

## CHAPTER I.

## DOMESTIC DOGS AND CATS.

ANCIENT VARIETIES OF THE DOG—RESEMBLANCE OF DOMESTIC DOGS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES TO NATIVE CANINE SPECIES—ANIMALS NOT ACQUAINTED WITH MAN AT FIRST FEARLESS—DOGS RESEMBLING WOLVES AND JACKALS—HABIT OF BARKING ACQUIRED AND LOST—FERAL DOGS—TAN-COLOURED EYE-SPOTS—PERIOD OF GESTATION—OFFENSIVE ODOUR—FERTILITY OF THE RACES WHEN CROSSED—DIFFERENCES IN THE SEVERAL RACES IN PART DUE TO DESCENT FROM DISTINCT SPECIES—DIFFERENCES IN THE SKULL AND TEETH—DIFFERENCES IN THE BODY, IN CONSTITUTION—FEW IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES HAVE BEEN FIXED BY SELECTION—DIRECT ACTION OF CLIMATE—WATER-DOGS WITH PALMATED FEET—HISTORY OF THE CHANGES WHICH CERTAIN ENGLISH RACES OF THE DOG HAVE GRADUALLY UNDERGONE THROUGH SELECTION—EXTINCTION OF THE LESS IMPROVED SUB-BREEDS.

CATS, CROSSED WITH SEVERAL SPECIES—DIFFERENT BREEDS FOUND ONLY IN SEPARATED COUNTRIES—DIRECT EFFECTS OF THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE—FERAL CATS—INDIVIDUAL VARIABILITY.

THE first and chief point of interest in this chapter is, whether the numerous domesticated varieties of the dog have descended from a single wild species, or from several. Some authors believe that all have descended from the wolf, or from the jackal, or from an unknown and extinct species. Others again believe, and this of late has been the favourite tenet, that they have descended from several species, extinct and recent, more or less commingled together. We shall probably never be able to ascertain their origin with certainty. Palæontology<sup>1</sup> does not throw much light on the question, owing, on the one hand, to the close similarity of the skulls of extinct as well as living wolves and jackals, and owing, on the other hand, to

<sup>1</sup> Owen, 'British Fossil Mammals,' pp. 123 to 133. Pictet's 'Traité de Pal.,' 1853, tom. i. p. 202. De Blainville, in his 'Ostéographie, Canidæ,' p. 142, has largely discussed the whole subject, and concludes that the extinct parent of all domesticated dogs came nearest to the wolf in organization, and to the jackal in

habits. See also Boyd Dawkins, 'Cave Hunting,' 1874, p. 131, &c., and his other publications. Jeitteles has discussed in great detail the character of the breeds of pre-historic dogs: 'Die vorgeschichtlichen Alterthümer der Stadt Olmütz,' II. Theil, 1872, p. 44 to end.