

generations; but characters sometimes reappear in the same manner after a much longer interval of time. Thus the calves of a hornless race of cattle which originated in Corrientes, though at first quite hornless, as they become adult sometimes acquire small, crooked, and loose horns; and these in succeeding years occasionally become attached to the skull.²⁵ White and black Bantams, both of which generally breed true, sometimes assume as they grow old a saffron or red plumage. For instance, a first-rate black bantam has been described, which during three seasons was perfectly black, but then annually became more and more red; and it deserves notice that this tendency to change, whenever it occurs in a bantam, "is almost certain to prove hereditary."²⁶ The cuckoo or blue-mottled Dorking cock, when old, is liable to acquire yellow or orange hackles in place of his proper bluish-grey hackles.²⁷ Now as *Gallus bankiva* is coloured red and orange, and as Dorking fowls and bantams are descended from this species, we can hardly doubt that the change which occasionally occurs in the plumage of these birds as their age advances, results from a tendency in the individual to revert to the primitive type.

Crossing as a direct cause of Reversion.—It has long been notorious that hybrids and mongrels often revert to both or to one of their parent-forms, after an interval of from two to seven or eight, or, according to some authorities, even a greater number of generations. But that the act of crossing in itself gives an impulse towards reversion, as shown by the reappearance of long-lost characters, has never, I believe, been hitherto proved. The proof lies in certain peculiarities, which do not characterise the immediate parents, and therefore cannot have been derived from them, frequently appearing in the offspring of two breeds when crossed, which peculiarities never appear, or appear with extreme rarity, in these same breeds, as long as they are precluded from crossing. As this

²⁵ Azara, 'Essais Hist. Nat. de Paraguay,' tom. ii. 1801, p. 372.

²⁶ These facts are given on the high authority of Mr. Hewitt, in

'The Poultry Book,' by Mr. Tegetmeier, 1866, p. 248.

²⁷ 'The Poultry Book,' by Tegetmeier, 1866, p. 97.