

of Luxan, has kindly collected for me all the information which he could respecting this breed. From his account it seems that about eighty or ninety years ago they were rare and kept as curiosities at Buenos Ayres. The breed is universally believed to have originated among the Indians southward of the Plata; and that it was with them the commonest kind. Even to this day, those reared in the provinces near the Plata show their less civilized origin, in being fiercer than common cattle, and in the cow easily deserting her first calf, if visited too often or molested. It is a singular fact that an almost similar structure to the abnormal¹ one of the niata breed, characterizes, as I am informed by Dr. Falconer, that great extinct ruminant of India, the Sivatherium. The breed is very *true*; and a niata bull and cow invariably produce niata calves. A niata bull with a common cow, or the reverse cross, produces offspring having an intermediate character, but with the niata characters strongly displayed: according to Señor Muniz, there is the clearest evidence, contrary to the common belief of agriculturists in analogous cases, that the niata cow when crossed with a common bull transmits her peculiarities more strongly than the niata bull when crossed with a common cow. When the pasture is tolerably long the niata cattle feed with the tongue and palate as well as common cattle; but during the great droughts, when so many animals perish, the niata breed is under a great disadvantage, and would be exterminated if not attended to; for the common cattle, like horses, are able just to keep alive, by browsing with their lips on twigs of trees and reeds; this the niatas cannot so well do, as their lips do not join, and hence they are found to perish before the common cattle. This strikes me as a good illustration of how little we are able to judge from the ordinary habits of life, on what circumstances, occurring only at long intervals, the rarity or extinction of a species may be determined.

¹ A nearly similar abnormal, but I do not know whether hereditary, structure has been observed in the carp, and likewise in the crocodile of the Ganges: *Histoire des Anomalies*, par M. Isid. Geoffroy St. Hilaire, tom. i. p. 244.