

R.N.,⁹⁵ states that all the cats are covered with short stiff hair instead of fur: he gives a curious account of a cat from Algoa Bay, which had been kept for some time on board and could be identified with certainty; this animal was left for only eight weeks at Mombas, but during that short period it "underwent a complete metamorphosis, having parted with its sandy-coloured fur." A cat from the Cape of Good Hope has been described by Desmarest as remarkable from a red stripe extending along the whole length of its back. Throughout an immense area, namely, the Malayan archipelago, Siam, Pegu, and Burmah, all the cats have truncated tails about half the proper length,⁹⁶ often with a sort of knot at the end. In the Caroline archipelago the cats have very long legs, and are of a reddish-yellow colour.⁹⁷ In China a breed has drooping ears. At Tobolsk, according to Gmelin, there is a red-coloured breed. In Asia, also, we find the well-known Angora or Persian breed.

The domestic cat has run wild in several countries, and everywhere assumes, as far as can be judged by the short recorded descriptions, a uniform character. Near Maldonado, in La Plata, I shot one which seemed perfectly wild; it was carefully examined by Mr. Waterhouse,⁹⁸ who found nothing remarkable in it, excepting its great size. In New Zealand according to Dieffenbach, the feral cats assume a streaky grey colour like that of wild cats; and this is the case with the half-wild cats of the Scotch Highlands.

We have seen that distant countries possess distinct domestic races of the cat. The differences may be in part due to descent from several aboriginal species, or at least to crosses with them. In some cases, as in Paraguay, Mombas, and Antigua, the differences seem due to the direct action of different conditions of life. In other cases some slight effect may possibly be attributed to natural selection, as cats in

⁹⁵ 'Narrative of Voyages,' vol. ii. p. 180.

⁹⁶ J. Crawford, 'Descript. Dict. of the Indian Islands,' p. 255. The Madagascar cat is said to have a twisted tail; see Desmarest, in 'Encyclop. Nat. Mamm.,' 1820, p. 233, for some of the other breeds.

⁹⁷ Admiral Lutke's Voyage, vol. iii. p. 308.

⁹⁸ 'Zoology of the Voyage of the Beagle, Mammalia,' p. 20. Dieffenbach, 'Travels in New Zealand, vol. ii. p. 185. Ch. St. John, 'Wild Sports of the Highlands,' 1846, p. 40.