

position when you come to apply a "strain" to it in the true sense of the word.

Take, for instance, the breeding of some of the winners as given in various issues of the "A.R.P.", and you find a conglomeration of about 16 strains, or so-called strains. As a pedigree, as far as strain is concerned, this is worth nothing, and one might just as well say straightout that the bird was bred by Mr. So-and-so from his best workers. As a matter of fact, it might not be a bad thing either if more of this were done, in the way of advertising the local man and giving him a help towards the attainment of founding a recognised Australian strain. If the man is a good fancier, and consistently successful, he will not be long without followers. But to call a lot of similarly bred birds a strain just because the grandparents of three-quarters of them were bred in the same loft would be



A WEST AUSTRALIAN CHAMPION
RED CHEQ. HEN.

Performances.

1916—555 miles, Equal 1st	W.A. Association
1916—657 .. 3rd	W.A. Association
1917—450 .. 3rd	City & Sub. Club
1917—555 .. 3rd	W.A. Association
1917—657 .. 3rd	bird home W.A. Assn.

Owner, W. F. JOSS.

rather an erroneous procedure. Literally speaking, of course, they might be a "strain," but, apart from the owner, the other 999 pigeon racers would not give a d— if they were a strain or not. To found a strain worthy of the name, it is taken for granted that you must line-breed and be consistently successful on the road. Any lot of birds you like to mention, if they lose their punch and disappear from the list of winners, will lose their reputation, or merely keep the doubtful reputation of a lot of has-beens.

A man's performances as a racer naturally tend to increase his reputation as a breeder, whether the birds he wins with were bred in his own loft or not.

If Smith wins a race with a bird presented to him by Brown, do they share the honour? Not so. Smith gets it all, for few ever know that Brown bred the champion, or if they do know it is quickly forgotten, whereas it might be a hard race very well worth winning, and Smith would go down to fame as the one who had pulled it off. Naturally, also, in the absence of other information, he would be considered the breeder of this pigeon.

A point worth mentioning is this, that just as you may have a pedigree showing all work and no "strain," you may also have a pedigree showing all "strain" and no work—or very little of it. You will have read recently "The Value of First Eggs," by "Nor-West" in the English "Racing Pigeon," and Dr. Barker's statistics in regard to the production of champions from the first egg of yearlings are very impressive. Well, if you don't race youngsters and breed about three generations consecutively from the first eggs of yearlings, you would get a pedigree reading successively something like this: "Flown 50 miles," "Trained 40 miles," etc., or just the exact distance the yearling parents had flown at the time the eggs were laid.

If training and racing a bird improves its mental calibre, and tends to improve its offspring and the race as a whole, it is not as likely therefore to throw as good a youngster before racing as afterwards. Consequently, in the youngster's pedigree it is quite justifiable to argue that, at the time it was generated, its parents were only entitled to having flown, say, 50 miles, however many Federation races they might win afterwards, and if the eggs were laid before the parents had raced at all, they are only entitled to go down to posterity in regard to that particular squeaker's pedigree as unflown birds. The next generation the same thing might happen, and the next, too, unless the owner watched this point closely.

D'y'er get me, Steve?

On the other hand, it would not be entirely fair to cut out of the pedigree the parents' subsequent performances, as the sire, say, might later turn out a real champion, and we can take it more or less for granted that he must have been a "good 'un" as a yearling, although unproved. The youngster should be entitled to some of the credit for being by such a sire. At the same time if the sire was trained 50 miles, bred his youngster, and was then sent on and dropped early, in how many pedigrees do you think you would see the bald statement: "Sire, B.C. Cock 232, 1915, lost at 70 miles"? In how many, do you think?

After which few remarks "Trier" can have his old subject back again.

LOST BIRD.

Red Ch. Cock, Rung N.U.R.P. 13 x L 380
REWARD.

C. STEWART, "Nippo," Lucas Road,
Burwood.

SHOWS AND SHOWING.

(From "English Racing Pigeon.")

By De Lacy.

In my last week's notes I dealt with the head properties desirable in a bird intended for showing purposes, and in particular I tried to draw attention to the importance of the eye, because of the vital part which this organ plays, for weal or woe, in what I may term a bird's expression. Now, the colour of the eye is naturally of importance in this connection (expression), and for that reason it is of importance in the case of a show bird.

The eyes perhaps most in favour with judges are pearl eyes, red eyes, and nut-brown eyes, and, personally, I must admit to a preference for the latter. On the contrary, white eyes are, I think, objectionable, and they frequently denote a suspicious cross of undesirable blood, whilst lemon and yellow eyes, beyond doubt, handicap a bird under the majority of judges on account of the expression they give to what we may term its face. It may be argued that yellow and lemon eyes are equal for racing purposes to those of any other colour, but even if one admits this—and I am not to be understood personally as giving an unqualified admission to the contention—that is to reason why they should score equally with others in the show pen.

It must be always borne in mind that where two pigeons are of equal merit, so far as actual racing qualities are concerned, preference in showing is bound to be given to good looks, and beyond question a good red, or pearl, or brown eye gives a bird a more handsome appearance than do yellow, lemon, or white eyes.

The setting of the eye in the head is also of prime importance. Small, deep-set eyes, with fine ceres, are objectionable, the majority of judges preferring a fairly full eye with plenty of life and sparkle in it, whilst an eye that is set too high up in the skull almost invariably denotes that the bird possessing it is out of its true latitude in a class for bona-fide racing pigeons.

There are some other points of interest in regard to the eye, but space forbids their consideration at the present time. If, however, some of the leading lights of the Fancy could be persuaded to recount their views on this all-important topic in the columns of the "R.P.," I am sure their letters would be read with the greatest interest and benefit by less experienced fanciers, and if this suggestion materialises it is pretty certain that the six wise men of Manchester will think that it is up to "Searchlight" to give us his own opinions on the subject.

Now, however good a pigeon may be, it is no use for showing purposes unless it is put down in tip-top condition, and if a few of the so-called bonafide racing men could be brought to realise this supreme fact, we should probably hear less grumbling that the vast majority of prizes at our shows go to what I have termed the profes-