

certain parts of their bodies, and are then called Himalayans. The young Himalayans, however, are sometimes at first either pale grey or completely black, in either case changing after a time to white. In a future chapter I shall advance a large body of facts showing that, when two varieties are crossed both of which differ in colour from their parent-stock, there is a strong tendency in the young to revert to the aboriginal colour; and what is very remarkable, this reversion occasionally supervenes, not before birth, but during the growth of the animal. Hence, if it could be shown that silver-greys and chinchillas were the offspring of a cross between a black and albino variety with the colours intimately blended—a supposition in itself not improbable, and supported by the circumstance of silver-greys in warrens sometimes producing creamy-white young, which ultimately become black—then all the above given paradoxical facts on the changes of colour in silver-greys and in their descendants the Himalayans would come under the law of reversion, supervening at different periods of growth and in different degrees, either to the original black or to the original albino parent-variety.

It is, also, remarkable that Himalayans, though produced so suddenly, breed true. But as, whilst young, they are albinos, the case falls under a very general rule; albinism being well known to be strongly inherited, for instance with white mice and many other quadrupeds, and even white flowers. But why, it may be asked, do the ears, tail, nose, and feet, and no other part of the body, revert to a black colour? This apparently depends on a law, which generally holds good, namely, that characters common to many species of a genus—and this, in fact, implies long inheritance from the ancient progenitor of the genus—are found to resist variation, or to reappear if lost, more persistently than the characters which are confined to the separate species. Now, in the genus *Lepus*, a large majority of the species have their ears and the upper surface of the tail tinted black; but the persistence of these marks is best seen in those species which in winter become white: thus, in Scotland the *L. variabilis*<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> G. R. Waterhouse, 'Natural History of Mammalia: Rodents,' 1846, pp. 52, 60, 105.