

aquatic animals which belong to quite different orders have webbed feet, there can be no doubt that this structure would be serviceable to dogs that frequent the water. We may confidently infer that no man ever selected his water-dogs by the extent to which the skin was developed between their toes; but what he does, is to preserve and breed from those individuals which hunt best in the water, or best retrieve wounded game, and thus he unconsciously selects dogs with feet slightly better webbed. The effects of use from the frequent stretching apart of the toes will likewise aid in the result. Man thus closely imitates Natural Selection. We have an excellent illustration of this same process in North America, where, according to Sir J. Richardson,⁸¹ all the wolves, foxes, and aboriginal domestic dogs have their feet broader than in the corresponding species of the Old World, and "well calculated for running on the snow." Now, in these Arctic regions, the life or death of every animal will often depend on its success in hunting over the snow when soft; and this will in part depend on the feet being broad; yet they must not be so broad as to interfere with the activity of the animal when the ground is sticky, or with its power of burrowing holes, or with other necessary habits of life.

As changes in domestic breeds which take place so slowly are not to be noticed at any one period, whether due to the selection of individual variations or of differences resulting from crosses, are most important in understanding the origin of our domestic productions, and likewise in throwing indirect light on the changes effected under nature, I will give in detail such cases as I have been able to collect. Lawrence,⁸² who paid particular attention to the history of the foxhound, writing in 1829, says that between eighty and ninety years before "an entirely new foxhound was raised through the breeder's art," the ears of the old southern hound being reduced, the bone and bulk lightened, the waist increased in length, and the stature somewhat added to. It is believed that this was effected by a cross with a greyhound. With

⁸¹ 'Fauna Boreali-Americana,'
1829, p. 62.

⁸² 'The Horse in all his Varieties,'
&c., 1829, pp. 230, 234.