

them for no other reason than because they are not like what used to be thought good when he was in the fancy before." Hence it would appear that there was a rather sudden change in the character of the short-faced Tumbler at about this period ; and there is reason to suspect that a dwarfed and half-monstrous bird, the parent-form of the several short-faced sub-breeds, then appeared. I suspect this because short-faced Tumblers are born with their beaks (ascertained by careful measurement) as short, proportionally with the size of their bodies, as in the adult bird ; and in this respect they differ greatly from all other breeds, which slowly acquire during growth their various characteristic qualities.

Since the year 1765 there has been some change in one of the chief characters of the short-faced Tumbler, namely, in the length of the beak. Fanciers measure the "head and beak" from the tip of the beak to the front corner of the eyeball. About the year 1765 a "head and beak" was considered good,⁴² which, measured in the usual manner, was $\frac{7}{8}$ of an inch in length ; now it ought not to exceed $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch ; "it is however possible," as Mr. Eaton candidly confesses, "for a bird to be considered as pleasant or neat even at $\frac{6}{8}$ of an inch, but exceeding that length it must be looked upon as unworthy of attention." Mr. Eaton states that he has never seen in the course of his life more than two or three birds with the "head and beak" not exceeding half an inch in length ; "still I believe in the course of a few years that the head and beak will be shortened, and that half-inch birds will not be considered so great a curiosity as at the present time." That Mr. Eaton's opinion deserves attention cannot be doubted, considering his success in winning prizes at our exhibitions. Finally in regard to the Tumbler it may be concluded from the facts above given that it was originally introduced into Europe, probably first into England, from the East ; and that it then resembled our common English Tumbler, or more probably the Persian or Indian Tumbler, with a beak only just perceptibly shorter than that of the common dovecot-pigeon. With respect to the short-faced Tumbler, which is not known to exist in the East, there can hardly be a doubt that the whole wonderful change in the size of the head, beak, body and feet, and in general carriage, has been produced during the last two centuries by continued selection, aided probably by the birth of a semi-monstrous bird somewhere about the year 1750.

Runts.—Of their history little can be said. In the time of Pliny the pigeons of Campania were the largest known ; and from this fact alone some authors assert that they were Runts. In Aldrovandi's time, in 1600, two sub-breeds existed ; but one of them, the short-beaked, is now extinct in Europe.

Barbs.—Notwithstanding statements to the contrary, it seems to me impossible to recognise the Barb in Aldrovandi's description and

⁴² J. M. Eaton's 'Treatise on the Breeding and Managing of the Almond

Tumbler,' 1851. Compare p. v. of Preface, p. 9, and p. 32.