

white, acquired as they grew old a few black feathers. A hen from the white Game, which was for a long time entirely black glossed with green, when two years old had some of the primary wing feathers greyish-white, and a multitude of feathers over her body narrowly and symmetrically tipped or laced with white. I had expected that some of the chickens whilst covered with down would have assumed the longitudinal stripes so general with gallinaceous birds; but this did not occur in a single instance. Two or three alone were reddish-brown about their heads. I was unfortunate in losing nearly all the white chickens from the first crosses; so that black prevailed with the grandchildren; but they were much diversified in colour, some being sooty, others mottled, and one blackish chicken had its feathers oddly tipped and barred with brown.

I will here add a few miscellaneous facts connected with reversion, and with the law of analogous variation. This law implies, as stated in a previous chapter, that the varieties of one species frequently mock distinct but allied species; and this fact is explained, according to the views which I maintain, on the principle of allied species having descended from one primitive form. The white Silk fowl with black skin and bones degenerates, as has been observed by Mr. Hewitt and Mr. R. Orton, in our climate; that is, it reverts to the ordinary colour of the common fowl in its skin and bones, due care having been taken to prevent any cross. In Germany³⁰ a distinct breed with black bones, and with black, not silky plumage, has likewise been observed to degenerate.

Mr. Tegetmeier informs me that, when distinct breeds are crossed, fowls are frequently produced with their feathers marked or pencilled by narrow transverse lines of a darker colour. This may be in part explained by direct reversion to the parent-form, the Bankiva hen; for this bird has all its upper plumage finely mottled with dark and rufous brown,

³⁰ 'Die Hühner- und Pfauenzucht,' Ulm, 1827, s. 17. For Mr. Hewitt's statement with respect to the white Silk fowl, see the 'Poultry Book,' by

W. B. Tegetmeier, 1866, p. 222. I am indebted to Mr. Orton for a letter on the same subject.