

expansion and their upward direction are more remarkable characters than their increased number. The tail is capable of the same movements as in other pigeons, and can be depressed so as to sweep the ground. It arises from a more expanded basis than in other pigeons; and in three skeletons there were one or two extra coccygeal vertebræ. I have examined many specimens of various colours from different countries, and there was no trace of the oil-gland; this is a curious case of abortion.¹³ The neck is thin and bowed backwards. The breast is broad and protuberant. The feet are small. The carriage of the bird is very different from that of other pigeons; in good birds the head touches the tail-feathers, which consequently often become crumpled. They habitually tremble much: and their necks have an extraordinary, apparently convulsive, backward and forward movement. Good birds walk in a singular manner, as if their small feet were stiff. Owing to their large tails, they fly badly on a windy day. The dark-coloured varieties are generally larger than white Fantails.

Although between the best and common Fantails, now existing in England, there is a vast difference in the position and size of the tail, in the carriage of the head and neck, in the convulsive movements of the neck, in the manner of walking, and in the breadth of the breast, the differences so graduate away, that it is impossible to make more than one sub-race. Moore, however, an excellent old authority,¹⁴ says, that in 1735 there were two sorts of broad-tailed shakers (*i. e.* fantails), "one having a neck much longer and more slender than the other;" and I am informed by Mr. B. P. Brent, that there is an existing German Fantail with a thicker and shorter beak.

Sub-race II. Java Fantail.—Mr. Swinhoe sent me from Amoy, in China, the skin of a Fantail belonging to a breed known to have been imported from Java. It was coloured in a peculiar manner, unlike any European Fantail; and, for a Fantail, had a remarkably short beak. Although a good bird of the kind, it had only 14 tail-feathers; but Mr. Swinhoe has counted in other birds of this breed from 18 to 24 tail-feathers. From a rough sketch sent to me, it is evident that the tail is not so much expanded or so much upraised as in even second-rate European Fantails. The bird shakes its neck like our Fantails. It had a well-developed oil-gland. Fantails were known in India, as we shall hereafter see, before the year 1600; and we may suspect that in the Java Fantail we see the breed in its earlier and less improved condition.

¹³ This gland occurs in most birds; but Nitzsch (in his 'Pterylographie,' 1840, p. 55) states that it is absent in two species of Columba, in several species of Psittacus, in some species of Otis, and in most or all birds of the Ostrich family. It can hardly be an accidental coincidence that the two

species of Columba, which are destitute of an oil-gland, have an unusual number of tail-feathers, namely 16, and in this respect resemble Fantails.

¹⁴ See the two excellent editions published by Mr. J. M. Eaton in 1852 and 1858, entitled 'A Treatise on Fancy Pigeons.'