

wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury, begging for the loan of any choice stallion, and promising its return at the end of the season.<sup>43</sup> There are numerous records at ancient periods in English history of the importation of choice animals of various kinds, and of foolish laws against their exportation. In the reigns of Henry VII. and VIII. it was ordered that the magistrates, at Michaelmas, should scour the heaths and commons, and destroy all mares beneath a certain size.<sup>44</sup> Some of our earlier kings passed laws against the slaughtering rams of any good breed before they were seven years old, so that they might have time to breed. In Spain Cardinal Ximenes issued, in 1509, regulations on the *selection* of good rams for breeding.<sup>45</sup>

The Emperor Akbar Khan before the year 1600 is said to have "wonderfully improved" his pigeons by crossing the breeds; and this necessarily implies careful selection. About the same period the Dutch attended with the greatest care to the breeding of these birds. Belon in 1555 says that good managers in France examined the colour of their goslings in order to get geese of a white colour and better kinds. Markham in 1631 tells the breeder "to elect the largest and goodliest conies," and enters into minute details. Even with respect to seeds of plants for the flower-garden, Sir J. Hanmer writing about the year 1660<sup>46</sup> says, in "choosing seed, the best seed is the most weighty, and is had from the lustiest and most vigorous stems;" and he then gives rules about leaving only a few flowers on plants for seed; so that even such details were attended to in our flower-gardens two hundred years ago. In order to show that selection has been silently carried on in places where it would not have been expected, I may add that in the middle of the last century, in a remote part of North America, Mr. Cooper improved by careful selection all his vegetables, "so that they were greatly "superior to those of any other person. When his radishes,

<sup>43</sup> Michel, 'Des Haras,' p. 90.

<sup>44</sup> Mr. Baker, 'History of the Horse,' 'Veterinary,' vol. xiii. p. 423.

<sup>45</sup> M. l'Abbé Carlier, in 'Journal de Physique,' vol. xxiv., 1784, p. 181; this memoir contains much informa-

tion on the ancient selection of sheep; and is my authority for rams not being killed young in England.

<sup>46</sup> 'Gardener's Chronicle,' 1843, p. 389.