

naturalist⁷⁴ believes that our sheep descend from ten aboriginally distinct species, of which only one is still living in a wild state! Another ingenious observer,⁷⁵ though not a naturalist, with a bold defiance of everything known on geographical distribution, infers that the sheep of Great Britain alone are the descendants of eleven endemic British forms! Under such a hopeless state of doubt it would be useless for my purpose to give a detailed account of the several breeds; but a few remarks may be added.

Sheep have been domesticated from a very ancient period. Rüttimeyer⁷⁶ found in the Swiss lake-dwellings the remains of a small breed, with thin tall legs, and horns like those of a goat, thus differing somewhat from any kind now known. Almost every country has its own peculiar breed; and many countries have several breeds differing greatly from each other. One of the most strongly marked races is an Eastern one with a long tail, including, according to Pallas, twenty vertebræ, and so loaded with fat that it is sometimes placed on a truck, which is dragged about by the living animal. These sheep, though ranked by Fitzinger as a distinct aboriginal form, bear in their drooping ears the stamp of long domestication. This is likewise the case with those sheep which have two great masses of fat on the rump, with the tail in a rudimentary condition. The Angola variety of the long-tailed race has curious masses of fat on the back of the head and beneath the jaws.⁷⁷ Mr. Hodgson in an admirable paper⁷⁸ on the sheep of the Himalaya infers from the distribution of the several races, "that this caudal augmentation in most of its phases is an instance of degeneracy in these pre-eminently Alpine animals." The horns present an endless diversity in character; being not rarely absent, especially in the female sex, or, on the other hand, amounting to four or even eight in number. The horns, when numerous, arise from a crest on the frontal bone, which is elevated in a peculiar manner.

⁷⁴ Dr. L. Fitzinger, 'Ueber die Racen des Zahmen Schafes,' 1860, s. 86.

⁷⁵ J. Anderson, 'Recreations in Agriculture and Natural History,'

vol. ii. p. 264.

⁷⁶ 'Pfahlbauten,' s. 127, 193.

⁷⁷ Youatt on Sheep, p. 120.

⁷⁸ 'Journal of the Asiatic Soc. of Bengal,' vol. xvi. pp. 1007, 1016.