

have rarely the thorough-bred look we are accustomed to in Baker Street, and at the exhibitions of the Royal Agricultural Society. The crosses from them "the Shropshire" and others—may rather be taken as the great feature in the sheep; the Leicesters, with one or two exceptions, making but a poor stand. We certainly expected to have seen a better show of them.

Of pigs, fat and breeding, the entries were numerous, and almost all excellent. In both these divisions Sir John Conroy exhibited to great advantage, with his Abortifid improved pig. The best test for the fat pigs was the eagerness with which they were bought up, at wonderful advance on the price of last year. In fact the sales generally were good; and when we left there was little prime stock in want of buyers. In the small pigs for breeding we especially commend two lots, sent by Mr. Leigh Clare, of Bristol, one of which obtained the first prize and medal. They were a very fine sample of the improved Essex. Though here again, in the pigs of Birmingham, purity is not generally bowed down to—at least as the standard of profitable excellence. But, after all the great strength of the Birmingham show is centred in the poultry. For one man in a railway carriage or a coffee-room that introduced himself with an observation touching the points of a short-horn, or the flavour of a south-down, twenty were learned in Cochins. Country clergymen, *ruse in urbe* citizens, elderly gentlemen going on their own account, and scrippings armed with unlimited orders, were all intent on Cochins. It was not the cattle show—the grand attraction was the "Cochin Show." With the Birmingham Society rests the credit of having first called attention to a branch of breeding so long and so strangely neglected. By its influence the different varieties of domestic birds have been rapidly improved: and, appropriately enough at this last exhibition there was such a display of poultry as never before was gathered together. Dorking, Game, Malay, Hamburg, pigeons, turkeys, geese and ducks of almost every known kind, were there, to be rewarded according to their several merits. And extraordinary merit there was, too, in every class; but still it was of but secondary consideration. The mania—and it is now nothing short of a mania—turns on the Cochins. We hear commonly enough of fifty or sixty guineas being asked and given for a lot of four birds; and we inquire in some ignorance may be, can this be warranted? What superiority has the Cochin over the Dorking or Game fowl? His appearance, for one point, is decidedly against him; no one we should fancy would ever attempt to rate the Cochin as a handsome bird. The two breeds we have just named as well as many others, are in this respect infinitely before him. Is it in flavour? Here, again, we question very much whether he can compare with the Dorking or Game; in fact, the result of our own experience—limited, we admit—is that for the table he is better crossed than when served up in all his native purity of size. Is it this size, after all, that is his chief recommendation? We trust not. If with it can be coupled early maturity, and the hen birds be depended on as good layers, the policy of encouraging the breed may be admitted. These very points, however, must of themselves tend rapidly to diminish the extravagant "fancy" prices now given: and the sooner they better. We may then begin to consider them as the common farm-yard fowl; ascertain how economically they may be raised, and how, in reality, they are appreciated. At present the breeding of the Cochins is not, as we would see it, the business of the farmer's wife and daughters, but rather the hazardous speculation of the dealer, or the costly luxury of the amateur. We write—as we hope we need

scarcely say—in the best spirit and with the best intention. If we have not done full justice to this highly prized fowl we shall be only glad to be better informed. Many, as well as ourselves may not be above the advice. As it is, we give the greatest credit to Birmingham for having first introduced such a feature into agricultural exhibitions. It must—it has—not only wonderfully improved and circulated our best breeds, but it has given the ladies a direct interest in these shows they never had before. It is on these two points we join issue—Is the Cochins-China fowl such an improvement on other sorts as to rank him, perhaps for a very long day, far beyond "the pocket-money" of our wives and daughters?

#### OXFORD COUNTY—ITS RAPID PROGRESS.

In our last number we noticed the publication of the "*Oxford Gazetteer*," a highly creditable work, showing in the most indisputable manner, by statistical returns, the rapid and healthy progress which is making in that productive section of Western Canada. We are tempted to make room for the following article in a recent number of the *British American*, published at Woodstock, that our readers—*particularly those in the Old Country*—may see that this Province holds out strong inducements to all classes of industrious and respectable settlers, where they may achieve an honorable independence and avoid those numerous drawbacks, which are more or less necessarily incidental to all strictly new settlements. In this age, and in a young, rising country, the results which under a former state of things in the old states of Europe, would have required centuries to develop, are successfully worked out in a single generation.

The rapid growth of many of the western towns of the neighboring Union, has called forth expressions of wonder from the tourist, and the columns of many an English publication have blazed forth the almost magic creation of what are now densely populated cities and mercantile marts.

The growth of American towns is probably beyond precedent in the annals of civilization and population; but when we take all things into consideration, the nature of the people, their speculative propensities and love of change, acting on the raw material of a new country, we can reasonably account for this wondrous result of human energy. Nor is the United States the only place where the same spirit is manifest. Canada, though denied many facilities which our neighbors possess, has not been behind in improvement—even in localities where essential advantages and the ordinary streams of business and travel seem to be wanting. In 1827 London was a wilderness, now it is a splendid town—a nucleus to the industry of a rich, flourishing country. Guelph in 1826 was carved out of a dense forest, now it is a town of no mean character. Hamilton in 1830 was in population what Woodstock now is, while in the number of good stores and private buildings of the better class it was far behind our present condition. Nor is it merely in the settlement of our country, and the erection of towns and cities, that we approach our American neighbors; our Educational Institutions are creditable rivals to their more time-honored Col-