

“profitable portion of the hog, and we therefore require no more of it than is absolutely necessary for the support of the rest.” Let any one compare the wild-boar with any improved breed, and he will see how effectually the legs have been shortened.

Few persons, except breeders, are aware of the systematic care taken in selecting animals, and of the necessity of having a clear and almost prophetic vision into futurity. Lord Spencer’s skill and judgment were well known; and he writes,⁵ “It is therefore very desirable, before any man commences to breed either cattle or sheep, that he should make up his mind to the shape and qualities he wishes to obtain, and steadily pursue this object.” Lord Somerville, in speaking of the marvellous improvement of the New Leicester sheep, effected by Bakewell and his successors, says, “It would seem as if they had first drawn a perfect form, and then given it life.” Youatt⁶ urges the necessity of annually drafting each flock, as many animals will certainly degenerate “from the standard of excellence which the breeder has established in his own mind.” Even with a bird of such little importance as the canary, long ago (1780–1790) rules were established, and a standard of perfection was fixed according to which the London fanciers tried to breed the several sub-varieties.⁷ A great winner of prizes at the Pigeon-shows,⁸ in describing the short-faced Almond Tumbler, says, “There are many first-rate fanciers who are particularly partial to what is called the goldfinch-beak, which is very beautiful; others say, take a full-size round cherry then take a barleycorn, and judiciously placing and thrusting it into the cherry, form as it were your beak; and that is not all, for it will form a good head and beak, provided, as I said before, it is judiciously done; others take an oat; but as I think the goldfinch-beak the handsomest, I would advise the inexperienced fancier to get the head of a goldfinch, and keep it by him for his observation.” Wonderfully different

⁵ ‘Journal of Royal Agricult. Soc.,’
vol. i. p. 24.

⁶ ‘On Sheep,’ pp. 520, 319.

⁷ London’s ‘Mag. of Nat. Hist.,’

vol. viii., 1835, p. 618.

⁸ ‘A treatise on the Art of Breeding the Almond Tumbler,’ 1851, p. 9.