

The truth of the principle of prepotency comes out more clearly when distinct races are crossed. The improved Short-horns, notwithstanding that the breed is comparatively modern, are generally acknowledged to possess great power in impressing their likeness on all other breeds; and it is chiefly in consequence of this power that they are so highly valued for exportation.⁶ Godine has given a curious case of a ram of a goat-like breed of sheep from the Cape of Good Hope, which produced offspring hardly to be distinguished from himself, when crossed with ewes of twelve other breeds. But two of these half-bred ewes, when put to a merino ram, produced lambs closely resembling the merino breed. Girou de Buzareingues⁷ found that of two races of French sheep the ewes of one, when crossed during successive generations with merino rams, yielded up their character far sooner than the ewes of the other race. Sturm and Girou have given analogous cases with other breeds of sheep and with cattle, the prepotency running in these cases through the male side; but I was assured on good authority in South America, that when niata cattle are crossed with common cattle, though the niata breed is prepotent whether males or females are used, yet that the prepotency is strongest through the female line. The Manx cat is tailless and has long hind legs; Dr. Wilson crossed a male Manx with common cats, and, out of twenty-three kittens, seventeen were destitute of tails; but when the female Manx was crossed by common male cats all the kittens had tails, though they were generally short and imperfect.⁸

In making reciprocal crosses between pouter and fantail pigeons, the pouter-race seemed to be prepotent through both sexes over the fantail. But this is probably due to weak power in the fantail rather than to any unusually strong power in the pouter, for I have observed that barbs also preponderate over fantails. This weakness of transmission in the fantail, though the breed is an ancient one, is said⁹ to be general; but I have observed one exception to the rule, namely, in a cross between a fantail and laughter. The most curious instance known to me of weak power in both sexes is in the trumpeter pigeon. This breed has been well known for at least 130 years: it breeds perfectly true, as I have been assured by those who have long kept many birds: it is characterised by a peculiar tuft of feathers over the beak, by a crest on the head, by a singular coo quite unlike that of any other breed, and by much-feathered feet. I have crossed both sexes with turbits of two sub-breeds, with almond tumblers, spots, and runts, and reared many mongrels and recrossed them; and though the crest on the head

⁶ Quoted by Bronn, 'Geschichte der Natur,' b. ii. s. 170. See Sturm, 'Ueber Racen,' 1825, s. 104-107. For the niata cattle, see my 'Journal of Researches,' 1845, p. 146.

⁷ Lucas, 'L'Hérédité Nat.,' tom. ii.

p. 112.

⁸ Mr. Orton, 'Physiology of Breeding,' 1855, p. 9.

⁹ Boitard and Corbié, 'Les Pigeons,' 1824, p. 224.