

vary in a greater degree in accordance with their more highly-domesticated condition, are descended from *C. livia*, including under this name the above-enumerated wild geographical races; yet the question becomes far more difficult when we consider the eleven principal races, most of which have been profoundly modified. It can, however, be shown, by indirect evidence of a perfectly conclusive nature, that these principal races are not descended from so many wild stocks; and if this be once admitted, few will dispute that they are the descendants of *C. livia*, which agrees with them so closely in habits and in most characters, which varies in a state of nature, and which has certainly undergone a considerable amount of variation, as in the toy-pigeons. We shall moreover presently see how eminently favourable circumstances have been for a great amount of modification in the more carefully tended breeds.

The reasons for concluding that the several principal races are not descended from so many aboriginal and unknown stocks may be grouped under the following six heads:—*Firstly*, if the eleven chief races have not arisen from the variation of some one species, together with its geographical races, they must be descended from several extremely distinct aboriginal species; for no amount of crossing between only six or seven wild forms could produce races so distinct as Pouters, Carriers, Runts, Fantails, Turbits, Short-faced Tumblers, Jacobins, and Trumpeters. How could crossing produce, for instance, a Pouter or a Fantail, unless the two supposed aboriginal parents possessed the remarkable characters of these breeds? I am aware that some naturalists, following Pallas, believe that crossing gives a strong tendency to variation, independently of the characters inherited from either parent. They believe that it would be easier to raise a Pouter or Fantail pigeon from crossing two distinct species, neither of which possessed the characters of these races, than from any single species. I can find few facts in support of this doctrine, and believe in it only to a limited degree; but in a future chapter I shall have to recur to this subject. For our present purpose the point is not material. The question which concerns us is, whether or not many new and important characters have