

to weigh more than five times as much as a Short-faced Tumbler. The eggs differ in size and shape. According to Parmentier,⁴⁰ some races use much straw in building their nests, and others use little; but I cannot hear of any recent corroboration of this statement. The length of time required for hatching the eggs is uniform in all the breeds. The period at which the characteristic plumage of some breeds is acquired, and at which certain changes of colour supervene, differs. The degree to which the young birds are clothed with down when first hatched is different, and is correlated in a singular manner with the colour of the plumage. The manner of flight, and certain inherited movements, such as clapping the wings, tumbling either in the air or on the ground, and the manner of courting the female, present the most singular differences. In disposition the several races differ. Some races are very silent; others coo in a highly peculiar manner.

Although many different races have kept true in character during several centuries, as we shall hereafter more fully see, yet there is far more individual variability in the most constant breeds than in birds in a state of nature. There is hardly any exception to the rule that those characters vary most which are now most valued and attended to by fanciers, and which consequently are now being improved by continued selection. This is indirectly admitted by fanciers when they complain that it is much more difficult to breed high fancy pigeons up to the proper standard of excellence than the so-called toy pigeons, which differ from each other merely in colour; for particular colours when once acquired are not liable to continued improvement or augmentation. Some characters become attached, from quite unknown causes, more strongly to the male than to the female sex; so that we have in certain races, a tendency towards the appearance of secondary sexual characters,⁴¹ of which the aboriginal rock-pigeon displays not a trace.

⁴⁰ Temminck, 'Hist. Nat. Gén. des Pigeons et des Gallinacés,' tom. i., 1813, p. 170.

⁴¹ This term was used by John Hunter for such differences in structure

between the males and females, as are not directly connected with the act of reproduction, as the tail of the peacock, the horns of deer, &c.