

as not only the musical sense of the song performed, but the whole of its poetic sense should be conveyed to the listeners. But I will presume you are having good instruction or guidance of some sort, and therefore I will only continue my little hints on "Careful Treatment of the Voice."

If you are a beginner, be sure when you practise to take a rest after the first ten minutes of vocalising; make a little pause, and then practise another ten minutes.

If your practice has been attentively done, and it is repeated every morning, in a few months you will begin to find your voice improving much more than if you were to sing for a whole hour without stopping every day. Then, when the voice has gained elasticity you will be able to practise a longer time without fear of injury; your first and second "dose" of ten minutes can then (but only after another little rest) be supplemented by the practice of a song, and perhaps you will be able to find another ten minutes or so in the afternoon for again going through a song. You will get a great deal done in this way if you are patient and persevering, but remember the voice takes a long time to ripen.

In cold weather you should be very careful not to rush out into the air directly after practice. The throat gets heated with exercise, and a sudden transition into cold atmosphere might produce a bad chill; and oh! how tiresome a cold is, and how difficult to get rid of in our treacherous climate, is it not? When suffering from a cold, I have found great benefit from inhaling the vapours of ammonia through a Chloride of Ammonium Inhaler, especially when I have felt very ill indeed, as, for instance, at the last Norwich Festival, when I was to sing oratorio music for the first time. The final London rehearsal had been long and tiring, and when my share of it was over, I did not allow a sufficient interval to elapse before going out into the raw autumn air (the very thing I have just been warning you against!) Well, next morning I woke with a very bad sore throat, with which I was obliged to travel to Norwich, and which by the next day—the day of the opening performance—had developed into a tremendous influenza. You can imagine how wretched I felt! Gratefully do I remember how kind and

sympathising the other artists were, Mr. Lloyd giving me doses of the quinine he always travels with, Mr. McGuckin lending me some wonderful smelling-salts, and so on; but the thing that really helped me was inhaling ammonia, and thanks to this, when the evening performance came off I was able to get through my work, and my cold was scarcely discernible.

But to continue: just as it is bad to rush directly after the exercise of singing into the open air, so it is unadvisable to use the voice immediately after a long walk, game of tennis, or any other fatiguing exercise which has tired the lungs.

Remember, it is wiser to omit your practice altogether when you feel tired or in any way not well; to insist upon singing under such circumstances is merely to impair the vocal organs, and perhaps to lay the foundation of the noxious "tremolo." This "tremolo" or "vibrato" (in plain English "wobble") is a defect which is luckily going out of fashion, and ceasing to be erroneously admired. A "thrill in the voice," such as we can hear in the exquisite pure tones of Lillian Nordica, for example, is a very different thing, and rare as it is beautiful.

And now a few words about things to be avoided at table. Hot curries, very peppery soups or dishes, very vinegary salads, ginger, and nuts are all bad things for the voice, but nuts are the worst of all, as little portions are apt to stick in the throat and cause irritation and coughing. By the bye, some people have a way of coughing and clearing the throat a great many times in succession just before commencing to sing, as if it were a help, whereas it only engenders local irritation, and in some cases becomes a very bad habit.

Strong tea and all alcoholic drinks are likewise bad for the throat, and should be avoided, sherry especially. *A propos* of sherry, I remember once, when I was scarcely more than a beginner, I was invited one evening to the house of an acquaintance who, beforehand, made me promise to sing. When I arrived I found to my horror a very large and brilliant gathering, which included ever so many celebrated artists and notabilities of every description. Oh, how frightened I felt at the

idea of standing up to sing! And how hot and stifling the crowded room was! My heart began to beat very fast, and my throat seemed to get as stiff and dry as a bit of old parchment. After a while I saw the hostess threading her way towards me through the crowd, coming to claim the promised song, and my despairing eye catching sight of some sherry on the buffet just at hand, I thought, "Oh, perhaps a little sherry will be just the thing to do me good!" Oh dear, how I regretted that mouthful of sherry! If my throat had been parched before, it was fifty times hotter and drier after swallowing that fiery wine, and needless to say I proceeded to sing my worst!

Now, under the same circumstances, I would ask for a little plain water (not iced), or perhaps take the half of a black-currant lozenge, and I would certainly take a couple of the deep breaths I recommended to you a little while ago.

But I must not forget also to tell you how injurious to the voice it is to wear strong smelling flowers, or have many of them in the room. The great Jenny Lind used to say that the scent of violets was enough to make her hoarse; and Mr. Santley, who seems such a Hercules that one cannot imagine anything affecting him, hates all strong-smelling flowers.

I think so many people have preached against tight-lacing that I need not go over the same ground. To breathe well is "half the battle" in singing, and how can that be done if the lungs are cramped and the chest confined?

Now, dear girls, if any word of mine proves a useful hint to you, I shall truly feel pleased!

A good voice is indeed a great gift, and ought to be made the most of, but although very hard work is necessary, yet never forget that moderation and care in practice are quite as important.

The Italians have an excellent saying, which seems to me appropriate. They say:—

"Chi va piano, va sano,"

which, being translated, means:

"Who goes slowly, goes surely."

Believe me,
Your sincere well-wisher,
LIZA LEHMANN.

DOVES' DOWN;

OR,

PIGEON LIFE.

By EMMA BREWER.

CHAPTER I.

LONDON PIGEONS.

"Like doves about a dove-cot, wheeling round

The central wish, until we settled there again."

—Tennyson.

WHILE waiting in the Editor's room I have often been interested in watching the pretty picture made by the wheeling round and round of the "orthodox" pigeons who have chosen for their homes the deep cornices of St. Paul's Cathedral, and on one or two occasions I noticed that they were on friendly terms with our Editor, whose kindness to all living creatures they seem to have discovered, for there they were on his window-sill looking in at him and thanking him in their own gentle way for the little feast he had provided for them, and to which they were evidently accustomed.

Seeing this friendly understanding between them, I ventured to tell him of what I had seen, heard, and known of these soft, pretty creatures both here and in other countries. In answer he said, "Dot down your remarks; they may prove interesting to our girls."

I left the Editor's room with a GIRL'S OWN PAPER in my hand, secured by a Religious Tract Society wrapper.

Looking at it mechanically, with my thoughts busy on the subject of doves and how I could dress it in an attractive form, my attention was suddenly arrested by the seal on the wrapper. It was a dove with outspread wings, having an olive branch in its mouth, and surrounded with the symbol of wisdom: "Wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove." Of course I had seen this seal hundreds of times before, but never as at this moment. The dove seemed a living thing appealing to me with quiet unobtrusive earnestness, and



saying: "In your thoughts upon doves find room for me, the carrier pigeon of the Religious Tract Society. I cease not day nor night to carry its messages into the far-away corners of the earth, and I am the willing bearer of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER both far and near, shielding it always under my wings."

Here was a dove, our own carrier pigeon, full of information and ready to pour it into my ear. It has seen many peoples and countries, it has had many adventures by sea and land, it has brightened many a home, it has let the light into dark places, it has satisfied the longings of lonely hearts; but it has been too busy for many years past to interest itself in pigeon life. It has formed no ties either in Guildhall or St. Paul's; it has no little feathered creatures billing and cooing about it; it has given up all to become the willing servant of the Religious Tract Society, and can tell me nothing of pigeon home life. I may be glad to talk with it another time when I have done with its more frivolous relations.

The dove is of ancient lineage, and divided into classes or families much the same as man, with whose history it is wonderfully woven, and between whom there is a close and mysterious friendship. This I hope to show later on, and to call attention to the characteristics which doves and girls have in common.

The gentleness, grace and beauty, the loving nature, the courtship, the domestic life of the dove all remind one of girl and home life. One has only to watch a colony of them to be quite sure of this. This ought not to be difficult, for next to sparrows there are no feathered citizens so numerous in London as pigeons.

Of what race, descent, or origin, or for what length of time they have formed a commonwealth in and about London, it is impossible to say; they were certainly here previous to the great fire of London, for Pepys in his Diary, when speaking of this calamity, says: "Among other things the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and barabines till they burned their wings and fell down."

They did not live so peacefully then as now, but were subject to the attacks of hawk and falcon who were also citizens of London. It is recorded that when Charles I. was on his way to be crowned, a falcon attacked a dove directly over his head, and a drop of the dove's blood fell on his coronation robe; and again that a sculptor carrying home a bust of this same king paused to rest on his way, when a pigeon overhead was struck by a hawk, and the blood of the bird fell on to the neck of the bust. These two circumstances created quite a sensation, and were regarded as ominous, for the belief was almost universal that "He who is sprinkled with pigeon's blood will never die a natural death."

At the present time there are three great centres of pigeon life in London, viz., Guildhall, St. Paul's, and the British Museum, the first being the oldest of the three. I asked a friend of mine, who knows every corner of the City and more of its history than any other person with whom I am acquainted, if he could explain the circumstance of the doves' selection of those places for their homes, and the probable date of the earliest settlement. His theory is that the Guildhall doves are the oldest settlers, and probably assisted the surplus population to emigrate to St. Paul's Cathedral. He thinks that in bygone days, when London business men lived with their families in the midst of their work, and the thought of a country house for dinner and sleep had never been dreamed of, that they required some recreation or amusement when business hours were over, and while some indulged in reading, and others in the cultivation of flowers, some few might have been

found who preferred the breeding of pigeons to any other fancy.

Suppose, then, one of these men having a large number and variety of pigeons, forgot to mention them in his will; the consequence would be that at his death the creatures who had depended upon him for everything they enjoyed would be thrown upon their own resources for daily bread and shelter.

That they had been hatched and bred in the heart of the City was a good and sufficient reason why they should continue to abide there, their intense love of home being one of the deep-rooted characteristics of their nature. So looking about the neighbourhood they resolved to seek protection from the Lord Mayor, aldermen, and Common Council, who saw no reason for denying them their request, and without opposition they took possession of Guildhall. The officials, who have an aversion to innovations, regarded them at first with disfavour, but soon became reconciled to their presence, which lent a grace and beauty to the old building, and so they were left unmolested.

This all took place "once upon a time;" but the settlers did not die out, they grew and multiplied; they took possession of roofs, parapets, water-pipes, and chimneys, and in the early morning, before the hall opened its doors to receive legal occupants, the broad pavement in front was quite darkened by these graceful birds.

They multiplied with such amazing rapidity, the birth-rate was so out of all proportion to the death-rate, that something had to be done if business men were not to be ousted from their places of business.

Sad to say, judgment was passed on the pretty creatures, and the thinning process was vigorously carried out. Those who escaped remained on in the old abode, beginning life afresh, and founding a colony which has been ever growing in favour from that time to this, bestowing upon the most business-like city in the world a grace and vivacity it could not possess but for the presence of these feathered colonists. No one would think of hurting them, for they are held almost as sacred as storks in Holland and the birds of good omen that built in the temples and residences of classic Greece.

There is no doubt that doves give to the places they inhabit a feeling of home life. Tom Hood must have felt this, for he notes their absence as a mark of desolation.

"No dog was at the threshold, great or small;

No pigeon on the roof, no household creature;

No cat demurely dozing on the wall—
Not one domestic feature."

Leaving the Guildhall pigeons to their pleasant daily life, let us visit those who have preferred St. Paul's as a residence. I think they must have had perilous times at first, for long before they could have emigrated thither the dome was inhabited by a family of falcons. How or when they were displaced is not known.

Some fourteen years ago this special colony of doves consisted only of ten birds; the number now in residence is about three hundred, not all of one kind, some rare specimens being content to live there.

The assembling of these pretty, graceful, shy creatures in St. Paul's Churchyard about one o'clock to be fed by the people who go there to eat their own luncheon, is a sight well worth seeing. I quite hoped to attract them near me by throwing out some of their favourite food, which I carried in a paper bag, but I was not successful. The policeman, who loves these birds and knows them all individually, came up to me, seeing my disappointment, and said, "It's the bag, ma'am;

they don't like the bag." He was quite right, they came to me quickly when the offence had been removed.

Among the many round about us I noticed one who seemed to have no companion, and to be lonely in the midst of the crowd, and I called the policeman's attention to it. "Yes," he said, "that bird is a stranger; it is having a look round in the hope of attracting a female." "What will happen?" I asked. "Well, ma'am, if he finds one that looks upon him with favour, he will court her and marry her, and dwell here with the rest of them; but if within an hour no one notices him, he will go off—he won't waste his time in persuasion."

The nests of pigeons are very loosely built; there is little or no architecture about them. This is accounted for in the following story or legend:—

Soon after the creation of the world, all the birds were assembled in order to learn how to build their nests. The magpie was selected to stand forth as teacher. He taught the most industrious, such as the wren and the piefinch, to make nests in the shape of a cocoon, with a small hole on one side; others less industrious he taught to make half nests, something like a teacup. And so he went on teaching each according to its capacity, till he came to the pigeon, who, being careless and idle, was very indifferent about the nest, and while the magpie was directing it how to place the little twigs, it kept up a continual "What, athurt and across? what zoo! what zoo!" which so irritated the teacher that he flew away; and to this day the worst nest of any of the feathered tribe is the pigeon's, which consists merely of layers of cross twigs.

But unscientific as it is, it is still a creation of love. The architect as a rule is the female, the male being the purveyor. The St. Paul's pigeons are very particular as to the materials with which they build. What they like best are hay and straw wisps; the policeman lays these about, and he says it is most amusing to see them taking up first one and then another, and after consideration rejecting certain among them.

A pigeon always lays two eggs at the time, or to be quite accurate, a day intervenes between the first and the second, during which time she stands sentinel over the first—

"As patient as a female dove,

When that her golden couplets are disclosed."

At the task of incubation the male bird does his part, for he sits upon the eggs in the middle of the day, while he sends out his little wife for food and air; but if she abuses his kindness and stays out too long, he is displeased, and comes out after her, and before the whole colony pecks her back to her home duties.

I am only speaking of what you may see for yourselves in the London dove colonies; a wider view may be taken when we leave our capital for other places.

The birds are very tame here, and it is most amusing to see a male bird running after a female, and pestering her with attentions. The courtship of pigeons, as seen even here under the very walls of our great cathedral, is most quaint and pretty; the various couples retire from the throng to pay each other little attentions. The coy, coquettish manners of the feminine dove are too amusing. She turns her head on one side, not so far though as to prevent her seeing her admirer, and looks disdainful, then for fear of having given offence she nestles up to him, and they go on caressing and cooing once again. The courtship of a pair is known at once throughout the colony by the tone of voice of the male bird, the acquisition of which is an indication of the approaching union; with that voice it ceases to be a *squeaker*. The betrothal is sealed by a loud billing or kiss. The next important

step is the selection of a spot for the building of a nest in which, when built, they live happy ever after.

It is very rare indeed that a separation takes place or that a bird takes two wives; the fidelity of a dove to its mate is proverbial. I cannot refrain from stating that while I have been writing this article a love story has been enacted before my window, which faces the ocean. An exquisite white dove has been followed for two days between twelve and one by two male doves, each of which is her devoted slave. Sometimes she turns to one, then to the other, drawing them on and on with her fascinations, till I have grown quite sorry for them. To-day they are absent, so I suppose she has made her choice.

A very pathetic story is told of a pigeon and its mate, which expresses the love of one for the other, and as it took place in London it may not be out of place here. A field of peas had been much preyed on by the pigeons living on the roof of the owner's house, and one morning the man shot the old male bird, who was in the very act of trespassing; the mate settled on the ground by the side of the dead bird, showing her grief in the most expressive manner.

The man took up the dead bird and tied it to a short stake, hoping so to frighten away other depredators. But his partner did not forsake him; there she was day after day walking slowly round the stick. The man's wife hearing of this went out to see what she could do for the poor bird, which she found quite exhausted, for it had walked round and round unceasingly, making little springs towards the dead mate. Not till the creature was removed out of sight would the hen return to the dovecot.

To come back to St. Paul's, I asked the policeman if he noticed the doves' conduct one to the other: did they often fight?

"No," was the man's answer, "not often, but I once saw two male birds fight furiously for forty minutes on a ledge of the cathedral, and I thought surely they would kill each other."

"What was the cause, do you think?" I asked. "Oh, some quarrel about a hen or a nest; wherever there's a quarrel a woman's sure to be in it." "How do they get regular food?" "Mostly through the kindness of the people living close round," was the answer, "but we shouldn't mind having a little regular help in the winter-time."

And now let us go to the British Museum, where the doves thrive and look happy, notwithstanding that they were the subject of much controversy a year or two ago, and occupied columns of the London papers.

There is more certainty about the time and method of this settlement than of the two in the City. It seems that in the days when elderberry wine was made from the fruit of the thick bushes around Montague House, and the sweet luscious scent of the lilacs filled the surroundings of the British Museum, some boys, the sons of the superintendent of the building, bought two pigeons and kept them on the premises.

These attracted stray ones from the houses in Great St. Andrew's Street, the headquarters of the pigeon fanciers close by, and soon a colony of columbæ was established—the founders of the pretty dove groups one sees to-day relieving the great sombre façade of one of the most impressive buildings in London.

It is certain that all large buildings with a deep cornice attract these birds, which increase very rapidly when once settled.

Before quitting London pigeons it may interest some to know that previous to the invention of the telegraph the *Stock Exchange* made use of pigeon expresses to secure the earliest intelligence of money transactions. These expresses were very expensive, and greatly in excess of what one speculator could bear alone, the cost of such an one being six or seven hundred pounds a-year. The men who gained possession of these despatches first were called pigeon men.

A communication was established between London and Paris by the same means. The St. Anthony boys of Threadneedle Street in the reign of Elizabeth called the boys in St. Paul's School St. Paul's pigeons, while they in turn called the others St. Anthony's pigs.

The love of and the breeding of pigeons have afforded great pleasure to many celebrated women and poets, among whom we may mention Mary Queen of Scots, Miss Mary Russell Mitford, and Cowper. Neither is this love of pigeons confined to any rank of life, as Crabbe shows in the following lines—

"Oft have I smiled the happy pride to see
Of humble tradesmen in their evening glee,
When of some pleasing fancied good possessed,
Each grew alert, was busy, and was blessed.
Whether the call bird yield the hours delight,
Or, magnified in microscope, the mite;
Or whether tumblers, croppers, carriers seize
The gentle mind, they rule it, and they please."

(To be continued.)

TALES OF GREAT FAMILIES.

By EDWARD WALFORD, M.A.

PART I.

THE FIRST LAIRD OF QUEENSBERRY.



HE hills and the mountains of Scotland have for the most part some story or legend attached to them. On the tops of some can be traced the foundations of Druidical temples, and cromlechs

abound in some hilly parts of Scotland, as they do in Wales, telling us of a day long previous to the Christian era. Such a mountain, for instance, is "Ben Ledi," or "Benledi," the Hill of God, so called from a temple which once crowned its summit.

But of a far different kind, and of far more recent fame, is the hill or mount of Queensberry, in Nithsdale, Dumfriesshire, not far from the old castle of Morton. Till less than three centuries ago the hill had not a name, and when it did receive a name it was from a jest of a sovereign of the House of Stewart or Stuart.

It so happened that James V., the grandfather of our own King James I. (who was also James VI. of Scotland), was married to a daughter of the King of France. He was a most eccentric and merry monarch. It is recorded in the chronicles of Scotland that at the end of a dinner, given in honour of his wedding at Holyrood Palace, he resolved to serve up to his royal and noble guests a strange dessert, so as to afford them a little amusement. Accordingly he set at each of the four

corners of his table a small dish, most carefully covered up, as if it contained roasted chestnuts or some other such thing. One of his guests was Sir William Douglas, ninth "Laird" of Drumlanrig, who was reckoned almost as much of a wag in his way as his royal master. On opening the dish next him, Sir William found, instead of chestnuts or other fruits, a heap of silver coins. He looked a little disappointed, or at all events a little puzzled, saying, "Sire, may it please your Highness, I did not know till to-day that silver coins grew in the gardens of Holyrood or Dunfermline." The French ambassador, who happened to sit next Drumlanrig, was also not a little puzzled and perplexed, but the king at once said to him, "It is my wish always to present to my French guests, as well as to my Scottish subjects, the very best of the fruits of my country, and these pieces of silver are natives of my land, having been dug out of my mines in Crawford Muir." "I venture to think, with all due submission to your Highness," said Drumlanrig, "that my mountain berries from Dumfriesshire would have made a better dessert to set upon your table." "What! your mountain berries!" replied the king; "and pray what sort of berries does your cold county bring forth?" "Just such a county as that in which stands your Majesty's flower-garden at Leadhills," answered Drumlanrig, readily, and with a scarcely disguised sneer; "there are barely seven miles between them both; indeed, the whole of that mountain-side is quite a garden for berries." "That must be a large tract of land for a garden," replied the king, "and I wish that I could only see it." "Sire," answered Drumlanrig, "it is quite open to

your Majesty to come and inspect it with your own eyes, and I shall be proud to show it to you." "I certainly will come some day, and that before very long too," rejoined the king, "and I will have a dessert off your native mountain berries."

It was late in the same summer when the king made one of his journeys or progresses into the fair region of Nithsdale; and he did not forget his promise to pay a visit to the laird of Drumlanrig at his home in that district. As soon as the king had arrived, he took him up to the hill-side region, and there sure enough the king saw large clusters of small berries on shrubs, growing thick on the sides and slopes of the mountains. The berries were of a dark bluish character, and the king on tasting them, as he walked along with the laird, found them pleasant and palatable. "And now, sir, how does my liege lord like the berries of Drumlanrig?" asked the laird, possibly with some little hesitation. "Faith, they are by no means amiss; and though they are a little sourish, they will be sweet enough in the early autumn. In fact, even now they will serve well to quench the thirst on a hot day, when there is not a spring of water handy." "And, my liege," added Drumlanrig, "they will not make a bad dessert some day at Holyrood, to follow after a dish of venison, I think." The king nodded his assent.

After he returned to Drumlanrig's house, the king asked his host what was the name of the hill on which he had been feasted with berries. "May it please your Majesty," replied the laird, "it has no especial name as yet." "Will you send me at Holyrood a dish of your mountain berries?" asked the merry king. "I will present them with my

"Remember? Until my introduction to you I never heard your name, and then I did not catch it."

"Ah, you have forgotten," I said, disappointed. "Naturally it wouldn't make the same impression on you as on me."

"To what are you alluding?" he asked, apparently beginning to doubt my sanity.

"When I read 'A First Illusion,'" I said, thinking to give him another chance, "it seemed to me the most beautiful book I had ever known—so natural, so full of thought, that I felt towards the author as to a personal friend."

"Happy author!"

"Under the impulse of the moment I wrote to him—"

I paused. Surely now he would understand.

"Wrote to him?" he repeated after me, adding, "Oh, of course, I had forgotten. And the result?" he continued.

"A correspondence ensued, disclosing a similarity of taste and thought, that to me at least was a great pleasure."

"The similarity is not altogether unnatural, considering the circumstances." He looked at me and smiled. Then he said, "Would you like to know the author personally?"

"I don't know," I stammered foolishly.

"These sort of things generally end in disappointment."

"It's no good pretending," I said, "because when you were introduced, I knew you were the author."

"I!"

"Yes, Mr. Grey."

"But—I am not Harvey Grey."

"Not Harvey Grey? But—you spoke of 'A First Illusion,' and—" I paused, dumfounded.

"Certainly. Because I know the author most intimately. Let me introduce you."

My feelings were indescribable, as, rising, I laid my hand on his arm and went out of the conservatory.

Speechless, utterly astonished, disappointed, and a little dismayed, I stood by his side in the drawing-room while he looked round in search of the author. Presently he evidently saw him, for he made his way through the crowd.

We stopped near the piano, where on a sofa were seated side by side an old man and a girl of about five-and-twenty.

"Molly," he said to the latter, "Miss Carton is a great admirer of 'A First Illusion,' so I thought you would like to know each other."

The girl looked up. She was not pretty, but very interesting in appearance.

"This," he said to me, "is my sister, Harvey Grey."

What happened after that I have not the least remembrance, save that I subsided on to the sofa, where they made room for me between her and her father.

She remembered my name, and seemed very pleased to see me.

"I had always thought of you as a man," I said presently, when I had collected my thoughts a little.

"I am supposed to be a man in the literary world," she said laughing, "because of my name. It is really Mary Harvey Grey, but I drop the Mary when I write. I wonder I never undeceived you. The critics were wiser than you. They thought I was a woman."

I did not confess to her the extent of my foolishness, but expressed a hope that we might be friends.

And after all, the author of "A First Illusion" is my most intimate friend, and I do sign myself Minnie Grey. I think and hope my husband finds a literary woman can yet fulfil her duties as wife and mother.

IDA J. LEMON.



DOVES' DOWN;

OR,

PIGEON LIFE.

By EMMA BREWER.

CHAPTER II.

RELIGIOUS AND POETIC.

"As innocent of offence as turtle doves."

—Proverb.



the house and the ship; they are emblems of innocence, tenderness, and affection; they are bright messengers of good news; they are shy and retiring, and yet they love society, and—

"Whether tumblers, croppers, carriers seize
The gentle mind, they rule it, and they
please." *

It will be seen therefore that the subject allotted to me is one full of grace and interest, and suggestive of bright fancies and pure thoughts.

One never thinks of a dove in connection with anything vicious or soiled or debasing; on the contrary, it suggests peace, comfort, purity, and constancy.

Doves have been familiar to our eyes in sacred history from the time when Noah sent one out of the ark for news of the deluged earth, until the "day of the baptism of our Saviour, when, as He went up straightway out of the water, the Spirit of God descended like a dove and lighted upon Him."

Not only David and Solomon, but poets in all ages have made the dove the subject of their song. "Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest," is scarcely more familiar to us than Francis Henry Lyte's lines—

"Like the wandering dove that found
No repose on earth around,
They can to their ark repair,
And enjoy it ever there."

Or Herbert's—

"Listen, sweet dove, unto my song,
And spread thy golden wings on me;
Hatching my tender heart so long,
Till it get wing and fly away with thee."

Perhaps it has been selected as the image of the Holy Spirit because of its gentle, loving nature, and the purity of its plumage.

To the Assyrians and Syrians the dove has

been the special emblem of the Godhead ever since the Ninevite sculptor typified the Supreme Being by an orb with the tail and wings of a dove hovering above the head of his Master. In fact, the worship of the dove and the various circumstances of the Deluge have always entered very largely into the religious rites and ceremonies of the Eastern world.

In very many countries the dove is intimately connected, not only with the religion, but with the superstitions of the various peoples; and the number of legends about the dove is very large, and not a few extremely interesting.

To return to the Deluge. There is a curious Arabic legend related by Wilkinson respecting the dove, which states that the first time it returned to the ark it was with the olive branch, but without any indication of the state of the earth itself, but that on its return from the second visit, the red appearance of its feet proved that the mud on which it had walked was already freed from the waters, and to record that event Noah prayed that the feet of these birds might for ever remain of that colour.*

Among the many testimonies of the truth of the Deluge to be found among the Western nations is an ancient coin known by the name of the Apamean medal from having been struck in Apamea, a city of Bythnia. It has on its reverse side an epitome of the Deluge. It represents the ark as a kind of square machine floating upon water on which a man and woman are just visible through an opening, and over the ark a triangular pediment. Upon this sits a dove, and below it another, which

* Jean Ingelow notices the colour in the passage, "They walked daintily up the steep roof with their small red feet."

* Crabbe.



DOVES.

seems to flutter its wings, and holds in its mouth a small branch of a tree.

The account of this coin is given in "Bryant's Deluge." The writer, who lived a hundred and fifty years ago, saw the medal, which he says was of brass, of medallion size, and that it was one of three existing at that time.

It is said that the Holy Spirit, under the form of a dove, designated Joseph as the spouse of the Virgin Mary by lighting on his head, and that in the same manner Fabian was indicated as the Divinely-appointed Bishop of Rome.

A dove or pigeon is considered by the Russians to be a living picture of the Holy Spirit, and therefore no Russian peasant will eat one.

There is a curious story told of Mahomet. It seems that he possessed a tame dove, which he trained to come to his ear for seed; this the bird did at length quite naturally, as it never failed to find some there.

Mahomet's object was to convince his followers that the dove was the representative of the angel Gabriel, and that Divine messages were thus communicated to him.

A still stranger thing is related of him. It appears that in his flight he entered a cave with his companions to hide from his pursuers, and no sooner had he taken refuge than two pigeons laid their eggs at the entrance, and a spider covered up the opening with her web so effectually as to baffle those who were seeking him.

All who have been in St. Gregory's Church in Rome will have observed a picture by Badelocke, in which he represents St. Gregory with a dove perched on his shoulder, and whispering in his ear, intended no doubt to impress the people with the belief that every word and action of his was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

In the old woodcuts of the "Golden Legend,"* the Popes are always distinguished by a dove whispering in their ears.

Many, too, may be familiar with the painted window in Lincoln College, Oxford, in which the prophet Elisha is represented with a double-headed dove seated on his shoulder.

"This," says the author of "Credulities," etc., "is the peculiar attribute of Elisha, and it becomes intelligible on referring to his petition to Elijah when he entreated that a double portion of his spirit might rest upon him."

In many of the paintings of the Madonna the dove is introduced as the emblem of the Holy Spirit; in others, doves are placed near her while reading or working, expressive of tenderness and gentleness.

A very strong belief exists among many peoples of the earth that the soul quits the body in the form of a bird, and this has been the subject of superstitious fancies from earliest times.

A bird always signifies the soul in Egyptian hieroglyphics, and the dove carrying in its beak a branch of palm or olive is a common emblem upon ancient tombs.

Therefore, taking these facts into consideration, it is not surprising that numerous stories exist in which disembodied spirits appear as doves.

In the life of St. Elizabeth by Count Montalembert, we find reference made to the belief that doves hover about a dying person, awaiting the departure of the soul from the body.

The story is that Duke Louis of Thuringia, the husband of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, being at the point of death, said to those around him—

"Do you see those doves more white than snow?" His attendants, considering him half unconscious, took no notice of the question,

but in a few minutes he said again, "I must fly away with those brilliant doves," and fell asleep in peace.

His almoner, Berthold, on looking up, perceived doves flying away to the east, and followed them for a long time with his eyes.

Again, in the legend of St. Polycarp, who was burned alive, it is said that his blood extinguished the flames, and that from his ashes a white dove arose and flew towards heaven. From the funeral pyre of Joan of Arc a dove was seen issuing.

In a very interesting Swedish legend, translated by the Rev. Dr. L. B. White for THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER, two years ago, the following verse occurs—

"Then two white doves from heaven
Came down so peacefully;
They took up little Karin,
And then the doves were three."

There is a wild kind of song sung by the good liars of Venice, which declares that the spirit of a grand patriot, Daniel Manin by name, is flying about the Lagoon to this day in the shape of a beautiful white dove.

To bring these stories down to the present time, there appeared in a Paris journal, "Le Pays," of June 27, 1879, the following incident, which is said by Monsieur Paul de Cassagnac to have occurred at the funeral service for the late Prince Imperial at St. Augustine's.

The enormous crowd which had been unable to find room in the church suddenly became aware that just as benediction was pronounced a white pigeon was fluttering undismayed overhead, and perched on the stone eagle that surmounts the building; and the narrator, after describing the emotion of the superstitious crowd who beheld it, goes on to say: "May not the Almighty, to whom all things are possible, have, as a last reward, permitted him who is no more, to behold under that graceful form what was going on, and to see how much he was loved?"

In an old Breton ballad there is a quaint and touching reference to the spirit-bearing doves:—

"It was a marvel to see, men say,
The night that followed the day
The lady in earth by her lord lay.

To see two oak-trees themselves rear
From the new-made grave into the air;

And on their branches two doves white,
Who there were hopping gay and light;

Which sang, when rose the morning ray,
And then towards heaven sped away."

The Russians have a belief that the departed haunt their old homes for the space of six weeks, during which time they eat and drink, and watch the sorrowing of the mourners, and then fly away to be at rest. Therefore, it is a common practice in some districts to place breadcrumbs on a piece of white linen at the window during these weeks, and the soul is believed to come and feed upon them in the shape of pigeons.

Then, also, the dove is regarded as a lucky bird, bringing good fortune to the house, the city, the person, and the ship. As an example of this, the credulous firmly believe that the pigeons in Venice are in some way connected with its prosperity, and that their being domesticated in the midst of the city is a sign that it will not be swallowed up by the water. It is unnecessary to say that they are protected by the almost superstitious care and affection of the people of Venice.

Again, take the voyage of Cortis, when, with his companions, he sailed away to the New World:—

"Their victuals waxed scant, and their fresh water wanted so that they prepared themselves to die. In this time of tribulation came a

dove flying to the shippe, being on Good Friday at sunset, and sat him on the shippe top; whereat they were all comforted, and took it for a miracle and good token, and some wept with joy, some said that God had sent the dove to comfort them, others said the land was neare, and all gave hartie thanks to God, directing their course the way that the dove flew."

I knew a girl who, owing to the loss of her father, had to leave her happy home and surroundings. She was sitting in her bedroom a night or two before taking her departure, almost too tired to undress, when she was startled by a fluttering and movement on the top of her white curtained bed. Standing on a chair, she saw a white dove, which came towards her when she held out her hands, and nestled up to her as though she and it were the greatest of friends. Thinking it had mistaken its home, she opened the window to permit of its flying away, but it remained in her room all night, and would not be separated from her even when she went down to breakfast next morning. The girl did her best to find out if any person had lost the beautiful bird, but in vain. Everyone called her a lucky girl, and wondered what good fortune could be in store for her. The dove remained in her room till the morning she left home, when it also took its departure no one knew whither.

The dove is the type of love, probably from its clinging to the partner of its nest with such uniform constancy.

"Venus and her doves" is a phrase known to us all; not less so is the famous representation of Venus with her son Cupid riding on a chariot drawn by doves.

"The tender turtles draw the car of Venus and of Love."*

The story goes that the Uranian or heavenly Venus was not born from the sea foam, as was believed, but from an egg which two fishes conveyed to the seashore, and that this egg was hatched by two pigeons, whiter than snow, and gave birth to the Assyrian Venus, who instructed mankind in religion, virtue, and equity.

Those who have been fortunate enough to go to Rome have probably seen the celebrated doves of Pliny in the museum of the Capitol. It is one of the finest specimens of ancient mosaics in existence. It represents four doves drinking. The mosaic is formed of natural stones, so small that a hundred and sixty pieces cover only a square inch. Pliny thus describes it:—

"At Pergamos is a wonderful specimen of a dove drinking, and darkening the water with the shadow of her head; on the lip of the vessel are other doves pluming themselves."

And lastly, stories are told of the benevolence of doves.

It is related of Semiramis, the celebrated Queen of Assyria, that as a baby she was exposed in a desert to die, but her life was preserved by doves for one whole year, till found by a shepherd, and brought up as his own child.

Again, of a child in Brittany, who, dumb from his birth, besought God earnestly to grant him speech. One day, when in the field keeping the cattle of his masters, he was overpowered with sleep. Suddenly he was enveloped in a mysterious light coming from the east, and in the midst of this light there appeared a dove of snowy whiteness; it touched his lips and caressed his face, and the child arose healed, and related what had occurred with his own lips.

One could give many more such stories, but enough has been said to show the character of this bird for gentleness, purity, kindness, and the appreciation of these qualities by all peoples of the earth.

(To be continued.)

* Logan.

* A collection of lives of saints made in the thirteenth century, so valuable for the picture they give of mediæval manners, customs, and thoughts, that they were called legends worth their weight in gold.



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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

DOVES' DOWN;

OR,
PIGEON LIFE.

By EMMA BREWER.

CHAPTER III. THE CARRIER PIGEON.

"I felt like the messenger pigeon flying home."—*Jane Eyre*.

THE habits and manner of life of the dove appeal to us all. Everything about it is interesting—whether it be the beauty and purity of its plumage, the swiftness of its flight, its love of home, its gentleness, its travels, or its attachment and service to man; and yet we knew scarcely anything about this bird until old John Moore, the friend of Pope, published his "Columbarium" in 1735. It is a curious old book, and so rare that I think only one original copy exists, and that is at the British Museum; it is quite worth seeing. Since its publication, however, it has been the delight of many to seek for knowledge concerning the habits and varieties of the dove, and to dot down their experiences.

At what period man added the dove to his list of domestic feathered retainers is not accurately known, but it must have been at a very remote period. What we do know is that we English have to thank the Romans for teaching us how to build our dovecots.

In varieties outside the carrier pigeon, between whom and man an intimate relation has always existed, people did not formerly very much interest themselves: it is otherwise now; we have learned that each variety has its own interesting features and characteristics.

In former days it was a privilege of noble birth to keep a dovecot. In Provence, for example, in the time of Louis XIV., no one of inferior position could possess one. A seigneurial tree at the gateway, a weathercock on the chateau, and a dovecot, were each and all signs that a family was ancient and of high birth.

In Ispahan a dovecot is still looked on as a great privilege. There are at the present time above three thousand in that city, but they are the exclusive privilege of the natives; no Christian may possess one.



THE PRINCESS OF WALES FEEDING THE PIGEONS IN THE PIAZZA OF ST. MARK, VENICE.

With us it is different; the dove itself has broken down the barrier, and delights to grace with its presence our castles and our barns, our cathedrals and our workhouses, our seats of learning and our homes alike.

In Egypt it appears that the pigeon houses are reckoned an important part of the husbandman's estate, and it is a proverb in that country that "a man possessed of dovescots need not be careful about the disposal of his daughter."

By the Indians, also, a pigeon roost or dovecot is considered an important source of national profit, and we shall see as we get on why this is so.

Pigeons are not confined to one or to a few countries. Go where one will, to the desolate and rugged range of cliffs as far north as Cape Wrath or on the wild precipices of the Orkneys, to sunny India or the primeval forests of America, to the rocky ravines near Genesareth or on the rocks round Norfolk Island, to our own charming woods and picturesque villages, to the Piazza of St. Mark's, Venice, the Gardens of the Tuileries in Paris, or the English gardens in Munich, the doves are sure to be there, greeting the traveller in their peculiarly graceful way, and fascinating him by the bright colours glittering on their breasts as they move to and fro. Our own Prince and Princess of Wales experienced the pleasure of being greeted by the doves while passing through Venice, recently, and showed their appreciation of the greeting by feeding the pretty, graceful creatures with their own hands in the Piazza of St. Mark. Desolate indeed would be the spot unfrequented by the dove.

There are as many as seventy different kinds of pigeon, which may account for their being found in every variety of clime. All of these derive their origin from the species known as the rock dove, which, in its wild state, is spread throughout the whole world. All the varieties breed with each other and with the wild rock dove, and without due care they soon degenerate, as it is termed, and acquire the same form and colouring.

Of these varieties the most aristocratic is the carrier pigeon; and certainly none can be traced to so remote an antiquity. It is doubtless of Eastern origin. Some few among pigeon fanciers place the blue-rock pigeon side by side with the carrier, as of equal rank; but this is a matter of opinion.

The carrier is a grand bird, beautifully formed, with broad chest and very powerfully-jointed wings; and in every way fitted for long-continued and rapid flight.

As a rule the colour of a good carrier is black or dun, though occasionally one may be seen white or blue. Its power of seeing equally well an object at a distance of many miles and a minute seed half an inch off is remarkable; but other species possess this gift equally.

It has been a constant cause of wonder how this breed of pigeon obtained its name of carrier. Mr. Ure, a great lover of pigeons, and of whom men speak as "doo daft," says, it is simply because it has more genuine carrier blood in it than any other variety, while according to others the name was given when this bird was little better than a common carrier. Certainly it must have taken a long time and many steps in the advancing process to produce the beautiful form of the carrier as we have had it for the last forty years.

The dragoon, which has now dropped out of the ranks of pigeon life, was doubtless the carrier in the less advanced state. Another and very fanciful reason for its name, is that it was bestowed on account of its noble carriage.

Carrier pigeons are greatly attached to their homes or lofts, and the intelligence they display in finding their way back, and the eagerness with which they return, are not only remarkable, but are just those qualities which recommend them to our use. Though they

be carried a hundred miles away with their heads covered, they find no difficulty in returning. Neither does time wipe out the memory or the love of home, as the following anecdote will prove:—

"One day," says Mr. Ure, "when visiting my friend, he pointed out to me some beautiful black birds, saying, 'I have had those carriers for twelve months, and they were brought to me at night in baskets, and since they have been here they have only viewed their surroundings from a wired enclosure, which, as you see, is surrounded by trees.'

"The day was fine, and they were turned out in my presence. They flew up to the top of the dwelling-house, and looking about them for a few minutes, went off straight as a dart to their old loft at Broughton Ferry, where they were found next day."

The question will always remain a puzzle, "How do they know in what direction their home lies when at a very long distance from it?" They must use their eyes to a certain extent, otherwise how is it that the only occasions on which they fail to reach home is when the weather is foggy or misty. Pigeons are constantly sent from towns on the Continent and set at liberty in London, and unless fog hangs over the sea, the birds cross the Channel safely enough and regain their homes without difficulty. It is just one of those facts of natural history upon which we must be content to acknowledge ourselves baffled.

The first mention of the employment of pigeons as carriers is by Ovid, who lived some forty years before the Christian era. He tells us, in his *Metamorphoses*, that Taurosthenes, having gained the victory at the Olympian games, gave notice of it to his father in *Ægia* on the same day by a pigeon stained with purple.

When Greece was in its glory, carrier pigeons were constantly used to convey to distant places the names of the victors at the Olympian games.

Hirtius and Brutus, at the siege of Mutina (Modena), carried on a correspondence with each other by means of pigeons.

History is full of references to pigeons and their service in great emergencies. During the Crusades, for example, when Acre was besieged by King Richard, Saladin habitually corresponded with the besieged by means of carrier pigeons. A shaft, however, from an English crossbow brought one of these feathered messengers to the ground, and the stratagem was discovered.

During the siege of Paris by the Germans, in the late war, communication between the besieged and the world without was maintained almost entirely by means of carrier pigeons.

In Turkey and Persia carrier pigeons are bred and trained with great care. At first they are permitted short flights of half a mile, which gradually increase, till at length they return from the most distant parts of the kingdom.

Every Bashaw has a basket of pigeons, which have been bred in the seraglio. In any emergency, such as insurrection, he dispatches them with notices back to the seraglio, and of all methods of conveying news this is found to be the safest and quickest.

The pigeons of Aleppo used to be very famous, and served as couriers between Alexandretta and Bagdad, until about a hundred and fifty years ago, when the use of them was discontinued, in order to save them from the cruelty of the Kurd robbers. These pigeons were peculiar in that their nostrils were rough and swollen.

Before sending them on very long journeys it has always been the custom to wash the pigeons' feet with vinegar to keep them cool, lest the birds should stop on the way to bathe.

In my visits lately to many lighthouses I heard

a good deal about the carrier pigeons which were formerly at the Bell Lighthouse. It seems that several "carriers" were kept at Arbroath for the use of the keepers, who on going out to relieve the others always took a few birds with them for communication in case of need. They were the pure English fancy carrier. From losses by storms and want of skill in management, they died out, and no attempt has been made to replace them.

Very interesting experiments are going on in France for the purpose of testing the capacities of swallows to carry messages—in fact, to take the place of pigeons. Should the expectations be realised a training school for swallows will be established at St. Valérien.

It may be possible to teach them to bear messages through the air from one French garrison to another, but only during the summer months, for the swallow is a migratory bird, moved by instinct to wing her way south as autumn chills set in.

A very interesting experiment has been tried by the editor of an American paper, by which he proves that pigeons are swifter than electricity. In former years he found great difficulty in obtaining prompt telegraph and mail service for the delivery of news from camp to his office. This year he has hit upon the expedient of substituting delivery by carrier pigeons, which has proved a great success.

Every morning at 9.30 his brother, a corporal, starts two birds with despatches, closely written on tissue paper, attached to their legs. On a certain day a telegram announcing the departure of the carriers was sent to the editor half an hour in advance, and the birds arrived one hour before the telegram. The distance is seventy miles, and is covered by the birds in one hour and six minutes.

A short time since, during the Emperor William's stay at Springe, experiments were made on a large scale with carrier pigeons. About one hundred and twenty of these birds were engaged in carrying military news from Springe, and the success of the trials was complete.

Mr. Gerard Walker, of Lincolnshire, in September sent a very interesting account to the *Times*, of how to his knowledge carrier pigeons were trained to be special messengers of telegrams between post-offices and country houses situate some miles apart, and spoke specially of a family who had used them for years.

It seems they live five miles from the postal telegraph office, and when sending into the town, which is of constant occurrence, a small box containing pigeons bred at the park is sent in by the dogcart. These birds are taken possession of by a grocer living near the post-office, who in return sends back to the park pigeons bred close to his shop in the town.

When a telegram arrives for the park, it is taken across the street to the grocer, who rolls it up and ties it round the neck of one of the park pigeons, so that the roll lies across the upper part of the bird's breast. The pigeon is then liberated, and in about ten minutes from the time of despatch the telegram is delivered at the park five miles distant.

The same process is repeated with the grocer's pigeons if a reply is required. The platform leading into the pigeon house is connected with an electric bell in the hall, which rings as the bird alights. The servants hearing this at once go to untie it from the bird.

There must, says this gentleman, be many country homes in England where a pigeon post could be established with advantage, and would certainly be more interesting and economical than the ordinary telegram delivery.

I was so interested in this account that I felt I might be allowed to introduce it here for those who had not already seen it.

The carrier pigeon has just been turned to a

curious use in Russia, viz., that of conveying negatives of photographs taken in a balloon. The first experiment was made a short time since from the cupola of the Cathedral of Isaac, and the subject photographed was the Winter Palace. The plates were packed in

envelopes impervious to the light, and then tied to the feet of the pigeons, who quickly carried them to the station at Volgovo.

There are not wanting romances which have been brought to a successful issue by means of doves; indeed, there is no knowing in what

phases of human life they have not taken part.

How to rear and train these birds, and what houses they require, will be spoken of later.

(To be continued.)

THE GIRLS OF TO-DAY.

By A TEMPLAR.



AN article has recently appeared in one of our influential reviews, entitled "The Women of To-day." The authoress is a lady of rank, and the subject of her essay is the terrible demand made upon the time

and strength of those who, like herself, belong to what the society journals delight to call the wealthy and leisured classes.

The title of the essay is, however, so broad and comprehensive that Lady Catherine Milnes Gaskell can hardly have intended her descriptions to apply solely to the "nobility and gentry," but to refer, though in a lesser degree, to that happier and more numerous middle class to which I imagine a great number of the readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER are privileged to belong.

Stories of the privations of the poor women-workers in the east of London are, alas! painfully familiar, but a statement in a magazine of authority and importance, that ladies and young girls of education and position are suffering keenly from the exacting social demands made upon them, is a curious and suggestive fact. Hitherto we have been taught to imagine that they only who need to work for their daily bread and butter feel the rush and stress of modern life; but now we are informed that the old order changeth, and that the young ladies of the Happy Valley, who have been nursed in the lap of comfort if not of luxury, and who know nothing of the great problems of existence, are bending under a weight of social duties and requirements with which their grandmothers were happily unacquainted. Such is in brief the charge which the talented essayist brings against the times. It may not be unprofitable to glance at some of the particulars of her complaint, in order that those of my readers who are thus early in life discovering how much is required of them, may be consoled by a ventilation of their grievances, and that others who have not been awakened to the facts, may be brought to a proper sense of their responsibilities.

After alluding to the great revolutions wrought by modern science, and the increased hurry and excitement which have followed in the wake of the railway train and the electric telegraph, Lady Catherine Gaskell tells us that not only has a new standard of perfection been raised for women, but that new requirements have been added to the old code. The pleasant mediocrity of thirty years ago is not sufficient. The young lady who paints must produce pictures of far greater merit than "her aunt's roses entwined with auriculas." Her playing and singing must far excel her mother's rendering of the simple ballads which in days gone by enslaved the captain and charmed an after-dinner circle of elderly friends. She must, we are told, take an active share in charitable and even political work, and for such she must cultivate accurate habits of business. She

must speak fluently and logically in public, and must be able to converse in several languages. She must excel in tennis and cricket, and stalk over heather and turnips like Nimrod himself. If she has the responsibility of a household resting upon her, she must be ready to discharge duties infinitely more varied and complicated than those which were laid upon the ladies of a bygone generation. Housekeeping must be more artistic and refined, and yet faithful attention must be paid to the thousand trifles or "petty things of life," which, if neglected, "place a household in chaos, and make every member uncomfortable."

"The petty burden of daily commonplaces," or what the Rev. John Keble called "the daily round, the common task," however, does not and must not fill up her time. A wider sympathy and larger and broader understanding of life are demanded of her. Men and women are meeting on equal terms, and the keen blade of the critic pays no heed to sex. "Women," says Lady Catherine Gaskell, "have no recognised leisure," and yet with all the manifold interruptions and claims upon them, they must be feminine Admirable Crichtons. This delightful essay, to which an abstract can do but scant justice, concludes with an amusing account of a modern lady who tries to get through some fourteen hours of "work" daily, and while endeavouring to cram in as much play as possible, strives hard to "grow a little soul," and to avoid nervous exhaustion.

Whatever we may think as to the absolute correctness and freedom from exaggeration in the above description of woman's occupations, it cannot be questioned that a vast, and, on the whole, beneficial change has been wrought during the past twenty or thirty years. Young girls are being educated as thoroughly as their brothers; and in many cases with far more satisfactory results. A smattering of French phrases, in the manner of Stratford-atte-Bowe, a little German, which was found useless the instant its fair possessor crossed the French frontier, a little morning exercise on the piano, a few crayon sketches executed by the drawing-master and signed by herself, all these things are happily banished to limbo.

It is, moreover, a subject of rejoicing that our sisters are cultivating broader interests, and acquiring far sounder judgments upon questions of literary and public importance, than did their mothers and grandmothers before them, and this without needing to sacrifice that girlish charm or womanly sweetness which the world would not exchange for all the libraries ever compiled, or for all the accomplishments guaranteed in the prospectus of a finishing school. "The Drawing-room Scrap Book," "The Chaplet of Flowers," "The Amulet," and the other frivolous literary trifles upon which the minds of girls and women a generation or two ago were expected to feed and flourish, have been replaced by books of real worth and permanent interest.

The opportunities, moreover, of outdoor

exercise, and the freer association with her brothers' friends, enable the girl of to-day to acquire a healthy body as well as a sound and vigorous mind. At lawn tennis young ladies are often victors over their more muscular opponents, just as in Virgil's epic the fleet Camilla routed some of the bravest paladins of the Pious Æneas. The tedious croquet mallet is naturally discarded for the more energetic racquet, while the prim propriety of our mother's maiden aunt would have been shocked by the frequent spectacle of flannel-clad maidens "wielding the willow," or "trundling the leather" in the cricket field, and stumping their opponents with the zest of a public schoolboy who has just got his eleven.

All these things, I fully admit, are indicative of a profound change in the position of the girls of to-day, but I venture to think that while in the past too little was expected from the gentler sex, and their powers and attainments altogether undervalued, that the tendency of Lady Catherine Gaskell and other writers is to exaggerate this change, and to regard the demand made upon the "women of to-day" as far more severe than it actually is. Girls used to be considered as of inferior social importance to the members of the sterner sex; they now are rightly raised to an equality. Surely it is a little premature to preach a universal "Place aux Dames," and to reverse the usual order of the genders by making the feminine precede in importance the masculine and neuter.

It is hardly necessary to point out, for example, that the power of speaking fluently and idiomatically several languages is rarely possessed by or required from young Englishwomen, however well educated; and the art of holding forth on the public platform is—I was going to say fortunately—a still more rare accomplishment, and one that may possibly be neglected without immediate loss to the community. Young ladies, moreover, while stimulated to long rambles in common-sense garments, may safely leave Lady Gaskell's turnips untrodden, without sacrificing one iota of influence or social advantage.

The fact that I desire to urge is, that girls are required by modern opinion either to be moderate all round performers, or to excel in some special accomplishment or pursuit. The world is not unreasonable, and does not call girls to paramount excellence in all things which make up cultured womanhood, any more than it calls Robert Browning to be a painter, John Millais to be a musician, or William Ewart Gladstone to be a burlesque actor. It asks for the development of latent ability, or, as Carlyle has it, it requires of us that we produce something.

If a maiden give promise of exceptional ability in music, she is required neither by common sense nor by the bogey of society to distinguish herself as a poet. If she devote herself to any of the varied forms of art, and can limn canvases of special excellence, no demand is made upon her to witch the world with harp or violin. If she dedicate her life to the solving of the perplexing problems of social science,



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DOVES' DOWN; OR, PIGEON LIFE.

By EMMA BREWER.

CHAPTER IV.

"God taught the bird to build its nest
Of wood and hay and moss;
God taught her how to weave it best,
And lay the twigs across."

It is possible to learn a good deal of the character and habits of individuals by their houses and their home life; for example, the crofter's hut, the artisan's cottage, the student's

library, the banker's mansion, the traveller's lodging, the gipsy's tent, each and all convey to our minds distinct notions about the people who occupy them.

Just so is it with the houses and homes of doves—not those we make for them, but those of their own forming; they vary according to the habits and daily life of the families living in them.

A glance into one suffices to assure us of the class or clan of dove inhabiting it, and whether its practice is to remain at home during the year or to travel abroad; whether it holds the freehold in perpetuity, or is simply a tenant on short lease; whether it prefers a wild, rough life on the cliffs or a retreat in the



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THE PRISONER'S FRIENDS.

woodlands. The architect takes all these circumstances into consideration when mapping out the plans, and this accounts for the congruity which always exists between the house and its inmates.

The home of the wild pigeon or stock dove is found in the holes of rocks, in old towers, and in the hollows of trees, but never in the branches. They have to change their lodgings very often in consequence of a peculiarity of the family, which is never to bring up two sets of children in the same nest, and they often find as much difficulty in securing new lodgings as poor people looking for rooms in London.

The peculiarity is that the nest is never cleared of the "ordure" or filth of the young, consequently it fills up the hollow, which is never very deep, and necessitates a change of apartments every time there is to be a new family, which is several times in the year. Once or twice, when the difficulties of finding what they wanted made them desperate, they really had a stand-up fight with some starlings and woodpeckers, who were after the same apartments, and, of course, poor things, not being great at fighting, they came off second best.

"The smallest worm will turn being trodden on,
And doves will peck in safeguard of their brood."

—Hensy VI., Part 3.

Many an ivy-covered tower in the land gives shelter to this family of doves. When a girl, I have often seen them in a corner of the belfry of the old church of the village where I stayed, and have watched them for hours together, as I sat reading, every now and then feeding them; but Jean Ingelow, who had evidently seen and done the same thing, has told her experience in a manner at once picturesque and graceful.

"We peeped into the bell chamber of the cathedral, and there, in a hole, we saw a nest full of newly-fledged pigeons; two of them fluttered on to the floor as we ran in. We took them and tied them loosely in Snap's handkerchief. In one corner of the chamber lay several nests with eggs in them."

In Homer's time, 950 B.C., they must have been equally attached to old towers, for he refers to the doves in the following lines:—

"Messé's towers for silver doves renowned."

Now the Ringdove, or Cusht family, on the contrary, seeks its home in the branches of trees. Its members are not particular, they can accommodate themselves equally well in the branch of a lofty pine, on a spray of holly, or in a leafy hedgerow.

Having decided which it is to be, they erect a rough sort of platform of loose sticks, on which subsequently the mother dove lays her two snowy-white eggs. As we regard them, we fear they will fall through, and that when hatched, the little ones will die of exposure and cold, for we know that they are born naked and helpless and blind, quite unlike other birds. We need not fear, however; in the first place the mother will nurse them longer than feathered babies are, as a rule, nursed; and in the second, the "ordure," being purposely allowed to remain, forms, in time, a sort of strong, scentless plaster, which increases the consistency of the nest, and affords a sufficient protection against outside influences. A family of these have, from time immemorial, made their home in the gardens of the Tuileries, in those of the Luxembourg, and in the Champs Elysées. They are very tame, and it is quite one of the sights of Paris to see the old

man in the Tuileries attracting them round him, and distributing crumbs of bread and grains of maize among them. Many take the crumbs from between his fingers, and even from his mouth, and allow themselves to be caressed without showing any fear.

I never lost an opportunity of seeing the feeding of the doves at the entrance of the English Garden, in Munich. The woman, who comes out at twelve o'clock with her apron full of food, is, in a few minutes, covered with the birds—they light on her head, her shoulders, her arms, and the place where she stands is soon surrounded by them.

She treats them as if she knew each one by name, caressing some and chiding others, and all the time looking that each one gets its proper meal. It is certainly a very pretty sight.

But the most pathetic was one I saw last week, when looking over a workhouse in an agricultural district, inhabited only by very old people and imbeciles. The one thing of grace and beauty in it was an exquisite blue rock dove, which came towards the master, as he was showing us the outhouses, lighted on his shoulder, and nestled up to him.

It seems that, many months ago, on a bleak winter day, as the master was sitting in his office, writing, it flew through the window towards the fire, and probably, from faintness and hunger, fell into it. Its feet and wings were sadly burnt, and one of the old men, almost an imbecile, nursed it back to health.

It is now quite well and tame, and is the pleasure and delight of the inmates. Its lodging is at the back of the house, but it often pays a visit to the master's office, which is in the front.

Strange to say, it will have no company. Several times the master has tried to introduce another dove into its loft, but it has made Charlie, as the old people call it, so shy and uncomfortable that they leave it now to its own company. One man, quite an idiot, is devoted to it, and tends it with the greatest gentleness; the understanding between them is perfect.

The passenger pigeons' nests exactly suit their habits of life. They are travellers, and do not require a settled home, they therefore interlace a few dry twigs and place them in the forked branch of a tree; it is a poor home, but sufficient for their purpose, and it shows distinctly that the builders are guided in its formation by the conditions of their daily life. A peculiarity of this family is that the hen rarely lays more than one egg at the time, and no doubt this is also considered when they are building.

They are remarkable for their love of travelling and for their liking for society; the former, it is said, is engendered by necessity, for they have to seek their food far and wide.

Then the turtle dove, which is but a spring visitor, is content with a mere platform of twigs, with little or no cavity on which to lay its eggs, but it is very particular that its home shall be in the midst of thick woods, for it is very shy and retiring.

The wood pigeon, again, whose cooing is the first decisive symptom of the approach of spring, is an instance of a combined method of making their homes, some choosing trees, while others prefer the ground; but in either case, they like to build in the immediate vicinity of a human dwelling; indeed, there is no bird breeds nearer to the abode of man than this. They must, however, have woods within a short distance.

In those about Dunrobin Castle wood pigeons may be seen in great numbers.

"From the woods
Came voices of the well-contented doves."*

Again, the beautiful and interesting rock dove, as a rule, makes its home in the crevices and caverns of the wild sea coasts of the north, utterly fearless of the constant beating of the waves and the dashing of the surf. Here she brings up her young, apart from the haunts of men, though alas! not always secure from the falcon.

We have sat for hours on the rocky shore at Durness watching them as they flitted to and fro on the very spray of the breakers, heeding not the roaring of the waves. They seemed to be always on the move, seeking food in the small fields about Durness, and carrying it to their fastnesses. It struck me that these doves, more than any other class, are types of self-reliance and independence. Their eggs are most difficult to get. We have seen the people going with ladders at low tide to try and get to the mouths of the caves, but they rarely succeeded in obtaining eggs.

It is this class of pigeon, when reduced to a sort of domesticity, that live about our buildings and give life to the roofs and chimneys, and sun their milky bosoms on the thatch, and, as Jean Ingelow puts it, "walk daintily up the steep roof with their small red feet while they utter their plaintive call."

Their bright colouring lends picturesqueness even to a common barn.

The ring pigeon of Jamaica builds its nest in the most reclusive and dense mountain forests, so that to reach it it is necessary to penetrate into steep mountain woods abounding in prickly bushes, and tangled beyond all description by twining spiky plants, and one would never be able to secure these highly-prized birds but for the insects which drive them to the chimney of the woodman's cottage, where they hope the smoke will rid them of the creatures. It builds its nest in the middle of a tree all clothed with a dense mass of withes and creepers, and always selects the fork of the principal limbs. It has never been known to perch on an exterior twig or branch. It comes out occasionally to get the berries of the mistletoe.

Again, the Gourd, or crowned pigeon, with its slate-blue plumage and crest of barbless feathers, loves the ground for its home; it feeds upon fallen fruit, and only uses its wings when disturbed, or when it desires a roosting-place on some low branch. They move about the woods in small parties. Some friends who have resided in Jamaica tell me that the woods there resound to the plaintive and musical cooing of the ground doves, and that none but those who have listened to this music can tell what effect it produces on the mind—its tender melancholy communicates itself to those who listen, and creates a certain sympathy for what seems to be the complaint of gentleness in distress.

One could go on indefinitely showing that each family of doves may be distinguished by the house it inhabits; but there is another point of interest which may not be omitted, and that is that you can tell, by looking at their face, how they live and on what they feed.

We have seen that in this large family of doves or pigeons there are some who live wholly in trees, and others which are terrestrial, as it is called; and the main characteristic is their diet, which is composed almost entirely of the seeds of various plants and trees. If you look at them with care you will see that the beaks are not all alike—that they are, in fact, formed according to the size and structure of the seeds on which each family lives. Those which feed on cereal grain and seeds of small grasses and plants, like the common pigeon and turtle dove, have the beak very much elongated, feeble, and slender, while those doves which live on large fruits and berries have their beaks well arched and compressed.

* They probably derive their name "stock dove" from the circumstance of building their nests in the stocks or stumps of trees.

* Tennyson.

There is a group of doves in the tropics called nutmeg eaters, because at certain times of the year they feed on the covering of the nutmeg, which we call mace. The nutmeg is swallowed whole, and passes uninjured through the digestive organs of the bird, who has merely taken the covering. Wonderful to relate, the nutmeg in thus passing through the bird gets a mucous covering, which is necessary to the growth and fertility of the nut, and I believe from this circumstance an attempt has been made to obtain an artificial mixture of lime and other matter, in which the nuts are steeped for a certain time, and which is rendering the

growth easy. Another thing that you will find in those doves that perch, is that their hind toe is jointed quite low down, and that pigeons as a race have no membrane between the toes.

Of all months in the year February, if fine, is the busiest of all, for this is their marriage time. Should it turn out wet they postpone the marriages until March, for fine weather they must have.

To those interested in pigeons a visit to South Kensington would be interesting. In the centre of the hall stand two cases illustrating "the hybridisation of species in a

wild state and the variation of species under domestication." The pigeons have been chosen as an illustration of the latter, and round a dovecot there are representatives of the principal breeds of pigeons as descending from the blue rock doves, a pair of which are hovering near.

It is a beautiful collection, and the thanks of all lovers of pigeons are due to the two gentlemen, Mr. C. Williams and Mr. Salter, who, by the help of some friends, have arranged it.

(To be continued.)



A LOVER OF MUSIC.

The passion of De Luc, the natural philosopher, for music was so predominant in his latter days, that a piano was placed by his bedside, on which his daughter played a great part of the day. On the evening of his death, seeing her father ready to sink into a slumber, she asked him, "Shall I play any more?"

"Keep playing," he said, "keep playing!" He slept, but awoke no more.

WITHOUT AND WITHIN.—The beautiful in the heart is a million times of more avail in securing domestic happiness than the beautiful in the face.

THE LIGHT FANTASTIC TOE.—Swift called dancing "voluntary madness." The Chinese seem to think it useless fatigue. When Commodore Anson was at Canton, the officers of the *Centurion* had a ball upon some court holiday, and while they were dancing, a native who had been looking on said to one of the party, "Why don't you let your servants do this for you?"

TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD.

Truth is a subject which men will not suffer to grow old. Each age has to fight its own falsehoods; each man with his love of saying to himself and those around him pleasant things, and things serviceable for to-day, rather than things that are.

Yet a child appreciates at once the divine necessity for truth; never asks, "What harm is there in saying the thing that is not?" And an old man finds in his growing experience wider and wider applications of the great doctrine and discipline of truth.—*Hefls.*

LOVE OF LIBERTY.

When making a progress through his kingdom, Louis XIV. was told at Rouen that one of the inhabitants, a man seventy years old, had never been without the bounds of the city. The man was called before the King, and, being poor, a pension was given him upon the following condition—that he should forfeit the pension if ever he set foot out of the city.

The man, however, did not continue long at ease. Love of liberty prevailed over habit; his confinement became insupportable, and he lost his pension in six months.

THE TWIN SISTERS.

The following, a singularly graceful epitaph on twin sisters, is by a writer whose name no one seems to know:—

Fair marble, tell to future days

That here two virgin-sisters lie,
Whose life employed each tongue in praise,
Whose death gave tears to every eye.

In stature, beauty, years, and fame,

Together as they grew, they shone,

So much alike, so much the same,

That death mistook them both for one.

A PHILOSOPHIC MUSICIAN.—Handel's early oratorios were but thinly attended. The great composer would, however, often joke upon the emptiness of the house, which he said "Would make de moosic sound all de petter."

WHO INVENTED THE TUNING-FORK.—The inventor of the tuning-fork was John Shore, royal trumpeter in 1711, sergeant-trumpeter at the entry of George I. in 1714, and lutanist to the Chapel Royal in 1715.

IN REMEMBRANCE.—The test of an enjoyment is the remembrance which it leaves behind.—*Jean Paul.*

HEREDITARY BLUSHING.—The tendency to blush is inherited. Dr. Burgess gives the case of a family, consisting of a father, mother, and ten children, all of whom, without exception, were prone to blush to a most painful degree. The children were grown up; "and some of them were sent to travel in order to wear away this diseased sensibility, but nothing was of the slightest avail."—*Darwin.*

THE PHONOGRAPH FOR A WITNESS.

"Did I ever say all that?" he asked, despondently, as she replaced the phonograph on the mantelpiece.

"You did."

"And you can grind it out of that machine whenever you choose?"

"Certainly."

"And your father is a lawyer?"

"Yes."

"Mabel, when can I place the ring on your finger and call you my wife?"

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE SPITEFUL.

In the Middle Ages, malice and superstition found expression in the formation of wax images of hated persons, into the bodies of which long pins were stuck. It was confidently believed that in that way deadly injury would be done to the person represented. This belief and practice continued down to the seventeenth century.

The superstition, indeed, still holds its place in the Highlands of Scotland, "where," says a well-informed writer, "within the last few years a clay model of an enemy was found in a stream, having been placed there in the belief that as the clay was washed away, so would the health of the hated one decline."

WISE TEACHING.—The worst education which teaches self-denial is better than the best which teaches everything else, and not that.—*John Sterling.*

THE GOOD-NATURED GIRL.—Good nature is more agreeable in conversation than wit, and gives a certain air to the countenance which is more amiable than beauty. It shows virtue in the fairest light, takes off in some measure from the deformity of vice, and makes our folly and impertinence supportable.—*Addison.*

A RISE IN VALUE.—The plates of Turner's *Liber Studiorum*, which cost the subscribers only five shillings apiece, were so little esteemed that in the early quarter of the nineteenth century they were sometimes used for lighting fires. So much has fashion, or public taste, changed since then, that a fine proof of a single plate has sold for £210.

UPS AND DOWNS.

Good unexpected, evil unforeseen,
Appear by turns as fortune shifts the scene.
Some raised aloft come tumbling down again,
And fall so hard they rise and bound again.

of 1,500 years ago did not forget this last part of the transaction.

"A BOOK LOVER AND A LADY."

It has been wisely spoken, "Not what I have, but what I am, is my kingdom," and well we may believe might this have been said by the unknown lady who was laid to rest more than 1,800 years ago, her head pillowed upon the "Iliad." How she must have loved her Homer! We can picture her with her finely-chiselled features, and aspect

full of intellectual light, seated on a chair inlaid with ivory, her hand resting on her black hair, with the treasured papyrus unrolled before her, appealing to the poet's wisdom "when her own knowledge and power of thought failed her, led on into wider light and purer conception," as one of our own great teachers has taught us we should be by the right use of great books. The instinct to give to lady and poem renewed and decent burial is strong as we look at both; but we

may be comforted for the dead lady in reflecting that a book so dearly loved had been well used, leaving her the possessor of high thoughts and noble memories which *no time can touch*; and although, for the benefit of scholars, her skull and the Homer papyrus now rest in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the soul that "wonned on high" has carried with it a treasure that neither tomb-breaker nor antiquarian can take from it.

[THE END.]

DOVES' DOWN;

OR,
PIGEON LIFE.

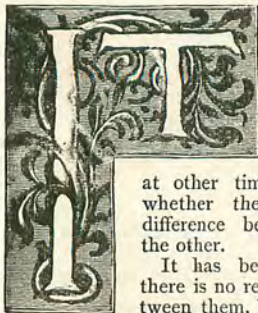
BY EMMA BREWER.

CHAPTER V.

MAN'S LOVE OF PIGEONS, AND THE RETURN THEY MAKE.

"He springs from his trap, he sails through the air,
Loud clapping his wings as he goes;
Now he's down on the roof, playing up to his hen,
See how neatly he trips on his toes.
They're off now together, and as they wheel round
You may hear the wind sigh through their wings,
Like the zephyrs so sweet through Æolus his harp
As they murmur their song through the strings."
—*J. C. Lyell.*

"Written legibly all over the resplendent beauty of the dove is the love of God."
—*Rev. J. Lucas.*



It may have been a subject of wonder to those who interest themselves in pigeons, why they should sometimes be called doves and at other times pigeons, and whether there is any real difference between one and the other.

It has been decided that there is no real distinction between them, but that they are one and the same, having derived the name of dove from the Anglo-Saxons, and pigeons from the Normans. One branch of the family has, however, never taken the name of dove, and that is the passenger pigeon of North America.

The French, in speaking of the dove, always use the Norman term "pigeon," the Italians evidently use the same "piccioni" and "pipione," while the Latin term for it is "pipio," a nestling that pipes or cries; the Germans, on the contrary, use the Anglo-Saxon* term, viz., "taube," or dove.

A great pigeon fancier has divided mankind into two classes, those who keep pigeons and those who do not. The former, he says, though in the minority, are by far the most important and the most to be envied, for from them the temptations to idleness are withdrawn, and while riding their hobby they gather strength and freshness to grapple with the real work of life.

A large number of pigeon fanciers love the birds for their own sake, and for the pure gratification they afford. "If I get worried

in business during the day, and I often do," said a lover of pigeons, "I come home in the evening and interest myself with the birds, and I forget the day's trouble in their company, and find a good night's rest when other men would miss it."

It is certain that the keeping of pigeons affords pure amusement to a great many people of all sorts and conditions. It is an inexpensive and an ennobling recreation when not carried to excess. Ure, who had as large an acquaintance among pigeon fanciers as any man living, says: "In the whole of my experience I never saw an instance of a real fancier being a degraded or an immoral man."

It is very much the same as being fond of flowers and cultivating them, for are not doves living flowers, beautiful in form and rich in colour. "Both the love of flowers and the love of doves is something akin to poetry: it must be born in one," says Mr. Lucas. "Pigeon-breeding is a consummate art, and the fancier is an artist."

Like most artists, too, he is enthusiastic, and of this we have proofs which extend back many centuries. "The Romans," said Pliny, "are mad with the love of these birds; they build towers for them on the tops of their roofs, and relate the high breeding and ancestry of each."

Then there was Akbar Khan of India (1600), a most extravagant fancier. He had over 20,000 pigeons, many of which he carried on his visits; indeed, he never went anywhere without them. It is believed he was the originator of crossing the breeds. In the present day Lyell, the great authority on pigeons, says: "I have seen the pigeons of the King of Oude, who is probably owner of the greatest number of choice pigeons in the world, his stock numbering thousands."

Many a poor man whom I know, being possessed of a few pigeons, would rather starve than sell them, let the need be ever so great. Pigeon fancying is not an unprofitable recreation either, for with patience, perseverance, and prudence on the part of the fancier, the birds multiply so fast that they outgrow their dwellings, and then some of them must perforce be parted with and frequently at a good price. Mr. Lucas relates an instance of a blind fancier of pigeons. "The birds and he were great friends and constant companions. He sat in his loft, and they alighted on his head, his shoulders, and his knees. He could not see them, but he heard them. He would sit quietly thus for hours, the sun shining upon his sightless eyes and silvery head, surrounded by his feathered friends, listening to the flutter of their wings and the language of their cooings. He was content and joyous. If one of his children entered the loft they caught a bird, described it, and put it into the father's hand. He fondled it a short time and let it go."

While they are kept for love they keep the

harp of life in tune, but when money enters into the calculation the love recedes into the background, or altogether disappears; the birds are then like any other article of commerce.

Spitalfields, not a very romantic place, seems to have been the cradle of the fancy, and is thus explained. After the massacre of the Huguenots in France, many silk weavers, to escape persecution, came to London and settled in Spitalfields, bringing with them their two hobbies of cultivating tulips and breeding pigeons, as well as their trade of silk-weaving.

To love flowers and birds is to be made better by loving them, and certainly this love was the one refining feature in their hard, monotonous lives. "If you have not something to enjoy in life you are a living grave," says Charles Kingsley. In 1824 these poor French weavers fell into depressed circumstances, and their tulips and doves had to go to the highest bidder, leaving Spitalfields desolate, for up to that time every house and tavern had pens for pouters. It is said that the light seemed to go out of the lives of these French refugees with the departure of the objects of their love and care.

Of course another condition of things obtains where the birds are kept and trained for money, for then, no matter how graceful and ornamental a creature may be, or how poetic and sacred its associations, man has no scruple in subjecting it to his will and making it subservient to his use.

He learns its habits, its weak points, and the proper time to come in with power, and it is even so between man and pigeons. It is nothing to him that the harmony and brilliant colouring of the dove's plumage surpasses the utmost efforts of human artists, or that it is the image of the innocent and graceful—it has a commercial value which absorbs the interest and excites the energies of the man who possesses it.

Of course there is nothing wrong about this—it is one way of earning daily bread; but it is not keeping them for love, nor does it have the same recreative and reposeful influence upon those who keep them.

The first public show of pigeons in London was held at the Baker Street Bazaar, in 1852, under the patronage of Prince Albert. I have heard that the Queen has a beautiful collection of doves.

Doves have in all ages been mixed up with history, and their influence and appearance have ever been accounted good, gentle, and fortunate.

It is stated as an historical fact that at the coronation of King Arthur of England, four kings walked before him each holding a sword of gold, whilst before the queen walked four more kings each carrying a white pigeon, according to custom; white pigeons being esteemed a happy omen.

* Anglo-Saxon is the mother tongue of the present English.

During the coronation of the French kings in the Cathedral of Rheims a number of white pigeons were liberated within the sacred edifice. This custom continued down to the coronation of Charles X.

It is a curious fact that the rude Hungarian warriors of the tenth century dreaded pigeons, and were very superstitious concerning them. It seems in one instance that a band of these men approached the Abbey of Lobbes for the purpose of plunder. The monks and the villagers took refuge in the church of St. Mary, which they fortified, resolving to defend themselves valiantly. In vain, however, for the besiegers were many in number, and monks and villagers saw themselves threatened with captivity or death. "All at once, by Divine goodness," says the historian, "two pigeons came out of the church and flew three times round the Hungarian forces." At the same time a heavy shower fell, relaxing their strings, and preventing the barbarian forces from accomplishing their purpose. Panic-struck they fled, and the chiefs used their whips on the few who desired to continue the conflict.

It does not surprise us that so beautiful and gentle a creature as the dove should be drawn into taking part in pageants of coronations and processions, for they give grace and poetry to the occasions; but it does astonish us to hear that one of our health-giving cities owes its celebrity to the sagacity of pigeons.

It appears* that when Cheltenham was but small and little known, one of its streams attracted a constant and numerous band of pigeons. This roused the curiosity of some clever people residing in the neighbourhood, who observed that the attraction consisted of certain white crystals left on the banks by the evaporation of the water. On being examined, these crystals were found to possess valuable medicinal properties, and the water which held them in solution soon became famous,

* Holiday number of *Medical Record*.

and drew the sick thither from all parts of the kingdom.

The pigeon, which is associated in our minds with the idea of a messenger, has been turned to the most varied uses by the ingenuity and caprice of man. It has been impressed into the cause of love, into the horrors of war, in saving life and preserving public safety, as well as being made the instrument of affording wealth to a large number of people in various quarters of the world. Even the great family of the Rothschilds owe something of their wealth to this gentle bird, who brought them news of the battle of Waterloo and informed them of the defeat of Napoleon three days before the British Government were aware of it, and they were thus enabled to buy up a large portion of national securities, which stood at a very low figure.

In the future it is impossible to say how important a part they will play. It will be quite within their powers to decide the fate of great armies and powerful nations by their speed, accuracy, and instinct. The work on which they are now engaged, viz., of communicating between vessels at sea and people on land, is of no slight benefit, for if one thinks of it a ship on the high seas stands utterly alone, and is cut off from all communication with the land. It has been proved that a pigeon despatched seventy miles from land will fly direct to its home, and it will cover a distance in three or four hours that would take a ship fourteen or fifteen.

Both in England and Germany they are largely used to insure the safety of coasting vessels, while in Spain they are employed for the prevention of smuggling; but the most extensive and important use to which they have been and are being put is that of military communication. The work that pigeons did in the siege of Paris was enormous. Three hundred and sixty-three were employed, but only seventy-three out of this number returned to Paris, and they traversed backward and forward five or six times. The number of official despatches alone sent by them was 156,000,

besides a million of letters sent through them by private individuals at fifty centimes (5d.) a word.

The method of conveying the messages has varied from time to time. We have seen that Taurosthenes tied a purple band round the neck of his pigeon when he desired to convey his success in the Olympian games to his father. Later on messages were written on parchment and fastened under the wing of the bird. Not until 1840 was the message written on paper, and inserted into the quill of one of the feathers of the tail, which had to be cut for the purpose. Somewhat later silk, being a little lighter, took the place of paper, but even this was at times too heavy, for the pigeon can only carry the weight of one gramme. The experiments of clever men like Barnesville and Dagron have resulted in this, that fifteen hundred lines of print need not weigh more than a gramme.

Every town of importance in Germany has now its pigeon stations; France also has eight, and Russia three.

A pathetic adventure was related lately* of a pigeon which had been trained for service at the Arsenal of Pola. The Empress of Austria, in sailing from Pola to Corfu, took this pigeon on board her yacht, having arranged to let it fly at a certain distance from the coast with a letter for her daughter, the Archduchess Marie Valérie, who was living some distance inland.

It was supposed that the bird would return to its home in Pola, and orders were given to forward the contents of the letter by telegraph to the young Duchess.

Unfortunately, a peasant with a gun saw the pigeon in its flight, and shot it. He did not notice the letter, which was no doubt blown off by the shot, and so, while he bore home the Empress's winged messenger for supper, the letter remained on the ground. It was accidentally found a few days afterward.

* *The Times*, Nov. 15th, 1889.

(To be continued.)

ELSIE'S VICTORY.

By E. CHILTON.

CHAPTER III.

THE sun had gone down, and the harvest fields lay lonely in the twilight, when the Restrigg carriage rolled up to the grey old vicarage.

"Good - night," cried Elsie, cheerily, to the coachman. Her heart felt like the skylark which she had watched as it soared into the heights. The world and her youth were beautiful; the past had known dark days, but the future, oh, that was golden! Who could tell what lay hidden in its haze? And meanwhile, perhaps, a month at Restrigg!

She looked into the drawing-room. Her sisters, with their governess, Miss Lowndes, were sitting round the table engaged in needlework, while the boys by turns read aloud. Elsie softly closed the door, and knocked at the neighbouring door of the study.

"Come in," said her father's resigned tones. He looked up from his great book beside the shaded lamp.

"It is you, Elsie! I am glad to see you back. Bobbie has been in trouble again."

Elsie's bright countenance fell.

"He was rude to Miss Lowndes, and I have punished him by her desire. No doubt she was right; the rest are perfectly happy with her. Your friend Hilda, too, thinks no one like her. It must be the child's own fault, and yet—I never had this trouble with the elder boys. But they had their mother."

He sighed heavily, resting his head upon his hand; and in that moment Elsie resolved—

"I will be Bobbie's mother."

"I'll go up to him," she said. Already in the place of that vague Eden of her fancy stood Bobbie's little figure, all alone, and she heard a dead voice repeating anxious words which it had uttered in reality years ago—

"I fear that some day there will be a terrible fight between the angel and the devil in Bobbie!"

"But the angel shall win," said Elsie, in her heart, as she ran upstairs.

Bobbie slept in a tiny chamber opening from her own. She stole in the soft twilight to his bedside. He was still under seven, and small of his age; but his little face was strangely hard and shrewd.

"Why, my Bobbie! Not asleep yet? What has been the matter?"

"The matter? Nuffin," said Bobbie.

If he were glad to see her he did not show

it. He lay staring straight before him at the darkening window-panes. Elsie rested her cheek against his white head, and clasped his passive little hand.

"Father is so grieved about you, darling. How can you bear to grieve dear father?"

"It's old Lowndes what grieved him."

"Oh, Bobbie!"

"Well, her name is Lowndes! I can't be always saying 'Miss'; it tires my tongue!"

"But what did you do to vex her?"

"I didn't do nuffin. I only asked her if she'd ever been up in the stars."

"It couldn't have been only that."

"Well, she was teaching us nonsense, and I told her she made it up out of her own head."

"Bobbie, I don't wonder she was angry."

"But how can she know about the stars? She hasn't ever been up there."

"Her brother is very learned; he's what is called an astronomer. When you are old enough you shall read his book. He has found out all kinds of wonderful things."

"I know. She told me. And I saw his photograph. And I don't like his face. He purtends. He tells old Lowndes for fun, because she's silly. I don't care what silly women says. I mean to find out everyfin for myself when I'm a man."

"When you are a man you'll be wiser. You are only such a foolish little boy now, my Bobbie."

ALL FOR LOVE.

By THE REV. WILLIAM COWAN, M.A.

I MET her first in country lanes
Wet with the dew of morning hours,
The glow of health upon her cheek,
And in her hand a bunch of flowers;

The wild flowers of the time she plucked—
Campion, hawkweed, and proud foxglove,
The starry stitchwort, sweet wild rose,
And bright blue speedwell, all for love.

For love she gathered all, and made,
With lissom fingers, bouquet fair;
'Twas not to grace her simple hat,
Nor on her modest bosom wear.

Within the dark street of a town,
Where seldom reached a brightening ray,
A young life who, in earlier years,
The country loved, now ebbs away.

It was to cheer her lonely couch
Young Pauline plucked the lovely flowers—
The sweet memorial of a time
When she, too, hailed the summer hours.

And where the cry of need was heard,
And where the heart was touched with woe,
There Pauline's hand was near to help,
And Pauline's tears were swift to flow.

And in the school to her, I saw,
A wealth of children's love was given;
They clung with gladness round her knees,
And listened while she spoke of heaven.

A light of joy was on her face,
The symbol sure of inward peace;
And in her eyes, the homes of truth,
The world might read how deep her bliss

Quick, sympathetic, bright, and kind,
She moved about in love's behest,
And young and old, and sick and sad,
Rose as she passed, and called her blest.

Oh, life! how beautiful thou art,
When thus inspired by holy love,
And, queen-like, robed in kindly deeds,
While moving to the home above.



DOVES' DOWN;

OR,

PIGEON LIFE.

By EMMA BREWER.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PASSENGER PIGEON.

"By studying Nature, our understandings are instructed and our curiosity gratified."—Boyle.

THIS bird is so peculiar, and indulges in its peculiarities to such an extent, that it deserves a small chapter to itself. It is distinguishable from other species of pigeons by its size and its plumage. The plumage of head and upper part of the neck is light slate colour, the throat and sides a reddish hazel, the lower part of the neck and sides a bright golden green and purplish crimson. The female bird is about half an inch shorter, and the plumage a little less vivid.

The stories related of this pigeon are so extraordinary that they might stand side by side with "Jack the Giant-killer," or any other old-fashioned nursery fable, only that those of the passenger pigeon are true, while the others are mere "creatures of the fancy."

The most remarkable of the characteristics of these pigeons is their associating together, both in their travels and during the breeding-time, in such immense numbers as quite to surpass belief; and look where one may among the feathered tribe it has no parallel.

The plague of locusts may bear some resemblance, as regards numbers. All the wonderful stories related of them are the result of this characteristic. They have no settled home, for the very best of reasons, viz., that no ordinary neighbourhood can supply them with food. They move about in such numbers, and the food they require is so immense in quantity, that a single wood, however well supplied with beech-nut, their favourite food, would scarce give them a meal. They are compelled, therefore, to be ever on the move, if they would not starve; having eaten up the whole produce in one district, they move on to another, darkening the air as they go with their numbers.

It is thought that in the 8th verse of the 60th chapter of Isaiah* allusion is made to this species of dove, which move about in such compact masses that they resemble a heavy cloud, and one so dense as to obscure the rays of the sun.

They can see from a great height the places which will furnish them with the food they require, and give them opportunities of roosting. The noise they make in travelling is like that of "a strong breeze among the cordage of a ship, the sails of which are furled." Unfor-

tunately for them, therefore, their movements are known to the whole country round. What they look for in their travels is a district famous for the beech-tree-bearing nuts. About the time when snow begins to fall the ground is covered with the nuts, which have been blown down by the gales. These nuts remain under the snow during winter, and about the time when the warmth of spring causes them to vegetate, myriads of pigeons are attracted, and so long as their favourite food lasts, so long they remain.

In and about these beech woods there are always low swampy pieces of ground, overgrown with tall coarse grass, and around the margins alder bushes grow in profusion, and it is these that the birds make their roosting-places—why, it is difficult to say, as the forest trees in the vicinity would certainly afford them greater security; but they have always shown a preference for the alders, and they ought to know best what is good for them. This is all very well for a roosting-place, but can you imagine the difficulty these birds find *themselves in when the period of incubation draws near?* There they are in *millions*, not thousands, wanting permanent lodgings between the 10th or 12th of April and the 20th of May—and they must be lodgings which will provide board also.

* "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?"

Such lodgings are few and far between, and the owners would *think twice*, if they could think at all, as to the advisability of receiving these boarders, notwithstanding that the pay they offer is good; for at the end of the month or five weeks they would know that there would not be a sound timber left in the domain, nor a nut in the larder, and that the creatures seeking what they can devour would render their former home uninhabitable, even if nothing else did.

But numbers mean power, and having found a rich forest, long, wide, and dense, the passenger pigeons ask no leave, but at once take possession; and it would pay any one of us well if we could take a trip to the backwoods of America, and see with our own eyes the sight, which has no equal in the world. Other people have, however, been fortunate enough to witness it, and the description they have given of it would be set aside as too impossible were it not that the narrators happen to be people of undoubted veracity. Fancy a wood, some forty miles long, with a width of several miles, every tree heavily laden with nests of loose twigs, and presenting a perfect tumult of crowding and fluttering pigeons! Try, if you please, to walk through any part of the wood during the month when the pigeons are in possession, and you will discover at once the difficulties of the task.

To begin with, the ground is covered to the depth of several inches with the dung of the birds; and in addition to this impediment to movement, it is strewn with broken limbs of trees, eggs, and young pigeons. And this is not all; there is a danger, as you walk under these fluttering millions, of being struck by large branches which, owing to the intense weight of the creatures which have made them their home, are constantly coming down with a crash, and destroying hundreds of birds in their fall; and still further, there is the disagreeable fact that before you have been in the wood half an hour your clothes would have a perfect covering of manure.

If this is a picture of the scene under the trees, what must it be above and within them? If you look you will see numbers of hawks, buzzards, and eagles sailing about overhead, seizing the young from their nests with the greatest ease, and keeping the poor parent birds in a constant fright.

As to the trees themselves, they present a perpetual tumult of crowding, fluttering multitudes of pigeons, the flapping of whose wings sounds like thunder.

For an illustration of overcrowding and its evil results, London, with its vast population, is nowhere in comparison with one of these

forests in America, at the period of incubation of the pigeons.

A great authority declares that the number settling in one of these breeding-places, roughly speaking, cannot be less than two thousands of millions—I write them in words that there may be no mistake; and reckoning that each would require half a pint of food daily, they would get through about seventeen millions of bushels every twenty-four hours.

The scene we have described is but the commencement of the five weeks' picture. As soon as the young ones are fully grown, and before they leave the nests, large parties of settlers from all parts of the surrounding country, both Indians and white people, may be seen drawing near to this giant nursery, with their wagons, tools, cooking utensils, and beds, evidently intending to make a merry and a busy time of the ingathering pigeon harvest. You will notice that the pole, club, and axe, together with pots of sulphur, are the weapons generally used, and not powder and shot, which are expensive articles in the backwoods.

The poor horses as they draw near the forest are terrified at the noise made by the pigeons, which is so great that it is quite impossible to hear a person speak, and the owners of the horses have enough to do to pacify them.

An encampment is quickly formed—no time is wasted—fires are lighted, astonishing and confounding the poor birds—and in a short time there commences such a scene of uproar and confusion as would be difficult to equal.

The men take their axes and cut down those trees that seem to be most crowded with nests, and they cut them in such a manner that in falling each tree brings one or more with it, and thus at one fall as many as two hundred young ones are obtained, little inferior in size to the old ones, and almost one mass of fat;* in the words of the nursery rhyme, "Down comes baby, cradle and all."

When the people are tired of cutting down and picking up the birds, the bags and sacks are put in requisition, and such as are approved are huddled in by scores, while the rejected ones are left to die of hunger or of their wounds.

Wagon-loads of pigeons are poured into the markets, and are eaten at breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper, till the very name of pigeon is sickening, even as salmon is in Scotland at some seasons of the year.

* By many of the white people and Indians the fat is melted and used as a substitute for butter and lard.

These breeding-places are an important source of profit, and you may be sure that the harvesters put forth all their strength during the limited time allowed them by the birds for operation. There are the birds to secure, the fat to be melted, the manure to secure, the last being by no means the least in value; indeed, the dung of pigeons stands higher in value than that of any other creature, one load of it being worth ten loads of other dung. It makes excellent soil for a cold, moist ground, and it is the best possible for a hop garden. It is used also in saltpetre beds, where it is of great advantage in the nourishment and production of it.

It is a curious fact that until the time of Oliver Cromwell we in England obtained no saltpetre from abroad, but made our own, and one of the principal ingredients made use of was pigeons' dung.

By the twenty-fifth of May the birds will have cleared out of the lodgings which have served them for the last five weeks, leaving behind them a scene of desolation which will take some years to restore to its former prosperity.

It is not surprising that the nest of the passenger pigeon shows no complicated architecture. Where would be the use of it? It is exactly suited to the requirements of a traveller who cannot carry his home with him. It is composed of a few dried, slender twigs, carelessly put together, and with so little concavity that the young, when only half-grown, can be easily seen from below. Most authorities agree in thinking that each nest contains but one squab, and that this pigeon breeds more than once in the year.

These birds leave the nursery as they came, viz., in a compact mass several strata deep, and at a height above gunshot. They move with great rapidity and steadiness, and so close together that it is wonderful they can move their wings at all. They are said to move in their flight by quickly-repeated flaps of their wings, which are brought more or less close to the body, according to the degree of velocity required, and they break the force of their flight by repeated flappings.

Poor things! they get very little peace, for as soon as it is ascertained in a town that they are flying in the neighbourhood, they are attacked with guns, and decoyed into nets by the sight of food they love; and thus will it ever be while they continue to move about in such numbers. Whether on the wing or in their roosting, or breeding places they will fall a prey to man.

(To be continued.)

ALDYTH'S INHERITANCE.

By EGLANTON THORNE, Author of "My Brother's Friend," etc.

CHAPTER VII.

A MISCHIEF-MAKER.

ALDYTH was feeling more out of temper than perhaps she had ever felt before. It was Thursday evening, and Miss Lorraine had gone to the lecture, leaving her alone. She had yielded to her uncle's wish from a sense of duty; but it was impossible to feel resigned to the deprivation his absurd crotchet was causing her. The absurdity, the unreasonableness of it struck Aldyth more and more as she sat dismally picturing Kitty and Hilda and her other friends enjoying the lecture from which she was shut out.

She could settle to no occupation. It was impossible to feel her former interest in the course of reading prescribed by the lecturer. Needlework was still more distasteful. She began a letter to her sister Gladys, the beautiful daughter of whom her mother wrote with pride that she was creating quite a sensation in Melbourne society; but Aldyth dropped her pen in the middle of a sentence, and, springing up, began to poke the fire with far more vigour than its condition demanded. It was of no use trying to think of anything except the lecture from which she was so provokingly

excluded. Would Mr. Glynne observe her absence, she wondered, with a little sigh.

"Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice."

What brought the words to her mind at that moment? Truly she had little of the spirit of self-sacrifice. Perhaps it was well that her will for once should be thwarted, that she might learn to sacrifice her own wishes without murmuring. John Glynne had been wise when he reminded her that Duty would not always wear a smile upon her face. He was one to obey Duty under any circum-

millionaire. This put his grandfather at his ease, for, absurd as it may seem, he had been almost silenced by his loquacious grandson.

"Sit down, my lad, and I will tell you," he said; and when Belle returned with the other children, she found her father descanting earnestly on the history of Jabez Dauncey, and Weatherley listening attentively.

The old man and the boy were nose and knees together, and Belle laughed at the sight. The little girls came hand in hand, and, as if by intuition, Marjory led Mamy up to her grandfather. The child stood a minute with her sweet little head on one side, and her mouth pursed up as if for a cry, looking at him. Mr. Dauncey held out his hand, and made a sort of chirrup. The child ran towards him, and he lifted her on his knee. "Dada, dada," she cried, struggling to free herself, for she was looking for her father. Weatherley and Marjory put their arms about her, whispering that dada was coming, and the embarrassed grandfather was about to rise, when another candidate for his affection leaped upon him. This was Rover, jealous of the children.

"Dog, dog, do away, dog," lisped Mamy, and Belle called him off. The diversion paved the way for further acquaintance, and Mr. Dauncey took the child in his arms, carried her to the tea-table, and gave her to Belle, who placed her on a high chair at her side.

"Please, may Mamy say grace?" asked Marjory. "She always says it at home. Say grace, Mamy."

At this order the child shut her eyes, clasped her hands, and murmured, "Dod bless us"; which Marjory supplemented by, "and our food, and us to Thy service, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

"Of course she can't say it all, but father liked her to begin," explained the astute Marjory.

"I'm awfully hungry," said Weatherley.

"Like father, like son," laughed

Dauncey; and the meal went merrily on.

They were all too well engaged for talk, and even Mamy roused up for the fresh milk and other dainties.

"She always feeds herself," explained Marjory, when Belle hesitated as to her duties, and it was pretty to see the chubby hands grasp the cup, and convey it safely to the cherry lips.

Before the children had quite finished Miss Dulcey arrived. They had seen her from time to time in London, so there was no need of an introduction.

"Don't move, children; I hate a fuss," she said, tripping round the table from one to another, and saluting them. "I feel ashamed to call such a big fellow as Weatherley a great-nephew. Are you as conceited as ever? He is the cleverest boy in London, Mr. Dauncey, in his own estimation."

"He passed his last exam with honours, Aunt Dulcey," said Marjory, proudly. "And I got the music prize, and I am going in for music."

"They speak a new language," said puzzled Mr. Dauncey.

Miss Dulcey laughed, and said that there was no time for long words in the nineteenth century. "Examination" was quite out of date, like "photograph," and other monstrosities.

"Exam and photo are timely abbreviations. I mean they don't take up time, Mr. Dauncey."

"Is that why Marjory's frock is abbreviated, Miss Dulcey? Does it save the dressmaker's time?"

"Nurse says I am growing out of my dresses," here put in Marjory, hanging her head and colouring. "Father couldn't afford to buy new."

"Anyhow, they haven't abbreviated your legs, child. But never mind. You shall have plenty of new frocks when we get our fortune," said Mr. Dauncey.

"Mamy is falling asleep. It is long past her bedtime," said Marjory, indifferent, apparently, to her grandfather's promise. "May I put her to bed, Aunt Belle?"

"We will both go, dear," replied Belle, uplifting the child, and leaving the room, followed by Marjory and Miss Dulcey.

Belle had prepared a small room, communicating with her own, for her nieces; Weatherley was to occupy his father's. How lovingly she had worked to arrange the white dimity curtains, the muslin blinds and the dainty table-cover; and how fresh and sweet was the breeze that flowed in through the open window. Miss Dulcey was as much delighted as Marjory, and whispered to the little girl, "Aunt Belle does all things well. Follow her example."

"What a pretty rhyme you have made," cried Marjory. "'Aunt Belle does all things well.' I shall tell it to Weatherley. We write poetry, and he means to be an author."

Miss Dulcey little thought that her unpremeditated rhyme was to become a proverb in the house. She watched Belle and Marjory undress Mamy, and thought of the mother in heaven with a sympathetic tear in her eye; she saw them lay the fair head on the pillow, and reproached herself that she had helped to bring about that mother's marriage; but when the little one suddenly awoke with the words, "Mamy tay payers," on her lips, she fell on her knees by the side of the white bed, and sobbed. "She has a tender heart, has Miss Dulcey," said the villagers; and so she had.

Marjory climbed on the bed, and raised the little sister. With her protecting arm supporting her, both being on their knees, she folded the tiny hands. "Now, darling, 'God bless——'" she whispered, and Mamy lisped forth, "Dod bless dada and mamma, and bother and sister, and Fanny, and——" She was asleep again, and Marjory laid her head back on the pillow, and drew the clothes about her.

Belle clasped Marjory in her arms, and silently asked her Father in heaven to aid her in doing her duty by these dear children.

(To be continued.)

DOVES' DOWN;

OR,

PIGEON LIFE.

By EMMA BREWER.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION.

HINTS FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO KEEP PIGEONS.

"A land without birds and flowers would be a land without prayers and without song, a dull, dead waste of business."—*Lucas*.

"Birds and flowers will, I believe, be part of the joys in the Great Hereafter."—*Ure*.

THE people most troublesome and difficult to get on with in life are those who have no hobby, no special love for anything, therefore it is our duty rather to encourage than discourage our children in their devotion to hobbies.

They are necessary to relieve the mind and refresh the body, and the amount of pleasure to be got out of them is wonderful. One of the most humanising and elevating hobbies is

that of keeping pigeons, and it is one indulged in by all sorts and conditions of people.

There are so many to whom pet creatures are a source of happiness, and whose success in keeping them lies in their desire to have them as perfect as possible, but to none is this recreation more beneficial than to the working man, whether his occupation be with brain or hand, whose spare hours might be so much less profitably employed.

He is preserved from many dangers by having these creatures to love and care for, and it is rare indeed for a working man with a hobby like this to be a drunkard or a cruel person. It makes him a home-loving man, no small advantage in these days of outdoor attractions.

A wife or mother would be most unwise to discourage husband or child in his fascination for pigeons. There are two good anecdotes

related of mothers who took the wise course, and a third of a wife who took the opposite.

A gentleman in Scotland wanting a particular variety of pigeon heard where he could procure one, and thither he made his way. It was only a very poor cottage, and the birds were kept in a sort of cupboard opening into the living room. He found a clean, comfortable looking woman sweeping up some sand and dirt which had been blown in from the pigeon-house. She begged him to take a seat for a few minutes until her sons came in from the foundry, for the pigeons were theirs.

"I wonder," said the gentleman, "you care to be troubled with those doves." "Ah, sir," she answered, "they are no trouble to me, for they bring my sons home soon at night." Quite true, they found their happiness in the doves rather than in the public-house.

A gentleman pigeon fancier relates in what

a warm-hearted manner he was received at a country house by a lady, the mother of an only son, whom he had recommended to keep pigeons; and on mentioning this to the young man, he said—

"I was half afraid I should be considered a nuisance by your mother for the advice I had given you."

"Ah," said the young man, "you don't understand. Until I had these pigeons I used to go down of an evening to the village inn, not so much for drink as for society; and now I am always at home looking after my birds, and the mother regards it as an improvement."

The third is of a young married man who from boyhood had loved and kept pigeons; he naturally expected to be allowed to retain so innocent a pleasure after his marriage, but he was mistaken. The wife resolutely set her face against it. She considered that the love and the time given to them were so much loss to her. She never ceased to find fault, and would give no welcome to his friends who cared for pigeons; the result was that she carried her point. As to the young husband, deprived of friends and pigeons, and missing the occupation, he took to drink and lost his character. The narrator goes on to say that subsequently the wife would have thought no sacrifice too great could she have restored the pigeons and recalled her husband's love and character.

The art of the pigeon fancier is a difficult one, and necessitates a certain knowledge of the habits and requirements of the birds, together with a large amount of patience, perseverance, and prudence; without these, sorrow and disappointment will mar the pleasure of the hobby.

To be successful in keeping pigeons a person must be a lover of nature, and he must rise with the lark, for his pets require attention at a very early hour. Doves are coy and shy, and very much attached to old haunts, therefore the first thing to be done is to provide a suitable home for them, and one which will prove comfortable and attractive, for the foundation of success will lie in the doves' love for home, and if they could express their wishes intelligibly, they would certainly ask that their house should have a southern aspect, as they thrive better with it, and are more sheltered.

It is quite a mistake to suppose that any place will do to house pigeons in; the home must be free of damp and draught, thoroughly wind and water-tight, and well ventilated and clean. These last are of the utmost importance, for foul atmosphere sours the soft food stored away in the crops of the old birds, and when they give it their young it poisons them.

Besides this, pigeons possess great warmth of body, and if dirt is allowed to accumulate in or near them, sickness will result. Homes or cotes for doves will vary according to the means of those who keep them, but whether they be in loft, attic, shed, or boxes fitted to the walls, they must possess the qualifications already named, and one and all be placed out of the way of cats, rats, and mice; the two former will destroy the birds, and, as a rule, take the best, while the last spoil their food.

The attic of a lofty house makes a capital pigeon loft, especially if the window be in the roof. In this case it is an advantage to keep the nearest gable or chimney stack constantly whitened. Stables are not bad places to select. All possibly remember the account of the Maypole Inn in "Barnaby Rudge."

"There were more pigeons about the dreary stable-yard and outbuildings than anybody but the landlord could reckon up. The wheeling and circling flights of runts, fantails, tumblers, and pouters were perhaps not

quite consistent with the grave and sober character of the building; but the monotonous cooing, which never ceased to be raised by some among them all day long, suited it exactly, and seemed to lull it to rest."

We will suppose that, having secured a house, the girls or boys of a family are desirous of peopling it with pigeons. All varieties are equally fascinating at first; they simply want pigeons of some kind, and naturally commence with those most easily obtained. But as knowledge and experience are gained, they will probably go to a good breeder and obtain from him one or two good stock birds.

To keep the pigeon-house free of vermin and the young ones warm, it is well to cover the floor or nest-boxes with sawdust about half an inch thick; and it is right to give the birds an opportunity of outdoor exercise. No creature thrives better on liberty than a pigeon, always providing the home is attractive enough to allure them back to it.

Having house and inhabitants, the next important thing is to feed them well and with judgment; the food must be varied according to the season, maize and wheat being good for them in summer, but extremely bad in winter, at which season they should be fed with grey peas and millet seed. The birds are at times, like their owners, very low-spirited, and nothing cheers them more than a little stimulant in the way of good hemp-seed and raw rice; so fond of it are they that they will come regularly to be fed with it, and even caress the person who gives it. As a rule, green food does not agree with them, although they like pecking at a fresh young lettuce if it be hung up in their cote.

It is well for beginners to know that if the doves have food always before them they will eat too much and too often, and so get diseased. The proper and pleasant way of feeding them is at stated hours, and by the owner's own hand. Lucas says that "Feeding by hand is one of the pleasures of the fancy never to be abandoned," and "to feed them by machine takes all the poetry out of the thing."

He describes his own experience in feeding his birds very pleasantly: "When the birds see me walking towards them up the garden, they commence fluttering and flying about in a pleased expectant manner. Soon as I enter the flight the old silver hen flies on my shoulder and gently pecks me, as much as to say, 'Make haste, please, it's dinner-time; I am hungry, so are the babies at home.'"

Amusing incidents are of frequent occurrence during feeding-time, and give great pleasure to the observant fancier. Lucas relates that while feeding his pigeons he has seen a cock bird jealous of his spouse, heavy with egg. He would not eat himself, nor permit her to do so; he considered that the duties of married life demanded her presence at home, and so he hustled her about, while she snatched here and there a grain of food. Sometimes she gave him the slip, and then he plunged wildly about until he found her, when he greeted her with a vigorous salutation of the beak, and lovingly drove her home. This is only one of many incidents which amuse and delight the fancier as he feeds them.

Doves are very fond of salt; it is, in fact, a necessity to them, and is their one weakness. So it would be well to get a box and fill it with a mixture of old lime, small, gritty, pebbly sand, crushed oyster-shells, and coarse kitchen salt. This will be a favourite spot for the doves to come to, and they will derive great benefit from it. The lime is necessary for the formation of the egg-shells, and the salt and gravel help the digestion. Some fanciers lay lumps of rock salt about, but it is not so wise a plan.

The pigeons should be kept well supplied with fresh pure water to drink, and a pan of water for a bath. They are extremely fond of

a splash, and in their eagerness will rush to it in a mass, and really quarrel for possession.

Care should be taken not to use a metal pan, as occasionally the birds have been poisoned by it. Earthenware pans are better and cleaner. Directly the pigeons cease to take pleasure in their bath, be sure they are out of health. There is no more reliable sign than this.

Keep stated hours for feeding them. Between six and seven in the morning, eleven or twelve in the forenoon, and three or four in the afternoon; allow of sufficient intervals, and a general survey at about eight o'clock in the evening will bring the day's care and supervision to a close. If there is reason to think a young one is being neglected and insufficiently fed, soak a *milk biscuit* in some hot water and inject the pulp into its crop by means of a syringe.

Pigeons are naturally of healthy and hardy constitutions, and with care and attention to their homes and diet there should be little or no disease among them. They cannot endure overcrowding in their homes any more than can human beings, and this is often a serious cause of trouble.

If the greatest care is not taken, pigeons are attacked with vermin; for this Mr. Lucas and one or two other great pigeon fanciers recommend a certain ointment, which is to be used sparingly. It is made of a quarter of a pound of blue unguent and one ounce of lard. These must be placed in a gallipot near the fire till melted, when it is stirred and allowed to set. By a judicious use of this the birds may be kept perfectly clean. It is, they say, the great *cure all*; otherwise physic is of very little use to pigeons.

The next thing to be done is to mate the birds. Where possible turn a single pair into an empty loft away from their companions. This is not always practicable, and the next best thing to do is to place them in a pen divided by a sliding wire fence, one on either side. Here let them be for a few days to get accustomed to see and notice each other. Should there be some matter of disagreement between them, remove the wire and let them settle it.

It may be that the female will treat the cock badly, and drive him out of the pen; if so she must be taught manners, and be herself placed in a dark pen, where she can hear her companions but not see them. Introduce her after a little of this punishment to the bird who is to be her master, and it is more than probable that she will behave well to him.

Care should be taken that the sitting birds should not be teased by the intrusion or enthusiasm of the owners, otherwise the eggs will never become live pigeons, nor when they enter life should they be roughly handled, for of all creatures none is so perfectly helpless as a baby pigeon—it is just able to hold up its little head for the mother's bill, and that is all.

All dove-kind feed their young at first with a sort of curd, free of any mixture of common food, and which has been called pigeon's milk. It is conveyed to the young birds by the insertion of the mother's beak into that of her infant. With this food it will grow rapidly, and in about a week be well "stuffed" over with feathers, and in about four or five weeks it will leave the nest and begin to look about on its own account (the air bones in young pigeons are described as being filled with marrow, which becomes gradually absorbed to make room for the admission of air). As soon as the young ones arrive at a state of comparative independence, they should be put into a pen of their own and never overcrowded.

With these few observations as to the care required in keeping pigeons, I wish all those who possess them success; it is a recreation second to none in its power of giving pleasure.