

English breed, and as I hear from Mr. G. R. Jesse,⁸⁵ seems to have originated from the mastiff since the time of Shakspeare; but certainly existed in 1631, as shown by Prestwick Eaton's letters. There can be no doubt that the fancy bulldogs of the present day, now that they are not used for bull-baiting, have become greatly reduced in size, without any express intention on the part of the breeder. Our pointers are certainly descended from a Spanish breed, as even their present names, Don, Ponto, Carlos, &c., show; it is said that they were not known in England before the Revolution in 1688;⁸⁶ but the breed since its introduction has been much modified, for Mr. Borrow, who is a sportsman and knows Spain intimately well, informs me that he has not seen in that country any breed "corresponding in figure with the English pointer; but there are genuine pointers near Xeres which have been imported by English gentlemen." A nearly parallel case is offered by the Newfoundland dog, which was certainly brought into England from that country, but which has since been so much modified that, as several writers have observed, it does not now closely resemble any existing native dog in Newfoundland.⁸⁷

These several cases of slow and gradual changes in our English dogs possess some interest; for though the changes have generally, but not invariably, been caused by one or two crosses with a distinct breed, yet we may feel sure, from the well-known extreme variability of crossed breeds, that rigorous and long-continued selection must have been practised, in order to improve them in a definite manner. As soon as any strain or family became slightly improved or better adapted to alter circumstances, it would tend to supplant the older and less improved strains. For instance, as soon as the old foxhound was improved by a cross with the greyhound, or by simple selection, and assumed its present

⁸⁵ Author of 'Researches into the History of the British Dog.

⁸⁶ See Col. Hamilton Smith on the antiquity of the Pointer, in 'Nat. Lib.' vol. x. p. 196.

⁸⁷ The Newfoundland dog is believed to have originated from a cross

between the Esquimaux dog and a large French hound. See Dr. Hodgkin, 'Brit. Assoc.' 1844; Bechstein's 'Naturgesch. Deutschland,' Band. i. s. 574; 'Nat. Lib.,' vol. x. p. 132; also Mr. Jukes' 'Excursion in and about Newfoundland.'