

The Himalayans, when first born, are quite white, and are then true albinos; but in the course of a few months they gradually assume their dark ears, nose, feet, and tail. Occasionally, however, as I am informed by Mr. W. A. Wooler and the Rev. W. D. Fox, the young are born of a very pale grey colour, and specimens of such fur were sent me by the former gentleman. The grey tint, however, disappears as the animal comes to maturity. So that with these Himalayans there is a tendency, strictly confined to early youth, to revert to the colour of the adult silver-grey parent-stock. Silver-greys and chinchillas, on the other hand, present a remarkable contrast with the Himalayans in their colour whilst quite young, for they are born perfectly black, but soon assume their characteristic grey or silver tints. The same thing occurs with grey horses, which, as long as they are foals, are generally of a nearly black colour, but soon become grey, and get whiter and whiter as they grow older. Hence the usual rule is that Himalayans are born white and afterwards become in certain parts of their bodies dark-coloured; whilst silver-greys are born black and afterwards become sprinkled with white. Exceptions, however, and of a directly opposite nature, occasionally occur in both cases. For young silver-greys are sometimes born in warrens, as I hear from Mr. W. Birch, of a cream-colour, but these young animals ultimately become black. The Himalayans, on the other hand, sometimes produce, as is stated by an experienced amateur,¹⁸ a single black young one in a litter; and this, before two months elapse, becomes perfectly white.

To sum up the whole curious case: wild silver-greys may be considered as black rabbits which become grey at an early period of life. When they are crossed with common rabbits, the offspring are said not to have blended colours, but to take after either parent; and in this respect they resemble black and albino varieties of most quadrupeds, which often transmit their colours in this same manner. When they are crossed with chinchillas, that is, with a paler sub-variety, the young are at first pure albinos, but soon become dark-coloured in

¹⁸ 'Phenomenon in Himalayan Rabbits,' in 'Journal of Horticulture,' Jan. 27th, 1865, p. 102.