

Romans kept pedigrees of their pigeons, and this would have been a senseless proceeding had not great care been taken in breeding them. Columella gives detailed instructions about breeding fowls: "Let the breeding hens therefore be of a choice colour, " a robust body, square-built, full-breasted, with " large heads, with upright and bright-red combs. Those " are believed to be the best bred which have five toes."³⁷ According to Tacitus, the Celts attended to the races of their domestic animals; and Cæsar states that they paid high prices to merchants for fine imported horses.³⁸ In regard to plants, Virgil speaks of yearly culling the largest seeds; and Celsus says, " where the corn and crop is but small, we must pick out the best ears of corn, and of them lay up our seed separately by itself."³⁹

Coming down the stream of time, we may be brief. At about the beginning of the ninth century Charlemagne expressly ordered his officers to take great care of his stallions; and if any proved bad or old, to forewarn him in good time before they were put to the mares.⁴⁰ Even in a country so little civilised as Ireland during the ninth century, it would appear from some ancient verses,⁴¹ describing a ransom demanded by Cormac, that animals from particular places, or having a particular character, were valued. Thus it is said,—

Two pigs of the pigs of Mac Lir,
A ram and ewe both round and red,
I brought with me from Aengus.
I brought with me a stallion and a mare
From the beautiful stud of Manannan,
A bull and a white cow from Druim Cain.

Athelstan, in 930, received running-horses as a present from Germany; and he prohibited the exportation of English horses. King John imported "one hundred chosen stallions from Flanders."⁴² On June 16th, 1305, the Prince of Wales

³⁷ 'Gardener's Chronicle,' 1848, p. 323.

³⁸ Reynier, 'De l'Économie des Celtes,' 1818, pp. 487, 503.

³⁹ Le Couteur on Wheat, p. 15.

⁴⁰ Michel, 'Des Haras,' 1861, p. 84.

⁴¹ Sir W. Wilde, an 'Essay on Un-manufactured Animal Remains,' &c., 1860, p. 11.

⁴² Col. Hamilton Smith, 'Nat. Library,' vol. xii., Horses, pp. 135, 140.