

told me that he always deliberated for several days before he matched each pair. Hence we can understand the advice of an eminent fancier, who writes,<sup>18</sup> "I would here particularly guard you against having too great a variety of pigeons, otherwise you will know a little of all, but nothing about one as it ought to be known." Apparently it transcends the power of the human intellect to breed all kinds: "it is possible that there may be a few fanciers that have a good general knowledge of fancy pigeons; but there are many more who labour under the delusion of supposing they know what they do not." The excellence of one sub-variety, the Almond Tumbler, lies in the plumage, carriage, head, beak, and eye; but it is too presumptuous in the beginner to try for all these points. The great judge above quoted says, "There are some young fanciers who are over-covetous, who go for all the above five properties at once; they have their reward by getting nothing." We thus see that breeding even fancy pigeons is no simple art: we may smile at the solemnity of these precepts, but he who laughs will win no prizes.

What methodical selection has effected for our animals is sufficiently proved, as already remarked, by our Exhibitions. So greatly were the sheep belonging to some of the earlier breeders, such as Bakewell and Lord Western, changed, that many persons could not be persuaded that they had not been crossed. Our pigs, as Mr. Corringham remarks,<sup>19</sup> during the last twenty years have undergone, through rigorous selection together with crossing, a complete metamorphosis. The first exhibition for poultry was held in the Zoological Gardens in 1845; and the improvement effected since that time has been great. As Mr. Bailey, the great judge, remarked to me, it was formerly ordered that the comb of the Spanish cock should be upright, and in four or five years all good birds had upright combs; it was ordered that the Polish cock should have no comb or wattles, and now a bird thus furnished would be at once disqualified; beards were ordered,

<sup>18</sup> J. M. Eaton, 'A Treatise on Fancy Pigeons,' 1852, p. xiv., and 'A Treatise on the Almond Tumbler,'

1851, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> 'Journal Royal Agricultural Soc.,' vol. vi. p. 22.