for hybrids raised from five differently coloured hens differed greatly in plumage. I formerly examined some curious hybrids in the Zoological Gardens, between the Penguin variety of the common duck and the Egyptian goose (*Anser ægyptiacus*); and although I will not assert that the domesticated variety preponderated over the natural species, yet it had strongly impressed its unnatural upright figure on these hybrids.

I am aware that such cases as the foregoing have been ascribed by various authors, not to one species, race, or individual being prepotent over the other in impressing its character on its crossed offspring, but to such rules as that the father influences the external characters and the mother the internal or vital organs. But the great diversity of the rules given by various authors almost proves their falseness. Dr. Prosper Lucas has fully discussed this point, and has shown [18] that none of the rules (and I could add others to those quoted by him) apply to all animals. Similar rules have been announced for plants, and have been proved by Gärtner [19] to be all erroneous. If we confine our view to the domesticated races of a single species, or perhaps even to the species of the same genus, some such rules may hold good; for instance, it seems that in reciprocally crossing various breeds of fowls the male generally gives colour; [20] but conspicuous exceptions have passed under my own eyes. It seems that the ram usually gives its peculiar horns and fleece to its crossed offspring, and the bull the presence or absence of horns.

In the following chapter on Crossing I shall have occasion to show that certain characters are rarely or never blended by crossing, but are transmitted in an unmodified state from either parent-form; I refer to this fact here because it is sometimes accompanied on the one side by prepotency, which thus acquires the false appearance of unusual strength. In the same chapter I shall show that the rate at which a species or breed absorbs and obliterates another by repeated crosses, depends in chief part on prepotency in transmission.

In conclusion, some of the cases above given,—for instance, that of the trumpeter pigeon,—prove that there is a wide difference between mere inheritance and prepotency. This latter power seems to us, in our ignorance, to act in most cases quite capriciously. The very same character, even though it be an abnormal or monstrous one, such as silky feathers, may be transmitted by different species, when crossed, either with prepotent force or singular feebleness. It is obvious,

[18] 'L'Héréd. Nat.,' tom. ii. book ii. ch. i.

[19] 'Bastarderzeugung,' s. 264–266. Naudin ('Nouvelles Archives du Muséum,' tom. i. p. 148) has arrived at a similar conclusion.

[20] 'Cottage Gardener,' 1856, pp 101, 137.