the pinion of the wing is speckled with white, in the form of a rose, it is called a rose-pinion, and is highly esteemed, though it is a great rarity to find any one complete in this property ; but, when the pinion has a large dash of white on the external edge of the wing, he is said to be bishoped or lawn-sleeved, as the fanciers term it. They must not be naked about the thighs, nor spindle-legged, as some of the powters formerly were before the breed was improved ; but their legs and thighs must be stout and straight, and well covered with white soft downy feathers : but, whenever it happens that the joints of the knees, or any part of the thigh, is tinged with another colour, he is foul-thighed. If the nine-flight feathers of the wing be not white, he is foul-flighted, and when only the extreme feather of the wing is of



the same colour with the body, he is called sword-flighted.

The crop of the powter ought to be filled with wind, so as to shew its full extent with ease and freedom; for it is a very great fault when a bird overcharges his crop with wind, and strains himself so much, that he sometimes falls backwards, because he is not able to give a quick vent to the confined air, which makes him disquiet and heavy: and many a fine bird has, by this ill habit, either fallen into the street, down a chimney, or become an easy prey to the cats. The reverse is, being loose-winded, so that he exhibits so small a crop as to appear to as little advantage as an ill-shaped runt. A powter should play erect, with a fine well spread tail which must not touch the ground, nor sink between his legs, neither must it rest upon his rump, which is a great fault, and is called rumping. He should draw the shoulders of his wings close to his body, displaying his limbs without straddling, and to walk almost upon his toes, without jumping or kicking, as is the manner of the uploper, but moving with an easy majestic air.

The powter that approaches nearest all these properties is a very valuable bird; and some fanciers, by a patient perseverance, and great expense, have bred these birds so near the standard prescribed, as to sell them for twenty guineas a pair.

These pigeons make a very striking appearance on the outside of a building; though the favourite sort are seldom permitted to fly, for fear of the accidents already mentioned, on account of their crops, particularly those that are apt to overcharge themselves with wind.

There is a great deal of trouble, time, and expense, requisite for breeding and rearing young powters, for they require a vast deal of attendance, as every single bird, cocks as well as hens, must be parted during the winter season, and placed in a separate pen or coop; each of them must be supplied with meat and water, and care taken that the coop be lofty and spacious, that they may not get an ill-habit of stooping, which is so great an imperfection, that it must be prevented by all possible means. In the spring, when you match them, prepare yourself with two pair of dragoons to every pair of powters, for feeders or nurses; for those who are curious in the



fancy, never suffers powters to hatch their own eggs, as they are such unfeeling parents, that, if left to themselves, they would frequently starve their young ones. The dragoons must be kept in a loft separate from the powters, for fear they should degenerate and bastardize the breed; but, when the hen-powter has laid her egg, it should be shifted under a dragoon that has also lately laid an egg, and the egg of the dragoon put under the powter; it being very proper the powter should have an egg or eggs to sit upon, or she will quickly lay again; and this, often repeated, will be the cause of her death. Very great caution must be observed, and that in due time, to prevent these birds from gorging, which the large cropped ones are apt to do, and is often the occasion of their death.

A great deal of time must be spent upon them, to make them tame and familiar; for the powter should be used to company, and frequently attended, chuckled and talked to, during the winter, in a phrase which the fancies are well acquainted with, stroaking their backs, and also clacking to them, as a hen does to her chickens, or they will become shy, and lose one of their properties, for which they are so much admired, which is called shewing; this would make the best of them appear to great disadvantage, and which caused a judicious fancier to remark, that powters were birds more peculiarly suited to watch-makers, cobblers, weavers, and such trades only as worked in the same room where they were kept, that the lower class of fanciers may converse and familiarize them, without lavishing that time which should be occupied in providing for their families.

The expense of raising a shew of powters is sometimes very great; for a fancier may begin with half a dozen pair of these birds, and in a short time be obliged to buy more, or be forced to exchange some of his best birds for worse, in order to cross the strain; for he must not breed them in and in, that is, coupling the brother and sister, or father and daughter, or any other consanguineous connection, as the breed would degenerate and be worth nothing. The above, and some other inconveniences too tedious to relate, attend the training of the powter; whereas the same number of almond-tumblers



would stock a fancier for life; for the breeding of tumblers in and in, would only diminish the size of the breed, which is a quality much coveted in them, and if supplied with meat, water, and a little clean straw, they give no further trouble. The powter was formerly so much valued, as to monopolize the attention of the fancy in general; but since the almond-tumblers are brought to such perfection, and for the other reasons already given, the powter is now much neglected. Some fanciers declare, that if tumblers were kept in separate pens, and trained as the powters are, they would shew in the same manner, and be equally familiar.

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### THE DUTCH CROPPER.

This pigeon was originally bred in Holland, and its make seems to agree with the country from whence it came; the body is thick, clumsy, and short, as are also the legs, which are feathered down to the feet: they have a large pouch or bag hanging under their beak, which they can swell with wind, or depress at pleasure; the crop hangs low, but is very large; they are so loose-feathered on the thighs, as to be styled flag-thighed; they seldom play upright, and stand wide on their legs; they are gravel-eyed, and such bad feeders of their young ones, that as soon as they have fed off their soft meat, it is necessary to place their young ones under a pair of small runts, dragoons, or powting-horsemen, who will act the part of nurses better t'ian their thoughtless parents.

There are a great variety of feathers in this pigeon, and the Dutch are very careful in the breed of them; for when they have fed off their soft meat, they place the young ones under more tender nurses, and then put the old ones in different coops for a month, feeding them with hemp, or rape-seed, which makes them very fallacious, and then turning them together, they breed pigeons with very good properties; but since the powter has been bred to such perfection, the cropper is but lightly esteemed by the English fanciers. The Dutch cropper is the most addicted to gorge of any pigeon, especially if not regularly supplied with food and water.



## THE POWTING-HORSEMAN.

This is what the fanciers term a bastard-bred pigeon, and is produced between the horseman and cropper; and, agreeable to the number of times that their young ones are bred over to the cropper, they have the appellation of first, second, or third breed; and the more frequent this method is practised, the greater is the improvement the crop receives from it. This breed of pigeons was formerly much encouraged, in order to improve the strain of the powder, by making them close thighed; though, it was the fire of the horseman's blood that caused them to rump; but since the strain of powters is now brought to such a degree of perfection that practice is discontinued.

These are lively birds, being very full of mirth on the top of a house, and, by frequently dashing off, are excellent decoys for stray pigeons that have missed their way home, which is a pleasing satisfaction to those who delight in the flying fancy. They are fertile breeders, and tender nurses, always taking great care of their young ones. Some of these pigeons measure six inches and a half in legs; they are a hearty spirited bird, and, only supply them with food, they will give very little trouble. There are instances of these birds coming home at twenty miles distance.

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THE UPLOPER.

This bird is a native of Holland, being originally bred there; it nearly resembles the English powder in all its properties, only it is smaller in every respect; it has a very round crop, in which it commonly hides its bill; it has small slender legs, (this was the fault of the English powder till the late improvement,) with its toes short and close together, on which it trips so exactly, when walking, as to leave the ball of the foot quite hollow; it plays very upright, is close-thighed, and it is the custom of this pigeon, on approaching the hen, to leap to her with his tail spread; from hence the name of Uploper is derived, from the Dutch word *uplopen*, to leap up. It is a great rarity to see any of these pigeons pick, they



being generally all white, black, or blue. Since the English powter has become such a favourite, there is little encouragement given to the breed of this pigeon here, and indeed there is no comparison to be made between them; though it is said that, in Holland, some of these pigeons have been sold for five-and-twenty guineas a pair.

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### THE PARISAN POWTER.

This bird, though brought into England from Brussels, is originally a native of Paris; it partakes of the same nature as the English powter, though it is not so well made; its body and legs are short, it has generally a long but not a large crop, and is thick in the girth. This bird is greatly admired for its plumage, which is very elegant, and peculiar to this species only; every feather being streaked with a variety of colours, the flight excepted, which is white; the more red this bird has interspersed with its other colours, the greater is the value set upon it; they are generally bull-eyed, or gravel eyed, but it is a matter of indifference amongst the fanciers which eye it hath.

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### THE CARRIER.

The carrier is a rather larger than most of the common-sized pigeons; their feathers lie very close, even, and smooth; their flesh is naturally firm, and their necks so long and straight, that when they stand on their legs, they shew an elegant gentility of shape, far exceeding most other pigeons who, when they stand, cringe themselves up in an uncouth manner. From the lower part of the head to the middle of the upper chap, there grows out a white, naked, fungous flesh, which is called the wattle, and is generally met by two small protuberances of the same luxuriant flesh, rising on each of the under chap: this flesh is always most valued when of a blackish colour.

The circle round the black pupil of the eyes is commonly of a red brick-dust colour, though they are more esteemed



when of a fiery red: these are also encompassed with the same sort of naked fungous matter, which is very thin, generally of the breadth of a shilling, and the broader this spreads, the greater is the value set upon them; but when this luxuriant flesh round the eye is thick and broad, it denotes the carrier to be a good breeder, and one that will rear very fine young ones. The pigeon-fanciers are unanimous in their opinion, that this bird should be called "the king of the pigeons," on account of its graceful appearance, and uncommon sagacity. They have attributed to the carrier the following twelve properties; three in the head, three in the eye, three in the wattle, and three in the beak.

The properties in the head consist in its flatness, straightness, and length; for instance, when a carrier has a very flat skull, a little indented in the middle, with a long narrow head, it is greatly admired; and if the reverse, it is termed barrel-headed.

The eye of the carrier should be broad, circular, and of an uniform appearance; for if one part of the eye appear to be thinner than another, it is a great imperfection, and is called pinch-eyed; but when the eye is equal and full, and free from irregularities, it is a rose-eye, and is very valuable. Some mention the distance which ought to be between the back of the wattle and the edge of the eye; but this is not a property, for when a carrier lives to be three or four years old, has a broad eye, and a large wattle, they will join of course.

The wattle should be broad across the beak, short from the head towards the point of the bill, and leaning a little forwards from the head; for if it lie flat, it is in great disrepute, and is said to be peg-wattled. This has caused some artful people, in order to impose upon the less knowing, and increase the price of an imperfect bird, to ingeniously raise the hinder part of the wattle, fill it up with cork, and bind it in with fine wire, in so neat a manner as not to be easily detected, particularly by those who want more skill and experience.

The beak of the carrier should be long, straight, and thick though an inch and a half is a long beak, it must not measure less than one inch and a quarter in length.

The straightness of the beak is a great addition to its length



and if it be the least out of shape in this respect, it is then termed hook-beaked, and is lightly esteemed. It should also be thick, and of a black colour, which is a great recommendation; but when it falls short in this particular, it is called spindle beaked, which decreases its value.

The length and thinness of its neck are so eminent a mark of its elegance, as not to be passed over in silence; some call this a property, and indeed it must be granted that it greatly increases the beauty of this broad-chested bird, and more especially so when the pigeon carries its head rather backward, as it shews itself to a great advantage.

The plumage of this bird is generally either dun or black, though there are also splashed, whites, blues, and piers of each feather: the dun and black agree best with the before-described properties; yet the blues and blue-piers being very scarce, are great rarities, consequently of great value, though they are inferior in the properties relating to the above-mentioned feathers.

This species of the pigeon was originally bred at Bassora, an ancient city of Persia, and from thence transmitted to Europe: they are called carriers, from having been used to convey intelligence, by letters, from one city to another. It is from their extraordinary attachment to the place of their nativity, and more especially where they have trained up their young, that these birds were employed in several countries as the most expeditious carriers. These birds are first taken from where they were bred, to the place from whence they are to return, with intelligence. The letter, which should be thin paper, must be gently tied under the wing, in such a manner as not to incommode the bird's flight; and it is then set at liberty to return. The winged messenger no sooner finds itself at large, than its love for its native home influences all its motions. It immediately flies up into the clouds, to an almost imperceptible height, and then, with great certainty and exactness, darts itself by some unknown intuitive principle towards its native spot, which is frequently at the distance of many miles, bringing its message to the person to whom it is directed. By what visible means they discover the place, or by what compass they are conducted in the right way, is equally mysterious and unknown; but it has been proved, by experiment, that they will perform a



journey of forty miles in the space of one hour and a half; which is a degree of dispatch three times sooner than the swiftest four-footed animal can possibly perform. This method of sending dispatches was in great vogue in the East, and particularly at Scanderoon till very lately; Dr. Russel having informed us that the practice is now discontinued, (*History of Aleppo*, p. 66). It was used there on the arrival of a ship, to give the merchants at Aleppo a more expeditious notice than could be devised by any other means.

In this country, these aerial messengers have been made use of for a very singular purpose, having been let loose at Tyburn, when the executions took place there, at the moment the fatal cart was drawn away, to notify to distant friends their shameful exit. They have, also, been made use of by lottery-adventurers, to convey the first drawn ticket to friends, waiting near lottery-offices, in a few minutes, at the west-end of the town.

In order to train a pigeon for this purpose, take a strong full-fledged, young carrier, and convey it in a basket, or bag, about half a mile from home, and there turn it loose: having repeated this two or three times, then take it two, four, eight, ten, or twelve miles, and so on, till they will return from the most remote parts of the kingdom. For if they are not practised when young, the best of them will fly but insecurely, and stand a great chance of being lost. Be careful that the pigeon intended to be sent with the letter is kept in the dark, and without food, for about eight hours before it is let loose. when it will immediately rise, and turning round, as is their custom, will continue on the wing till it has reached its home,

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### THE HORSEMAN.

It is a matter of great dispute, which remains undecided amongst the fanciers, whether the horseman is an original pigeon, or whether it is not a bastard strain, bred between a tumbler and a carrier, or a powder and a carrier, and so bred over again from a carrier; for it is certain the more frequent this is performed, the stronger and more graceful the horseman becomes. There is a species of this sort brought from Scanderoon, famous for the rapidity of their flight, and the



vast distance they will go; which is the only incident that seems to support the opinion that they are an original strain; but this does not obviate the difficulty, for they may be bred after the same manner at Scanderoon, and so imported into Europe.

This bird is in shape very like the carrier, only less in all its properties; its body is smaller, its neck shorter: neither is there so much luxuriant incrusted flesh upon the beak and round the eye, so that the distance between the wattle and the eye is much more conspicuous in this pigeon than in the carrier. They are also more subject to be barrel-headed and pinch-eyed. This species of the pigeon are decorated with a variety of colours; but the most distinguished are the blue and blue-pieds, which generally prove the best breeders.

These pigeons, especially when young, should be regularly made to fly twice a-day, and as they gain strength should be let loose, and put on the wing, without any others in company, and they will fly four or five miles distance in a few minutes, sweeping over a large circuit for an hour or two: this is what the fanciers term going an end: this method is of essential service to them, especially when they are in training for the homing use. These are the sort of pigeons chiefly made use of in this country for the deciding of bets, or the conveying of letters. The true genuine carriers are at this time very scarce, and of too great value to be flown, except the wager is very considerable.

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### THE DRAGOON.

This pigeon was originally bred between a tumbler and a horseman, and the ablest fanciers are unanimous in their opinions, as to its being of a bastard strain, and that by frequently matching their breed to the horseman, they will acquire great strength and agility.

This pigeon is an excellent breeder, and makes a very tender nurse; for which purpose they are frequently kept as feeders for rearing of young powters, Leghorn runts, and some other pigeons, who either breed so fast that they cannot conveniently give their young ones due attendance, or are destitute of that natural fondness, which is the characteristic of this bird.



The dragoon is a lighter and a smaller made pigeon than the horseman, and is said to be more rapid in its flight for ten or twenty miles; nevertheless, if the horseman be well bred, it will always distance them at a greater number of miles. They should be flown and trained whilst young, in the same manner as the horseman. Amongst the several remarkable instances of the celerity of the flight of this bird, there is one supported by undeniable testimony, of a dragoon that flew from Bury St. Edmunds to London, which is seventy-six miles, in two hours and a half.

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### THE TUMBLER.

This pigeon derives its name from an intuitive principle of instinct peculiar to its species, which is their extraordinary motions as they are rising in the air, and is effected by their turning themselves over backward, much after the same manner that an expert genius in tumbling performs what is called the backspring. Some fanciers are of opinion that the celebrated almond-tumbler cannot perform the manœuvre; but we are assured by a country gentleman, who is well versed in the fancy, that they perform this motion with as great alertness as any other tumbler. The tumbler is a very small pigeon; its body is short, it has a slim neck, is very full-breasted, with a short round head, and small spindle beak, and the irides of the eyes should be of a clear pearl-colour; indeed, if the tumbler be without any particular blemish, there is no difference between it and the almond-tumbler, except in the plumage.

These pigeons, by their flight, afford great satisfaction to the bird-fanciers in general; for, besides the pleasure they give by their tumbling, they will frequently rise to such an amazing height in the air, as to be almost imperceptible to the keenest eye; and there is one peculiar property belonging to them, that is, they will not ramble far, like the horseman, but if good birds, and familiarized to each other, will keep such close company, that a flight of a dozen may be covered with a large handkerchief. At this height, especially if the weather be warm and clear, they will continue upon the wing for four or five hours upon a stretch; it is



reported that some well-bred pigeons of this sort have flown for nine hours successively, when they have been up at their highest pitch: the favourite sort seldom or never tumble but when they are beginning to rise, or when they are coming down to pitch.

This pigeon displays in its plumage an amiable and charming variety of colours, as reds, yellows, duns, blues, blacks; whites silvers, and, in truth, a delightful composition of all these colours interspersed with the white.

Tumblers should be kept in a loft by themselves, and not be suffered to have any connection with other pigeons; for if they are once familiarized to fly with others, they will by degrees drop their flight, when they perceive their company scaling in the air beneath them; and by this means lose one of their best qualities, for which they are so remarkable. Spare no expense in the purchase of one or two birds, that have been used to high-flying, for they will be of infinite service in training your young ones to be lofty soarers. When the pigeons are well acquainted with their habitation, turn them loose, and put them upon the wing once a day only, and that without any other company; a clear grey morning, especially for young birds, is the properest time; when after having exercised themselves, and they are coming down, strew a little hemp-seed, or rape and canary, to inveigle them in, and then confine them for the rest of the day. According to the observations of some fanciers, there are particular times when a tumbler will take a more extraordinary flight than usual; as for example, when she sits upon eggs, and a short time after having fed off the soft meat; and although there is no convincing reason to be assigned for this, yet it has been repeatedly confirmed by ocular demonstration. When crows, swallows, or other birds, are wantingly sporting at a vast height in the air, this is another time when tumblers will make a very extravagant flight, both for height and length of time; but this may be readily accounted for, there being always at such a time something predominant in the temperament of the air agreeable to the genius of those birds, that take pleasure in the upper regions of the atmosphere. The fancier should never let loose his tumblers on a misty morning, or when there appears the least signs of a



rising fog, for by these means they are deprived of the sight of their habitation, and many a good flight broke and lost. High winds are also very detrimental to a flight of pigeons, by forcing them too far from home, and causing them to stay out all night; so that if they are not quite lost, they are exposed to various accidents, particularly to the claws of the cats. It should be a standing rule never to turn out a hen-tumbler when she is with egg, she being generally sick at that time, and very unfit to fly, so that she may drop her egg, by her long flight, to the great prejudice of your stock.

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### THE BALD-BATED TUMBLER.

The plumage of these birds consists of great variety of colours; they have a pearl eye, a white head, with a white flight and tail, and are reckoned very good fliers. When they all drop in the air in fine clear weather, the contrast of the feathers shows, if the distance be not too great, and they make a very pleasing appearance; though the blue ones have gained the greatest reputation for their lofty flights.

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### THE BLACK, OR BLUE-BEARDED TUMBLER.

When the colours are ornamented with a long dash of white reaching from the under-jaw and cheek, a little way down the throat, these tumblers are thus distinguished; and when this is well shaped, and they soar clear, in the flight, tail, &c. they are very handsome birds.

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### THE ALMOND, OR ERMINE TUMBLER.

This bird, though by some called the ermine tumbler, is generally known by the name of the almond-tumbler, but for what reason the most experienced fanciers are at a loss to explain. It is a very beautiful and valuable species, and derived its origin from the common tumblers, (which it so nearly



resembles in shape and make, as to render any description unnecessary,) by being judiciously matched so as to sort the feather; to wit, yellows, duns, whites, blacks, black-grisled, black-splashed, &c.; but, as these require a length of time, they are not attainable without patience and perseverance; however, when they are brought to a tolerable degree of perfection, they are esteemed by some as the greatest curiosity in the whole fancy of pigeons. Though the ancient fanciers have with one consent given the title of king of the pigeons to the carrier, yet so great a favourite is the almond-tumbler with the modern fanciers, that many of them are for transferring the title to the latter, on account of the superior beauty of its plumage. It must indeed be acknowledged that there is no comparison between the plumage of the two birds; but at the same time we beg leave to remind those gentlemen who are so very sanguine in their opinion of this bird, that the true genuine carrier did not obtain the title altogether from the elegance of its feathers, but from the uncommon sagacity with which it is endued.

As it requires a good judgment and nice observation to be acquainted with the qualities and perfections of this species, so it must be acknowledged that they lie under some disadvantage, in not having their properties well understood by the fancy in general; for their charming variety of feather makes them exceed (in the opinion of some of the ablest fanciers) every other fancy of the pigeon tribe. Some of these birds are so magnificently elegant in their plumage, that the rump, tail, back, and flight, have been compared to a bed of the finest and best broken tulips that the imagination can conceive, or to a piece of the best and highest polished Egyptian pebble: for the more they are variegated in the flight and tail, especially if the ground is yellow, the greater is the value set upon them; for those of a fine bright yellow ground have always the precedence of all other colours, it being a colour the hardest to acquire, for you may breed twenty that are light-grounded for one deep ground; besides, the light-grounded ones are for the most part wanting in yellow, both in the tail and the flight, which of course decreases the value of the bird; but a tail with a mixture of good black in it is not despicable. To be complete in feather, the rump, back, and breast must be variegated, and the flight not barred.



There are some of these pigeons that are variously and curiously intermixed with three colours only, that compose the ermine or almond, as yellow, white, and black, but these are very scarce. The almond-tumbler never arrives at his full beauty of feather till it has moulted several times, and, what is remarkable, it increases in beauty every year; but in the decline of life, when it is very old, changes to a mottled, splashed, or some other colour.

Some fanciers advise the matching of a yellow, a splashed, or black grizzle, with an almond, and by that means lay a good foundation to heighten the colours: those of a black colour, bred from almonds, are generally better shaped in the beak and head than the almonds themselves, and the tail and flight have frequently a strong glow of yellow: this colour matches to an almond, promises to produce a fine bird. They often breed a pale yellow, or buff, and this colour is very proper to match with such as are too high-grounded; let it be remembered, that the less ash or blue they have the better, for sometimes a slight mixture of these colours will shew, even when they have been carefully and well bred. There are some that are ash-coloured, but these are lightly esteemed.

The properties of the yellow and black mottled tumblers should coincide with those of the almond-tumbler, the plumage excepted; the former of these must have a yellow ground, and a body mottled with white, with a yellow tail and flight; the latter must have a black ground, its body also mottled with white, together with a black flight and tail. Both of these two last-described fancies make exceeding pretty birds, and are also very useful, especially when they agree in their other properties, to occasionally intermix with the almond. Several fanciers, after rejecting the foul-feathered birds of this species, and judiciously coupling the best coloured ones together, have brought them to a great degree of perfection, and have been so satisfied for their labours, as to continue no other but the breed of the almond-tumbler, to the exclusion of all the other fancy birds. Indeed, the elegant plumage of some of these birds baffles all description, and nothing but the eye, or the pencil of an ingenious painter, can do justice to their beauty.



### THE LEGHORN RUNT.

This is a noble large full-bodied pigeon ; it is close feathered, short in the neck, very broad-chested, and frequently measures seven inches and a quarter in the length of its legs ; when it walks, it carries its tail raised up in the nature of a duck's, but hangs it down when he plays. It is goose-headed and hollow-eyed, with a longer neck than any other pigeon, which it carries bending after the manner of a goose ; the eye is encircled with a thin skin broader than that of the Dutch tumbler, the beak is very short, with a small wattle over its nostril, and the upper chap projects a little over the under.

The Leghorn runt is a much hardier bird than many fanciers imagine, and breeds tolerably well, but they are bad nurses, and ought not to be suffered to bring up their own young ones ; therefore it is proper to shift their eggs under a dragoon, or some other tender nurse, in the same manner as directed for the powder, being careful to give them a young one of some sort to take off their soft meat, and by this method they will succeed very well. The genuine breed is at present very scarce in this country, and what is remarkable of all the different species of runts, is, that they increase in size till they are three years old. The matching of them with the Spanish runt greatly improves the size of the breed, and makes them increase the faster ; some of this sort, when brought to table, have appeared as large as a pullet ; and a certain veteran fancier of credit has assured us, that he killed a hen of the Leghorn breed, that weighed two pounds eight ounces avoirdupois weight.

As to their plumage, they are frequently of a grizzled colour, ermined round the neck ; but those most esteemed are either red, white, or black-mottled. This species of the runt is of greater value than any other kind of runts, though there is a material difference in them, some of them being very different birds, though natives of Leghorn. It was originally bred in Pisa, a city of Tuscany, on the north of Leghorn.

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### THE SPANISH RUNT.

This pigeon came originally from Spain, hence the name of Spanish runt ; it is a short thick-legged, flabby fleshed, loose-



feathered bird, with a remarkable long body; some of them measuring twenty-three inches in length, from the apex of the beak to the extreme end of the tail, and does not carry itself so upright as the Leghorn runt. The feathers of this are so uncertain, and of such a variety of colours, that a judgment cannot be formed of the sort by the colour, though some of the best are reported to be of a blood-red, or mottled colour. This bird being so very short-legged, is the cause of its breaking its eggs, by sitting too heavy on them in the nest: to remedy this misfortune, some put a pair of neat chalk or ivory eggs into the nest, and by that means prevent the bird's sitting too heavy on the real eggs: others treat them in the same manner as they do the Leghorn runt, already described. There is a long-legged pigeon, which nearly resembles the Spanish runt, and is said to be brought from their settlements in the West-Indies.

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### THE RUNT OF FRIESLAND.

This bird is a native of the United Province of Friesland; it is somewhat larger than a middle-sized runt, its feathers are all inverted, and stand the wrong way: if this pigeon has its fanciers, it must be because it is uncommon and disgusting, for the bird really makes a frightful appearance; they are at present very scarce in this country. There are several other kinds of runts, as the feather-footed runt of Smyrna: it is a middle-sized pigeon with so many feathers sprouting from the outside of its feet, as to have the appearance of small wings; some of these feathers measure four inches and a half in length; for this reason these birds ought to be kept very dry and clean, or these long feathers on the feet occasion their dragging their eggs or young ones out of their nest. There is the large Roman runt, which is so big and unwieldy, that it can scarcely fly; also the common domestic runts, which always compose that medley of pigeons kept on purpose for the table, and are so very common in inn-yards and other places, as to need no description: these last sort are good feeders, and make very useful nurses for the better sort of pigeons.



## THE TRUMPETER.

This pigeon is nearly as big as a middle-sized runt, and very like it in shape and make; its legs and feet are covered with feathers; the crown of its head is very round, like that of the finnikin and nun, only it is larger, and the larger the head is the more it is esteemed, as being usually more melodious: it is in general pearl-eyed, and black-mottled as to its feather; but the surest mark to distinguish a good trumpeter, is the tuft of feathers which sprouts from the root of the beak, and the larger this tuft grows, the greater is the value set upon the bird, the more fallacious it is, the more it will trumpet: it derives its name from its imitating the sound of a trumpet after playing, which it always does in the spring of the year, when that genial season returns, which gives as it were a new life and vigour to the whole creation: those who are fond of hearing it trumpet at other times, feed it very high with hemp-seed, which makes them lecherous, and always has the desired effect.

This bird and the ensuing species of pigeons are by the gentlemen of the fancy denominated toys.

## THE SPOT.

From whence this pigeon derived its origin is uncertain, but it was first imported into this country from Holland; it has its name from a spot just above its beak upon the top of its head: the tail-feathers are for the most part of the same colour with the spot, but the body is generally all white. The tail and spot in some of these birds are either yellow, red, or black; there are some blue, but these are rare: they make an exceeding pretty appearance when they spread their tails to fly; and what is remarkable in this species is, that they always breed their young ones of the same colour with themselves.

## THE LAUGHER.

This pigeon is a native of Palestine in Asia, and was brought into Europe by the ships which trade to and from



**Turkey.** This bird in shape and make very much resembles a middle-sized runt; its plumage is generally red-mottled, but sometimes it is blue, and it has a very bright clear pearl-eye, inclining to a white. When the cock begins to seek for the hen, he has a kind of rough coo, like the bubbling of water poured from a jug, and then makes a rattling noise, very much like a gentle convulsive laugh, and from this the bird derives its name.

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### THE NUN.

This is a small pigeon, and from the pleasing contrast in its feathers greatly attracts the notice of the beholder: its plumage is so remarkable, that its head is almost covered with a veil of feathers, which gives it the name of the nun. Its body is chiefly all white; its head, tail, and the six flight-feathers of its wings should be entirely red, yellow, or black; that is, when its head is red, its flight and tail should be red also; and when its head is yellow, its flight and tail should be yellow; and when its head is black, its flight and tail should also be of the same colour; and agreeable to this they are called either red-headed, yellow-headed, or black-headed nuns: and whenever the colour of the feathers differs from these rules, they are termed fould; for example, should a red-headed bird have a black or any different colour in its head, except red, it would be termed foul-headed; or a white feather in its flight, it is then foul-flighted; and in like manner with the yellow and black-headed ones: it is to be observed that, the best of them have frequently a few foul feathers; but when this happens in the least degree, it decreases their value, though they often rear as pure feathered birds as those that are perfect. The nun should have a pearl-eye, with a small beak and head; its head should be covered with a hood of white feathers, rising from the back part of the head, and the larger this tuft or hood is, the handsomer is the appearance that the bird makes.

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### THE HELMET.

This pigeon is something larger than the nun; the head tail, and flight-feathers of the wings, for the most part



preserve an uniformity of colour, either yellow, red, blue, or black, but all the rest of its body is generally white; so that the most material difference between it and the nun is, the former has no hood on the back part of the head, and is frequently gravel-eyed. They receive the name of helmets from their heads being ornamented with a tuft of fine soft feathers, which are always of a different colour from the body, and from its faint resemblance to that ancient piece of armour formerly worn as a covering for the head.

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### THE JACOBINE.

This pigeon is usually called for shortness the jack; it is a very pretty bird, but very good birds of this species are exceeding scarce, the genuine breed being greatly degenerated by an imprudent method of intermixing them with the ruff, with a view of improving the chain by the length of the ruff's feathers: but, by this ill-judged practice, the chain is greatly damaged, the bird bred larger, and is much flimsier in its hood and chain, with an additional length of beak; in a word, it is worse in all its original properties; for the real jack is one of the smallest pigeons, and the less they are, the more they are valued: it has a range of inverted feathers on the back part of its head, which turns towards the neck, like the cap or cowl of a monk; from hence this bird derives its name of jacobine, or capper, as some call it; the religious of that order wearing cowls or caps, joined to their garments, for the covering of their bald pates. Therefore the upper part of this feathered covering is called the hood, and the more compact and close this feathered ornament grows to the head of the bird, so much the more does it enhance its value amongst the curious: the Dutch style the lower part of this range of feathers, the cravat, but with us it is called the chain. The feathers which compose this chain should be long and thick, so that by laying hold of the bill, and giving the neck a gentle stretch, the two sides should lap over each other, as has been often experienced in some of the best birds of this species; but real



good ones are very scarce in this country. Though this breed has been much neglected with us, our neighbours the Dutch and French breed them to great perfection.

The real jacobine is possessed of a very small head, with a short spindle beak and clear pearl-eye, and the less these properties are the better. As to its plumage, there are yellows, reds, mottled, blues, and blacks; though the yellow-coloured birds always claim the precedence, yet of whatever colour they prove to be, they must always have a white tail and flight, and a clean white head; the legs and feet of some of these birds are covered with feathers, others are naked and without any.

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### THE RUFF.

There is so great a similarity, both in shape and make, between the jacobine and this bird, that the latter has been frequently sold for the former: but the ruff has a longer beak, and larger head, it is also rather a larger pigeon: the irides of its eyes are in some of a gravel, in others of a pearl colour; the chain does not flow so near to the shoulders of its wings, though both the hood and chain are longer, but are nothing near so close and compact as the others, and are easily disturbed with every puff of wind; they likewise fall more backward off the head, in a ruffled discomposed form, and from this the pigeon takes its name. The plumage of this bird is also so similar with that of the jack, that it is not at all surprising, that those who were not well acquainted with the properties of the genuine jack, should be put off with a ruff in its place; but the above description sufficiently distinguishes the two birds, and the reader, by paying a proper attention to it, may easily discover the deception, and prevent his being imposed upon.

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### THE TURBIT.

This pigeon is by some supposed to derive its name from a corruption of the word cortbeck, or curtbeke, as it is called



by the Dutch, which words seems to be originally derived from the French, *court-bec*, and signifies a short bill, for which this pigeon is remarkable. It is a small pigeon, very little bigger than a jacobine; it has a round button head, and the shorter the beak is the better; it has a tuft of feathers growing from the breast, which opens and spreads both ways, sprouting out like the frill of a shirt; this is called the *purle*: it has also a *guilet*, which reaches from the beak to the *purle*; this bird is admired according to the largeness of its *purle*. As to the plumage, there are yellows, duns, reds, blues, blacks, and some that are chequered; the back of its wings and the tail should be one entire colour, the yellow and red coloured ones excepted, whose tails must be white; and there ought to be bars of black across the wings of the blue-coloured ones; but to the rest the body and the flight feathers ought to be white, and the fanciers term them yellow-shouldered, red-shouldered, blue shouldered turbits, &c. agreeable to the colour they are of. They are very genteel, airy pigeons, and make very good fliers, if properly trained when young. A veteran fancier of some note has informed us that he trained a flight of these birds, which for their lofty soaring seemed to dispute the palm with his tumblers. There are some of this species which are of one uniform colour, being all black, blue, or white, which have frequently been mistaken and sold for owls.

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### THE OWL.

This bird has a mild, pleasant, insinuating aspect, is rather less than a jacobine, with a gravel-eye, and a very short hooked beak, much resembling that of an owl, and from this the bird derives its name. The *purle* in this bird is rather larger, and opens and expands itself more like a roe, than that of the turbits, but in every other respect, both in shape, make, and plumage, this bird is so very like the turbit, the beak excepted, as to render any further description needless. Particular care ought to be taken, that the breeding places where these birds sit, are made dark and private, for they are naturally so very



wild and timid, that the least noise affrights them, and when disturbed will fly off their eggs. This bird seems to dispute the palm in point of beauty with the jack.

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### THE CAPUCHIN.

This bird, like the jacobine, receives its name from another order of bare-headed monastics: it has a longer beak than the jack, and is somewhat larger in its body; it has no chain, but a very pretty hood, and is in plumage and other properties the same as the jack. Some fanciers positively assert it to be a distinct species; others again as confidently affirm it to be a bastard-breed, between a jacobine and some other pigeon; however, it is beyond a doubt, that a jack and another pigeon will breed a bird so exactly similar to it as will greatly embarrass the fanciers of this first persuasion to distinguish between it and what they term their separate species. Though all the pigeons of the toy kind have their respective admirers, the capuchin is but lightly esteemed by the fancy in general.

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### THE FINNIKIN.

This pigeon, in make, shape, and size, differs very little from the common runt; the crown of its head is formed very like the head of a snake; it has a gravel-eye, with a tuft of feathers growing on the back part of its crown, which falls down its neck, hanging like a horse's main; it has a clean leg and foot, and its plumage is always blue or black-pied. This pigeon, when wanton, is addicted to very odd antics: it first rises over its hen, spreading and flapping its wings, and turns round three or four times; it then reverses, and turns as many times the contrary way. Many fanciers are prejudiced against this sort for their whimsical gestures, as being apt to teach their other race ill-habits, and making a hen to squat by these whimsies; but, in truth, they are no more dangerous in this respect than any other pigeon, when the lecherous fit is on it.



## THE TURNER.

This pigeon is in so many respects like the finnikin, that very little more remains to be said about it, than to point out the difference between them; it is not snake-headed, and the tuft on the back part of the crown is wanting; and when the wanton fit is on it, and it plays to the female, it turns only one way, whereas the finnikin turns both.

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THE BROAD-TAILED SHAKER, OR  
FAN-TAIL.

This pigeon, especially when lustful, has a frequent tremulous motion or shaking in the neck, which, joined to the breadth of its tail when spread, gives the bird the name of Broad-tailed Shaker. This bird is possessed of a long, taper, handsome neck, which it erects in a serpentine form, rather leaning towards its back, somewhat like the neck of a swan: it has a very short beak, and is exceedingly full-breasted, with a tail composed of a vast number of feathers, very seldom less than four and twenty, and never exceeding six and thirty, which it spreads in a very striking manner, like the tail of a turkey-cock, and raises it up to such a degree, that the tail appears joined to the head, in the nature of a squirrel's, and from hence some fanciers give them the name of fan-tails; but when it is so crowded with feathers, it occasions it frequently to droop its tail, and hinders it from throwing it up to meet its head, which is so great an imperfection in the opinion of the fancy, as never to be overlooked, be all the other properties of the bird ever so perfect; though a very large tailed bird of this species, which carries its tail according to the rules of the fancy, is a great variety, and of great value.

Though the general colour of its plumage is entirely white, there are yellow, red, blue, and black-pieds, and some all blue; but the whites are the favourite birds, as they have by far the noblest carriage both in their tail and head. There is another kind of broad-tail shakers, which differ in nothing from the above-described bird, the neck excepted, which is



shorter and thicker ; but the shaker with the longest neck is by far the handsomest and most valuable bird.

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### THE NARROW-TAILED SHAKER.

Fanciers are divided in their opinions concerning this pigeon ; some say it is a distinct species, others that it is only a bastard kind between the broad-tailed shaker and some other pigeon ; its back is longer, and its neck shorter and thicker than that of the last-described bird : it has also a less number of feathers in its tail, which it does not spread out so much as the others does, but lets them fall as it were double, the one side folding over the other, in the nature of a fan when three parts opened, and is very apt to fall into the fault of letting its tail droop very much. In regard to the colour of its plumage, it is usually white, though, like the broad-tailed shaker, there are some of various colours ; and a certain fancier of distinction had amongst his collection some almond of this sort, but that is a great rarity.

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### THE BARBARY PIGEON, OR BARB.

This pigeon is originally a native of Barbary in Africa, and receives its name from the country from whence it came, but the name is contracted, and it is now called by no other name than the barb. This bird is in size rather larger than a jacobine, it has a short thick beak, like a bull-finch, incrusted with a small wattle, and a naked circle of a thick spungy red skin round about its eyes, like that of the carrier ; when the feathers of the pinion are inclinable to a dark colour, the irides of its eyes are of a pearl colour ; but when the pinion-feathers are white, the irides are red, as is observable in some other birds : the redder in colour, and the wider the circle of tuberos flesh round the eye spreads, the greater is the value set upon the bird ; though this circle is very narrow at first and does not arrive at its full size till the bird is four years old. Some of this species are ornamented with a pretty tuft of feathers, sprouting from the back part of the crown of its head, resembling that of the finnikin, but others



there are without any. The plumage of the original barb is either dun or black; for though there are piers of both these colours, fanciers in general set but little store on them, as they are supposed to be bred from a barb and a mahomet.

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### THE MAHOMET, OR MAWMET.

A late celebrated fancier of good repute used to affirm, that this pigeon is in reality only a white barb, which colour gave the red tuberos circle round its eyes a very fine effect; but some modern fanciers give a different account, and describe the bird in the following manner.

The pigeon named Mahomet, and by corruption Mawmet, is of a fine cream-colour, with black bars across its wings; its feathers are very remarkable, for though the outside, or surface of them, is of a cream, yet the underside, or that part next the body, is of a dark sooty colour, as are also its skin and flue feathers, which is peculiar to this pigeon; it is about the size of a turbit, and, instead of a frill, has a fine gullet, with a handsome seam of feathers; it has a thick short made head, with an orange-coloured eye, encompassed with a small naked circle of black flesh; its beak has a small black wattle on it, and is short and thick, like that of the bull-finch. Some are of opinion that this bird is of a mixed strain, between a turbit and some other pigeon.

This bird takes his name from Mahomet, the prophetic impostor, who, it is said, learned a bird of this kind to feed out of his ear, and thereby shamefully imposed upon the Arabians, saying it was the visible appearance of the Holy Ghost, whispering the dictates of the Almighty, and teaching him the precepts of his new law; and from hence this bird receives the name of Mahomet; though it is more frequently called Mawmet.

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### THE LACE PIGEON.

This species of the pigeon is in great plenty in some parts of Holland, where it was originally bred, though at present



very scarce in this country : it is about the size of a common runt, and not unlike it in make and shape, but the colour of its plumage is always white ; it differs in the make of its feathers from all other pigeons, whose plumage is composed of a close smooth feather ; but the web or fibres of the feathers in this bird appear quite unconnected with each other, and as it were disunited throughout its whole plumage ; in short, the make of its feather is very peculiar, and gives the bird a pretty though singular appearance, and from hence it derives its name of lace pigeon.

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### THE FRILL-BACK.

This pigeon like that last described, is remarkable only for the peculiar turn of its feathers, all of which look as if they had been distinctly and purposely raised at the end with a small round-pointed instrument, after such a manner as to make a small hollow in each of them ; or as if the bird had been under the hands of some of our modern hair-dressers, and had its plumage frizzled and curled at the ends. It is in size less than the common runt, though very much like it in shape ; and its plumage is always white.

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### THE SMITER.

This pigeon, in shape, make, and diversity of plumage, nearly resembles the tumbler, the size excepted, it being a much larger bird. The smiter is supposed to be the same species that the Dutch call the drager : when it flies, it has a peculiar tremulous motion with its wings, and commonly rises in a circular manner, the male for the generality flying much higher than the female ; and though it does not tumble, it has a particular manner of falling and flabbing its wings, with which it makes so loud a noise as to be heard at a great distance, which is frequently the cause of its shattering or breaking its quill-feathers.



## THE CHINESE PIGEON.

This beautiful little pigeon is a native of Peking in China, and was imported into Europe in some of the Company's ships; it is only to be seen in the collections of the rich and curious, who have always large cages, or a distinct aviary built on purpose for them. It is a very scarce and dear bird, and in our opinion one of the greatest curiosities of the pigeon kind; therefore, for the satisfaction of our readers, we shall give a particular description of it.

This pigeon in size is rather less than the common swallow; the sides of the head are yellow, but the top and the space round the eyes are of an ash-colour; it has a blueish ash-coloured beak, and the irides of its eyes are of a fine white: the extreme feathers on each side the head and neck are red, and there are blue feathers about the rise of the wings. The hind part of the neck and back are brown; and the extremities of the feathers black; those on the shoulders are lighter, and variegated at the ends with black and white. The first and last covert feathers are black, but are white on their external edges; the long feathers of the wings are black, the edges of which are tipped with white, and the belly and breast are of a lovely pale rose-colour. The tail, which is composed of twelve feathers, is a mixture of dusky and bright; the legs and feet are red and the claws black.

## THE INDIAN TURTLE.

This bird, which is also called Cocolzia, is somewhat larger than a sparrow. The upper part of the body is covered with brown feathers, edged with black. The fore parts of the wings are partly black, and the rest is of a dusky colour. The end of the tail is promiscuously tinged with white and brown, and the feathers on the lower part of the body are white, ending in black lines. The head is small, the bill is black, and the legs and feet are whitish. They make a noise when flying, and frequent mountainous places. They grow very fat, and their flesh, which greatly resembles that of a quail, is thought very delicate.



## THE TURTLE, OR ALDROVANDUS.

This is another Indian turtle. The female is entirely white, except the bill and the feet; the former being black, and the latter red. The male is the size of a common pigeon, and of a light red colour. The iris of the eyes is of a saffron-colour, with a reddish cast, and a narrow black ring surrounds the neck.

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## TURTLE OF KERNANDEZ, OR COCOTZIN.

This is a little bigger than a sparrow, and the upper part of the body is all over brown, only the feathers are edged with black. The head is small, and the bill black. They are found in mountainous places.

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## THE GREENLAND PIGEON.

The eyes of this bird are black, with a yellow iris, and on the covert feathers of each wing it has a white spot, but is black on every other part. It has twenty-seven feathers on each wing, and the legs and feet are of a bright red.

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## THE PICUI PINIMA.

This, which is an inhabitant of Brazil, is about the size of a lark; it has a brown bill, and is shaped like a common pigeon: the eyes are black, surrounded with a bright yellow iris; the head, top of the neck, back, sides, and the wing-feathers, are all very long, and of an ash-colour. The tail is of a brownish ash-colour, but in some, white and black about the middle. Those on the belly are white, with brown edges; and the legs and feet are of the same colour. The flesh of this bird is esteemed very delicate. Some naturalists suppose the small Barbadoes turtle to be the same with the Picui Pinima of Mangrove, or the wild pigeon of Brazil.



## THE MEXICAN PIGEON.

This bird is covered with dusky feathers, except on the breast, and the extremities of the wings, which are of a dirty white. The iris of the eyes is red.

## THE RING-TAILED PIGEON OF JAMAICA.

The length of this bird is fifteen inches, and the breadth twenty inches; the length of the bill is three-quarters of an inch, and it has a double protuberance at the base about the nostrils. The iris of the eye is red, and the length of the tail is about five inches. The head, neck, and breast, are covered with feathers of a purple-colour, and the belly with those that are white. The upper part of the neck is a greenish-colour, shining, and changeable. The back and tail are of a palish blue, and the wings are of a dusky colour.

## THE BALD-PATE PIGEON OF JAMAICA.

This is another bird of the same kind, which is eleven inches in length, and eighteen in breadth; the bill is half an inch in length, red at the base and protuberance, but white below the nostrils. In the old birds, the top of the head is white, from whence their name is derived. The body is wholly of a darkish blue, except the upper part of the neck, which is of a changeable blue and green.

*Full and ample Directions for the Building of a Pigeon-House.*

Having presented our readers with a copious, useful, and entertaining natural history of the pigeon we proceed in the next place to give instructions for the erecting of a pigeon-house, or *dove-cote*, as they are termed by the country people; of which piece of economy much may be said, there being a number of things to be noticed, in order to procure a pigeon-house that will be both beneficial and profitable to the owner. In the first place, it is necessary to seek for a convenient situation, of which none can be better adapted to the purpose, than the centre of a spacious court or farm-yard; for pigeons



being naturally timorous, the least noise affrights them: therefore, it is not without reason, that pigeon-houses are generally erected at a proper distance from the rustling noise of trees shaken by high winds, and the loud roarings of mill-dams. With regard to the size of the pigeon-house, it depends entirely on the number of birds intended to be kept; but it is better to have it roomy, than to be pinched for want of it; and as to the form of it, the round are greatly preferable to the square ones; because it will not be so easy for the rats to come at them in the former as in the latter. It is also much more convenient, for you may, by the help of a ladder, it turning upon an axis, get at all the nests in the house with very little trouble, which is not readily done in a square house.

In order to prevent rats from getting into the pigeon-house, by climbing up the outside, the wall should be sheathed with plates of tin, for about two feet in height; and project out three or four inches at the top, which should be pointed with sharp wire, to prevent their clambering any higher; also the outside angles of a square pigeon-house ought to be particularly guarded against the devastations of these formidable enemies to the pigeon tribe.

The pigeon-house should be built near some good sweet water, that the pigeons may convey it to their young ones; and they carrying it in their bills will warm it a little, and not only make it more palatable, but also more wholesome.

The covering of a pigeon-house should be well put together, so that not the least rain may penetrate through it. The whole building must be covered with hard plaster, and white-washed within and without; white being the colour pigeons most delight in, and because the building is the easier discerned by the bird when at a distance, from its white appearance. As pigeons' dung is very corrosive, care should be taken that the foundation is well laid, the flooring good, and the whole building well cemented. It should also be a standing rule, that there be no door or other aperture towards the east: these should always face the south, pigeons being very fond of the sun, especially in the winter; but if the window of the pigeon-house faces the north, it should never be opened but in very warm



weather, when the air may have free admittance, which, at that season of the year, is both refreshing and wholesome to the pigeons. The pigeon-house should have a cincture, made either of free-stone or parget, reaching from the projecture under the window, to nearly the middle of the pigeon-house; the use of which is for the birds to rest upon when they come out of the fields: and at this aperture should be fixed a portcullis, or sliding blind, the sides of which must be lined with tin, fenced with sharp pointed wire, strongly fastened to the wall, as a barrier against the rats. This portcullis, or sliding blind, may be drawn up at pleasure, by means of a cord and pulley, properly fixed to it, and the pigeon set at liberty, or confined, as inclination may dictate, or occasion require.

The nests, or coves, in a pigeon-house generally consist of long square holes made in the walls, and these are so contrived, that the pigeon sits dark, which is a situation they much covet when hatching: these nests were highly esteemed, till the invention of earthen pots came up. As the pigeon does not always build a nest, it is necessary to have a small cavity sunk at the bottom of the coves to prevent the eggs from rolling aside; for, though the pigeon may sit well in her nest, if this accident happen they will certainly be spoiled; particular care should also be taken, that the coves in the walls be of a size sufficient for the cock and hen to stand in. The first range of these nests should be about four feet from the ground. These nests or coves must be placed in a quincunx order, or chequer-wise, and not directly over one another; nor should they be raised any higher than within one yard of the top of the wall. Before the mouth of every cove, which must be built even with the wall, should be fixed a small flat stone, to project out of the wall three or four inches, for the pigeons to rest upon in going in or coming out from their nests, or when the weather obliges them to remain prisoners at home.

There are pigeon-houses of different forms and sizes, built of various materials, but mostly of wood, to be seen in farm-yards, the yards of inns, and gentlemen's court-yards, chiefly inhabited by pigeons kept for the table, which walk



about the yard picking up the scattered grains of corn, and feeding among the fowls ; there are many persons who are very fond of this sort of pigeons. Others there are, who are possessed of very valuable flights of fancy birds, which, as they required a distinct description, have been copiously treated of, under their different names, in the preceding pages. These pigeon-houses are always built according to the fancy or convenience of the owner ; but in what manner soever they are constructed, the same advice as has been already given, is indispensably necessary to be complied with, in defending the pigeons from the nocturnal depredations of the weasel, pole-cat, and rat.



*Directions for stocking and managing the Pigeon House, or Dove-Cote; with some Account of those Pigeons that are most advantageous for this Purpose; very necessary Information, particularly to those who keep large Quantities of Pigeons for Profit.*

The months of May and August are the most proper seasons to stock your pigeon-house ; your pigeons, being then plenty, may be purchased very reasonably ; the spring pigeons, having been kept up during the winter, are much strengthened, and soon in a condition to yield profit to the buyer. Those in autumn are well fed and strong, having been plentifully supplied by the old ones in the time of harvest. As to the number necessary to stock a pigeon-house, that depends upon the inclination, ability, or convenience of the purchaser : if few pigeons are put into the house, it will be some time before any advantage is reaped, for none must be taken out of the pigeon-house before it is well stocked.

The dove-cote, or common blue pigeon, being both prolific and hardy, is most worthy the attention of country people, as it is generally remarked, that the small pigeons rear the greatest number of young ones ; but when the breed of pigeons proves too small, it will be proper to in-



termix with the dove-cote a few of the common tame sort; in the procuring of which, care must be taken not to select those of glaring colours, for the rest will not easily associate with them. Others recommend the dark grey coloured pigeon, inclining to ash-colour and black; especially if she has a redness in her eyes, and a ring of gold-colour about her neck; which, according to the judgment of some, are never-failing signs of her fertility.

On farms contiguous to cities and large towns, though the maintenance is expensive, it will turn to good account to keep a number of the large tame pigeons; for, as they hatch early in the season, the young ones are always fat, and fetch a good price. On farms more remote from cities and towns, the common pigeons are greatly preferable; as they increase very fast, and are kept at a small expense, their numbers over-balance the lowness of the price.

Pigeons should be kept very clean, for though they make a great deal of dirt, they do not like to live in it: care should be taken to prevent starlings and other birds from visiting their nests, as they will suck or destroy their eggs; also, that there are not too many cocks in proportion to the hens, for this is a constant source of mischief, as the cocks disagree and drive each other away, which proves detrimental to the stock. Few people make any conscience of enticing away neighbouring pigeons; but, for the reason just given, this practice becomes hurtful to themselves, and they are frequently losers by it.

Pigeons are kept to the best advantage near those lands which are sowed with horse-beans and grey peas; for these pulse being sown early in the season, the bird, by feeding on them, acquires great vigour, and hatches its young early in the season, which is a beneficial circumstance to the owner. Barley and buck-wheat are very strengthening food for pigeons, and cause them to lay frequently. Tares and white peas are also very proper food for pigeons. Though the common sort will provide for themselves through the greater part of the year, they must be fed in hard weather; and also towards the latter end of June, which is styled by the husbandmen benting-time, from the grass called bent, the seed of which is then



ripe, and is almost the only food the pigeon can get at, as the peas are not sufficiently mature. At this season, pigeons in general have many young ones, as the seed of the bent-grass is not cherishing, it is really necessary to supply them with food during the short time it lasts, which is while the pulse ripens: and as extreme hard frosts are seldom of long continuance the keeping of pigeons, in the country turns to good account. Pigeons usually take rest at noon, and, as it agrees with them, they should not be disturbed: mornings and evenings are the best times for giving them their food: be mindful also that they are plentifully supplied with water, that they be kept free from vermin, that the pigeon-house be kept clean, and frequently strewed with gravel: these rules properly observed will greatly increase your stock.

Various are the disputes concerning the longevity of pigeons, for it is difficult to know how to distinguish their age; though they seldom live more than eight years, and continue prolific for the first four only; after which time, if you keep pigeons for profit, they only encumber the house, and deprive you of the advantage you might reap by others that are younger. In order to fatten young pigeons for the table in winter, take them before they can fly, when they are stout birds, and pull the largest quill-feathers out of their wings, which will confine them to their nests; and the substance of the nourishment they receive, not being diffused for want of exercise, soon fattens them.

Farmers, for their own sakes, should be careful that the pigeon-house is kept clean, and the dung preserved; it being some of the finest manure in the world, and claims the precedence of the dung of all other animals. It is endued with a nitrous quality, and is of a very hot nature, which makes it an excellent soil for cold, moist, damp grounds. In manuring of land, it is frequently sown in the same manner as grain, also harrowed in with it. It is of a nature peculiarly suited to hop grounds. Tanners make use of it in preparing upper-leathers: and it is of great service in medicine.

Any lord of the manor, or freeholder, may build a pigeon-house or dove-cote upon his own land, but a tenant cannot do it without the lord's licence. When persons shoot at or



kill pigeons within a certain distance of the pigeon-house, they are liable to pay a forfeiture.

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*Rules to be observed in distinguishing a Cock from a Hen.*

The following rules, joined to a little experience, will soon enable the young fancier to become an adept in this particular,

1. The cock has always a longer and stouter breast-bone than the hen.
2. His head and cheeks are broader and fuller, and he has a bolder look than the hen.
3. The vent in the hen, and the bone near the vent, is always more open than in the cock.
4. In young pigeons, that which squeaks longest in the nest generally proves to be a hen; and where there are two in the nest, the largest usually turns out to be a cock.
5. The coo of the cock is longer, a great deal louder, and more masculine than the hen's; and the cock often makes a half round in his playing, which the hen seldom does, though a warm lively hen will sometimes show, and play very like a cock; and when lecherous will even attempt to tread another pigeon.

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*Instructions for coupling or matching Pigeons.*

It has already been observed, that pigeons are very constant, seldom or never suing for a divorce, when once mated to each other, except in times of long illness, death, or old age; yet it is sometimes attended with difficulty to make the fancy birds couple to your liking.

In order to effect this, let two coops be built close together; these are commonly named matching-places by the fanciers; let there be a partition made of lath placed between them, that the birds may see each other, and it may easily be so contrived that the birds may feed out of the same vessels: supply them well with hemp-seed, which



will soon make them wanton, and when you perceive the hen to sweep her tail and shew to the cock, as he plays in the adjoining pen, you may then remove her to his pen, and they will soon agree. When this convenience is wanting, and you are compelled at first to put them both into one coop, be careful to put the cock in first, for three or four days, that he may get master of the coop, particularly if the hen is a termagent, or else they will quarrel so much as to end in an irreconcilable hatred ever after. But when the cock is once master of his house, he will always maintain it, and by a stout and well-timed resistance, make his mistress yield to his authority.

When the pigeons are once matched, give them the liberty of the loft, and the privilege of fixing upon what nest they please; but, when you have a mind to fix them to any particular nest, make use of the following method: Get a machine made of lath, the length of the breeding-places; let this be enclosed with boards both at bottom and top; this machine may project out as far as the loft will admit; one of the top boards must lift up with hinges, for the conveniency of supplying them with food; this may be placed before any nest, and the pigeons put in it: after they have remained in this situation about a week, let the machine be removed, which ought to be done in the night, and they will not leave that nest.

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*Directions for the erecting and furnishing of a Loft for Pigeons.*

In the former part of this work, we gave full and ample instructions for the building, stocking, and management of the pigeon-house or dove-cote; but as this related to country breeders, and those who keep them for market, it is both necessary and incumbent on us that we give some plain and useful directions for the building and preparing a loft for the reception of the better and more curious breed of these birds.

When a fancier has an intention of building a loft on purpose for the keeping of pigeons, let it be a standing rule to place the front facing the south, or south-west, as being the warmest quarters; but as few persons erect a room for



that use only, it may be proper to take notice, that any place where there is room enough may be made subservient for that purpose. Some break a hole through the roof of the house, and there lay a platform of what size best suits them; but, in doing this, particular care must be taken to erect proper fences to keep out those terrible enemies to the pigeon tribe, the cats. Be careful not to over-stock the loft, and always allow at least two holes or breeding-places for every pair; for if they are cramped for want of room, they will not sit quiet nor breed so well as when they have a sufficiency of room allowed them. The reason is obvious; fallacious cocks will often be playing to and fretting the others as they sit: and others that want room to sit will fight for nests, and by this means both eggs and young ones are destroyed.

In erecting the breeding-places, let the shelves be at least fourteen inches in breadth, and the distance between shelf and shelf twenty inches, that tall powters may not be compelled to crouch for want of height, and spoil their carriage, by getting an ill-habit of playing low: let partitions be fixed upon these shelves, leaving the space of three feet between each partition, having a board nailed against the front, which serves as a blind on both sides of every partition; and by this method there will be two nests in the length of every three feet, and the pigeons will sit dark and private. Some place a partition in the middle of each nest, which is of service in hindering the young ones from running to the hen, and cooling her eggs, when she sits at the other side; for, in breeding-time, when the young ones are about three weeks old, the hen will lay again, if a good breeder, and leave the young ones to the care of the cock. For the easier cleaning out the nests, some have them built without any blind, being entirely left open in front: but as the pigeon does not like to be disturbed when sitting, and an open fronted nest is liable to some other inconveniences, we can say nothing in favour of it.

Let every nest be furnished with an unglazed earthen pan, or straw basket, both of which are made and adapted for this use, and the size should be in proportion to the



pigeons it is intended for: for example, a pan proper for a tumbler, or any other small pigeon, ought to be three inches high, and about eight inches over at the top, slooping like a wash-hand basin towards the bottom; and these should be varied in proportion to the size of the pigeons; in fixing the pan or basket in the breeding-place, put a small wedge of wood, or a brick, against the front of it, that the pigeons may get on and off the nest without treading on the edges of the pan or basket, and by that means tilt out the eggs. When the hen has hatched, be careful not to handle the young ones, when you want to look at them, for the handling of young pigeons often brings a scouring upon them. The basket is preferred by some, as being much the warmest, and not so subject to crack the egg when fresh laid; but the advocates for the pan say, that these difficulties are easily obviated, by a proper supply of clean straw, or frail, made soft and short; the frail, as it lies hollow, and lasts a great while, is preferable to the straw; for when the young ones are able to get out of their nest, take hold of the ends of the frail, and shake off the dung and filth, and the frail will be fit for use again. It is not improper in this place to inform the reader, that gravel should be sifted on the shelves and floor, which the pigeons are fond of picking, and it is very wholesome for them, and also gives the loft a more creditable appearance, and makes it much easier to be cleaned; besides, in keeping the pigeons clean, they are cleared from fleas and other vermin, which are the constant attendants of nastiness and filth, being principally bred and nourished by the dung.

As for the trap or airy, it is always built on a platform or floor of deals, on the outside of the house and is the common passage for the going out and coming in of the pigeons; it is made of laths, which should be nailed so close together, as not to permit a mouse to creep through. Some of these are made very small, with a door in the middle, and one on each side; which three doors are so contrived, that by the pull of a single string, like a piece of machinery, all draw up together: this contrivance is chiefly designed to trap stray pigeons: who are allured into it by the tempting baits of hemp-seed, or rape and canary, which is strewed there for that purpose, and frequently has its desired effect.



In order to complete the furniture of the loft, it must be provided with proper bottles and stands for water, and also with proper meat-boxes. It should be a large egg-belled glass-bottle, with a long neck, big enough to contain three or four gallons of water, though the shape of it is immaterial, for a piece of pasteboard, hung by a string about three inches above the bottle, will always hinder them from settling on it, and dunging it. This bottle should be set upon a three-legged stool or stand, having a hollow at the top for the belly to rest in, that the mouth may descend into a small pan underneath, by which means the water will gradually run from the mouth of the bottle, supplying the pan with water as fast as the pigeons drink it out: this method will keep the water fresh and sweet, and the water will stop running when its surface meets the mouth of the bottle.

The box for the meat should be made in the shape of a hopper, and, in order to hinder them from dunging the grain, it must have a cover over the top, and then it will serve as a preservative for their food; hence the meat descends into a hollow square box, and this is usually fenced in with rails or small holes on each side, to prevent them from flirting the grain amongst their own dung, which lies about the floor. Some leave it quite open for the benefit of the young pigeons, that they may the more easily find their way to it.

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#### *Observations on the Diet proper for Pigeons.*

The common dove-house pigeon, being removed, as it were, but one step from a state of nature, is hardy, and will seek its own food, living upon almost any grain; yet it is far different with the fancy birds, that require some attendance, being much more delicate, and always used to tender treatment; therefore some short observations on their food is very necessary.

The pigeon is a granivorous bird, and may be fed with various sorts of grain, as wheat, barley, oats, peas, horse-beans, vetches, or tares, rape and canary, or hemp-seed. But of all grains, old tares prove to be the best suited to the nature of these birds; for new tares should be given very sparingly,



especially to young pigeons, as they are very liable to put them into a scouring.

Horse-beans are esteemed the next best food to tares, but the smallest of these are by all means to be chosen: there is a French sort, called small ticks, which make good food, and are cheaper than tares.

Wheat, barley, oats, and peas, ought only to be given now and then for a change of diet, as they are very subject to scour them. There is a mixed diet, made of tares, beans, and peas, which is called Scotch meat, with which some fanciers feed their pigeons for cheapness, but care should be taken that the beans are not too large. Rape and canary, and hemp-seed, is a diet that pigeons are immoderately fond of: but this, for many substantial reasons, must not by any means be made a constant diet.

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*Of the Diseases incident to Pigeons with their Method of Cure.*

The first disease that we shall take notice of is, the corruption of the egg in the uterus: this usually arises from the over-salaciousness of an unmatched hen, and proceeds from high feeding, or some other cause, who will often breed eggs without any connexion with the male, though they seldom bring them to perfection, and sometimes they do not bring them forth, so that they decay in the womb: there is no remedy for this but a low diet, (if you think this disorder arise from high feeding,) and to match her to a cock in time.

*The wet-roop.*—In this case give them three or four peppercorns once in three or four days, and steep a handful of green rue in their water, and as this is very wholesome, you may let all the pigeons drink of it.

*The dry roop* is usually known by a dry husky cough, that always attends it, and is supposed to proceed from a cold, to which they are very subject, particularly during the time of moulting: to remedy this, give them every day three or four cloves of garlick.

*The canker* usually takes its rise from the cocks pecking and fighting one another: though some fanciers say, that giving



them water in a metal or tin vessel will bring on this disorder. In order to remove this, take burnt alum and honey, and rub the affected part every day: but when this has not its desired effect, dissolve five grains of Roman vitriol in half a spoonful of wine vinegar, mix it with the former medicine, and anoint the part affected.

When the flesh or wattles round the eyes of the carrier, horseman, or barb, are torn and pecked, bathe them with stale urine for several days; if this should not prove successful, dissolve two drams of alum in one ounce and a half of water, and wash the aggrieved part; but when the case is very obstinate, mix half an ounce of honey with twenty grains of red precipitate, and anoint the part, and it will certainly cure it.

Pigeons are infested with small insects, particularly during the summer months, which the fanciers call lice: when this happens, smoke their feathers well with the smoke of tobacco, and it will certainly destroy them.

*Gizzard fallen*, is when the gizzard sinks down to the vent: the fancy in general think it proceeds from weakness, though we are of opinion that it is rather caused by feeding on too much hemp-seed. We know of no cure for this malady, unless nature will co-operate with an alteration of diet, which in young pigeons it sometimes does.

*Navel fallen*, is when there is a sort of bag hanging down near the vent. This distemper is frequently desperate, and if the given of them clary, or some other strengthening things of a similar nature, will not effect a cure, we can recommend nothing that does.

Pigeons are subject to be *pap-arsed*, as it is termed by the fancy. This malady arises either from a natural weakness, or from a lecherous cock's mounting his hen too frequent: there is no cure for this, except flying, and the parting of them sometimes, to make them more abstemious. Young pigeons and carriers that are not much flown are most liable to it.

Some pigeons, as *pouters* and *croppers*, are apt to overcharge or gorge themselves; that is, when they have fasted rather longer than usual, they will eat such a quantity that they cannot digest it, but it will stay and corrupt in the crop, and be the death of the pigeon; when this happens,



take the following advice: put the gorged bird in a tight stocking, with its feet downward, stroking up the crop, that the overloaded bag of meat may not hang down; then hang up the stocking on a nail, keeping it in this posture, only supplying it with a little water now and then, till the food is digested, and this will frequently cure it; but when it is taken out of the stocking, put it in a coop or open basket, feeding it but very moderately; for if left to itself it will, gorge again. When this method does not succeed, slit the crop from the bottom with a sharp pair of scissars or penknife, take out the corrupted meat, wash the crop, and sew it up again: this method often has proved successful, though the crop will lose its roundness. Some take off the crop by a ligature, that is, tying that part of the crop that contains the undigested food tight round with a string, and let it remain till it drops off; this method never fails, but the shape of the crop is entirely ruined for ever after.

*The vertigo*, or, as it is commonly called by the fancy, the *megrims*, is a disease, in which the pigeon flutters about at random, with its head reverted in such a manner, that its beak rests on its back. This malady is pronounced incurable by most fanciers, and, if it baffle the power of the following remedy, it is so; infuse in a half a pint of water, one ounce and a half of the spirit of lavender, and a dram of the spirit of sal-ammoniac that has been distilled with quick-lime; in the course of a day force down the bird's throat about a spoonful and a half of this composition, and if the bird find benefit, repeat the medicine, every third or fourth day, only lessening the quantity, and in the intermediate days give it a clove of garlick, or three or four pepper-corns; if, after a trial, you perceive no amendment, it will be best to kill it out of the way.

When pigeons do not moult freely, or are at a stand in their moulting, so that they do not throw their feathers kindly, it is a never-failing sign of a bad state of heath: to amend this, the following method will be of service; put them in some warm place, and pull out their tail-feathers, mixing a good quantity of hemp-seed with their common food, also a little clary or saffron thrown into their water, though some prefer cochineal, or elder-berries for this use.

The distemper called the *small-pox*, which breaks out in eruptions or pustules, full of yellow matter, on their bodies,



wings, and legs, is cured by opening the pustules, and applying burnt alum and brandy, or touching them with Roman vitriol.

When pigeons are lame, or the ball of their foot swelled, either with cold, the being cut with glass, or any other accident, spread some venice turpentine on a piece of brown paper put it to the part affected, and it will heal it in a few days.

*The flesh-wen* is a fleshy tumor, which arises on the joints of the legs or wings; this may be either opened or cut off; if opened, take out the kernel, and wash it with alum and water; if cut off, the part may be afterwards healed with almost any salve.

*The bone-wen* is a hard tumor, growing upon the joint as the last; this is very rarely cured, and the bird affected with it will not breed: some attempt to cure it with a mixture of black soap and quick lime; but if this is suffered to lie on too long, or made too strong, it will eat off the leg, or any other part where it is applied, it being a strong caustic.

*The core.*—This malady is so called, from its resemblance to the core of an apple: it is hard, and usually of a yellow colour interspersed with red, and is mostly seated in the anus or vent. This must be ripened; to effect which, keep the pigeons loose, by giving them a gentle purge of tobacco; a small quantity will do: this will sometimes make them discharge the core themselves, if not, when ripe, it must be drawn out.

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#### *Some Remarks on the Keepers of Pigeons.*

It will not be improper, in the course of this treatise, to take notice of the distinction which real pigeon-fanciers make between themselves and pigeon-keepers. Such persons who keep the best of the kind, whether carriers, powters, tumblers, dragoons, horsemen, runts, jacobines, turbits, barbs, nuns, spots, owls, trumpeters, finnkins, &c. are named fanciers; on the reverse, those who keep rubbish are styled pigeon-keepers, of which latter tribe there are an incredible number. It is really astonishing, that any person will give loft-room to such as are not worth the tares they eat, which can



only be accounted for, by supposing such persons to be ignorant of the bad qualities and imperfections of the several sorts they keep: if they breed for the dish only, even then, their table might be more fully supplied by the better sort; for the expense of keeping is equally the same in either; the only difference is in the first buying of a few pair. Should any objection arise to the first purchase of the better sort, we inform the reader that it is much the cheapest in the end to give a good price for a couple of pair of valuable young birds; who, in a little time, would so well stock his loft, as to repay his purchase with interest, (powters and Leghorn runts excepted, for the reasons already given,) than to begin with bad birds, at three or four shillings a pair, the value of which can never be raised, nor the breed mended.

To those who keep pigeons for the sake of good breeding, we should recommend the bastard-bred pigeons, such as powting-horseman, powting dragoons, from a powder or cropper, and a Leghorn runt; or a cock cropper, and a hen carrier: the reason is, these pigeons frequently breed ten pair of young ones in a year; for the little puff of wind derived from the powder, gives them a heat and mirth, which occasions them to be continually playing or courting; and when they have young ones, they feed them well. A cock powder will tread any hen that will let him at any time, and part him from his old mate, and he will match with another in a few days: besides, bastard-bred pigeons are the most serviceable or those who breed them to supply the table.

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*Abstract of the Laws relating to Pigeons.*

By the 1 James, c. 27, Whoever shall shoot at, kill, or destroy, any dove or pigeon, with any gun or bow, or take, kill, or destroy the same, with setting-dogs and nets, or any snares, engines, or instruments whatsoever, shall, on being convicted thereof, before two justices, by confession or oath of two witnesses, be committed to gaol for three months; or pay, for the use of the poor, 20s. for every pigeon; or, after one month after his commitment, become bound by recognizance, with two sureties, before two justices, in 20l. each, not to offend in the like manner again.

And by the 2 Geo. III. c. 29, Any person who shall shoot at, or by any means kill or take, with a wilful intent to destroy



any pigeon, he shall, on conviction thereof, by confession or oath of one witness, before one justice, forfeit 20s. to the prosecutor; and, if not immediately paid, such justice shall commit him to the house of correction, for any term not exceeding three months, nor less than one, unless the penalty be sooner paid. Persons who are convicted on this act, shall not be convicted on any former act; and prosecutions on this act must be commenced within two months after the offence is committed.

These two abstracts are given to inform the keepers of pigeons of the laws in force to protect them; but more especially to remove the vulgar error so prevalent among the lower class of people; "that pigeons are a nuisance, that they destroy a great deal of seed in the fields, grain in the rick-yards, and loosen the tiles on the top of buildings; and that any person may shoot them, provided he does not carry them away." Therefore the reader is desired to take notice, that both the above acts are unrepealed, and in full force; consequently every offender is liable to the punishment therein specified.

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*Account of the best Methods for preventing Pigeons from leaving their Habitations*

Many and various are the means made use of by owners of pigeons, to prevent their straying from home, or being enticed away by the arts of others; but as it would be needless to insert more than is necessary, we shall here only select some of the most approved and useful methods now in practice.

1. Lay near the pigeon-house a barrow-full of loam, reduce it to the consistence of pap, by mixing it with water, but brine is better; add to this a gallon and a half of the coarsest sand, a pack of bay-salt, and a little salt-petre. If the loam is beat up with water, it will require more salt than when brine is used for that purpose. If it is a good sandy loam, less sand will do. Where loam cannot be procured, clay will answer the purpose, but then much more sand will be wanted. The pigeons will be so fond of this little bank, as not easily to leave it.

2. Take the head and feet of a gelt goat, boil them till the flesh parts from the bone: take this flesh and boil it again in



the same liquor, till the whole is reduced to a jelly: then put in some clean potters' earth, kneading the whole together to the consistence of dough, which make into small loaves, and dry them in the sun or oven; but be careful they are not burnt: when they are dry place them in the most convenient parts of the pigeon-house, when the pigeons will soon peck at it, and, liking the taste, will not leave it but with regret. Some make use of a goat's head boiled in urine, with a mixture of salt, cummin, and hemp.

3, Others make a repast, of millet fried in honey, with the addition of a little salt and water.

4. Lastly, there is nothing superior to the true and genuine salt-cat, if made as follows: Take sifted gravel, brick-makers' earth, and the rubbish of an old wall, a peck of each; or if you use lime instead of rubbish, half the quantity will do: add to these a pound and a half of cummin-seed, a quarter of a pound of bay-salt, or salt-petre; let these ingredients be well mixed together with as much stale urine as will make a stiff cement. Let it be put into old tin pots, kettles, or stone jars, with holes in the sides for them to peck at it, only let them be covered at top to prevent their dunging it.

When pigeons are with egg, they are generally very fond of lime, and it is of great use in hardening the shell of their egg; and by this means they are kept from pecking the mortar off the tops of the houses; though the damage they do is trifling, their beak being not long enough to loosen any tile that is properly fixed. The salt and urine provoke their thirst, and, they being of a very hot nature, occasion them to drink often, which is of great service to them. The strong smell of the cummin-seed pleases them much, keeps them at home, and allures others that are hovering about and straying from home. The oily nature of the earth is a great help to them in the discharge of their soft meat, when they are feeding their young ones; and the gravel scours their craws, and is of great service in promoting digestion.

Pigeons are remarkably fond of salt; nor is there a cure for scarce any of the disorders to which they are subject, without the assistance of this ingredient; which proves that instinct the wise Creator bestows on animals, for the necessary preservation of their welfare: and accounts for the



extraordinary fondness pigeons have for the mortar that is found in old walls, which contains a salt little inferior to the common salt-petre: for which reason some place cakes of salt candied against the walls of their pigeon-houses.

We have now given copious and, we trust, satisfactory directions for the choice and management of those pigeons that are most advantageous for country-people, or others, who breed them for market, or keep them for pleasure; and, no doubt, this **NEW PIGEON-FANCIER** will be found a useful and instructive **GUIDE**.

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