

is followed methodically when the fancier tries to improve and modify a breed according to a prefixed standard of excellence; or he acts unmethodically and unconsciously, by merely trying to rear as good birds as he can, without any wish or intention to alter the breed. The progress of selection almost inevitably leads to the neglect and ultimate extinction of the earlier and less improved forms, as well as of many intermediate links in each long line of descent. Thus it has come to pass that most of our present races are so marvellously distinct from each other, and from the aboriginal rock-pigeon.