

the false plants or "rogues" as they are called. It has already been remarked, that some few seedling apples and pears generally resemble, but apparently are not identical with, the wild trees from which they are descended. In our turnip<sup>8</sup> and carrot-beds a few plants often "break"—that is, flower too soon; and their roots are generally hard and stringy, as in the parent-species. By the aid of a little selection, carried on during a few generations, most of our cultivated plants could probably be brought back, without any great change in their conditions of life, to a wild or nearly wild condition: Mr. Buckman has effected this with the parsnip;<sup>9</sup> and Mr. Hewett C. Watson, as he informs me, selected, during three generations, "the most diverging plants of Scotch kail, perhaps one of the least modified varieties of the cabbage; and in the third generation some of the plants came very close to the forms now established in England about old castle-walls, and called indigenous."

*Reversion in Animals and Plants which have run wild.*—In the cases hitherto considered, the reverting animals and plants have not been exposed to any great or abrupt change in their conditions of life which could have induced this tendency; but it is very different with animals and plants which have become feral or run wild. It has been repeatedly asserted in the most positive manner by various authors, that feral animals and plants invariably return to their primitive specific type. It is curious on what little evidence this belief rests. Many of our domesticated animals could not subsist in a wild state; thus, the more highly improved breeds of the pigeon will not "field" or search for their own food. Sheep have never become feral, and would be destroyed by almost every beast of prey.<sup>10</sup> In several cases we do not know the aboriginal parent-species, and cannot possibly tell

<sup>8</sup> 'Gardener's Chron.,' 1855, p. 777.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 1862, p. 721.

<sup>10</sup> Mr. Boner speaks ('Chamois-hunting,' 2nd edit., 1860, p. 92) of sheep often running wild in the Bavarian Alps; but, on making further inquiries at my request, he

found that they are not able to establish themselves; they generally perish from the frozen snow clinging to their wool, and they have lost the skill necessary to pass over steep icy slopes. On one occasion two ewes survived the winter, but their lambs perished.