

has often observed this same mark on the forearms of domestic cats in India. Mr. Blyth states that domestic cats coloured nearly like *F. chaus*, but not resembling that species in shape, abound in Bengal; he adds, "such a colouration is utterly unknown in European cats, and the proper tabby markings (pale streaks on a black ground, peculiarly and symmetrically disposed), so common in English cats, are never seen in those of India." Dr. D. Short has assured Mr. Blyth⁹² that, at Hansi, hybrids between the common cat and *F. ornata* (or *torquata*) occur, "and that many of the domestic cats of that part of India were undistinguishable from the wild *F. ornata*." Azara states, but only on the authority of the inhabitants, that in Paraguay the cat has crossed with two native species. From these several cases we see that in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, the common cat, which lives a freer life than most other domesticated animals, has crossed with various wild species; and that in some instances the crossing has been sufficiently frequent to affect the character of the breed.

Whether domestic cats have descended from several distinct species, or have only been modified by occasional crosses, their fertility, as far as is known, is unimpaired. The large Angora or Persian cat is the most distinct in structure and habits of all the domestic breeds; and is believed by Pallas, but on no distinct evidence, to be descended from the *F. manul* of middle Asia; and I am assured by Mr. Blyth that the Angora cat breeds freely with Indian cats, which, as we have already seen, have apparently been much crossed with *F. chaus*. In England half-bred Angora cats are perfectly fertile with one another.

Within the same country we do not meet with distinct races of the cat, as we do of dogs and of most other domestic animals; though the cats of the same country present a considerable amount of fluctuating variability. The explanation obviously is that, from their nocturnal and rambling habits, judiscriminate crossing cannot without much trouble be prevented. Selection cannot be brought into play to produce distinct breeds, or to keep those distinct which have been

⁹² 'Proc. Zoolog. Soc.,' 1863, p. 184.