

ment so many species. *Thirdly*, these supposed species having nowhere become feral. *Fourthly*, the extraordinary fact that man should, intentionally or by chance, have chosen for domestication several species, extremely abnormal in character; and furthermore, the points of structure which render these supposed species so abnormal being now highly variable. *Fifthly*, the fact of all the races, though differing in many important points of structure, producing perfectly fertile mongrels; whilst all the hybrids which have been produced between even closely allied species in the pigeon-family are sterile. *Sixthly*, the remarkable statements just given on the tendency in all the races, both when purely bred and when crossed, to revert in numerous minute details of colouring to the character of the wild rock-pigeon, and to vary in a similar manner. To these arguments may be added the extreme improbability that a number of species formerly existed, which differed greatly from each other in some few points, but which resembled each other as closely as do the domestic races in other points of structure, in voice, and in all their habits of life. When these several facts and arguments are fairly taken into consideration, it would require an overwhelming amount of evidence to make us admit that the chief domestic races are descended from several aboriginal stocks; and of such evidence there is absolutely none.

The belief that the chief domestic races are descended from several wild stocks no doubt has arisen from the apparent improbability of such great modifications of structure having been effected since man first domesticated the rock-pigeon. Nor am I surprised at any degree of hesitation in admitting their common parentage: formerly, when I went into my aviaries and watched such birds as Pouters, Carriers, Barbs, Fantails, and Short-faced Tumblers, &c., I could not persuade myself that all had descended from the same wild stock, and that man had consequently in one sense created these remarkable modifications. Therefore I have argued the question of their origin at great, and, as some will think, superfluous length.

Finally, in favour of the belief that all the races are