

parent-forms of our cats. Several naturalists, as Pallas, Temminck, Blyth, believe that domestic cats are the descendants of several species commingled: it is certain that cats cross readily with various wild species, and it would appear that the character of the domestic breeds has, at least in some cases, been thus affected. Sir W. Jardine has no doubt that, "in the north of Scotland, there has been occasional crossing with our native species (*F. sylvestris*), and that the result of the crosses has been kept in our houses. I have seen," he adds, "many cats very closely resembling the wild cat, and one or two that could scarcely be distinguished from it." Mr. Blyth⁸⁹ remarks on this passage, "but such cats are never seen in the southern parts of England; still, as compared with any Indian tame cat, the affinity of the ordinary British cat to *F. sylvestris* is manifest; and due I suspect to frequent intermixture at a time when the tame cat was first introduced into Britain and continued rare, while the wild species was far more abundant than at present." In Hungary, Jeitteles⁹⁰ was assured on trustworthy authority that a wild male cat crossed with a female domestic cat, and that the hybrids long lived in a domesticated state. In Algiers the domestic cat has crossed with the wild cat (*F. lybica*) of that country.⁹¹ In South Africa as Mr. E. Layard informs me, the domestic cat intermingles freely with the wild *F. caffra*; he has seen a pair of hybrids which were quite tame and particularly attached to the lady who brought them up; and Mr. Fry has found that these hybrids are fertile. In India the domestic cat, according to Mr. Blyth, has crossed with four Indian species. With respect to one of these species, *F. chaus*, an excellent observer, Sir W. Elliot, informs me that he once killed, near Madras, a wild brood, which were evidently hybrids from the domestic cat; these young animals had a thick lynx-like tail and the broad brown bar on the inside of the forearm characteristic of *F. chaus*. Sir W. Elliot adds that he

⁸⁹ Asiatic Soc. of Calcutta; Curator's Report, Aug. 1856. The passage from Sir W. Jardine is quoted from this Report. Mr. Blyth, who has especially attended to the wild and domestic cats of India, has given in

this Report a very interesting discussion on their origin.

⁹⁰ 'Fauna Hungariæ Sup.,' 1862, s. 12.

⁹¹ Isid. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 'Hist. Nat. Gen.,' tom. iii. p. 177.