

individuals of the same species, though treated in the same manner. In this latter case we see that the power of transmission is a quality which is merely individual in its attachment. As with single characters, so it is with the several concurrent slight differences which distinguish sub-varieties or races; for of these, some can be propagated almost as truly as species, whilst others cannot be relied on. The same rule holds good with plants, when propagated by bulbs, offsets, &c., which in one sense still form parts of the same individual, for some varieties retain or inherit through successive bud-generations their character far more truly than others.

Some characters not proper to the parent-species have certainly been inherited from an extremely remote epoch, and may therefore be considered as firmly fixed. But it is doubtful whether length of inheritance in itself gives fixedness of character; though the chances are obviously in favour of any character which has long been transmitted true or unaltered still being transmitted true as long as the conditions of life remain the same. We know that many species, after having retained the same character for countless ages, whilst living under their natural conditions, when domesticated have varied in the most diversified manner, that is, have failed to transmit their original form; so that no character appears to be absolutely fixed. We can sometimes account for the failure of inheritance by the conditions of life being opposed to the development of certain characters; and still oftener, as with plants cultivated by grafts and buds, by the conditions causing new and slight modifications incessantly to appear. In this latter case it is not that inheritance wholly fails, but that new characters are continually superadded. In some few cases, in which both parents are similarly characterised, inheritance seems to gain so much force by the combined action of the two parents, that it counteracts its own power, and a new modification is the result.

In many cases the failure of the parents to transmit their likeness is due to the breed having been at some former period crossed; and the child takes after his grandparent or more remote ancestor of foreign blood. In other cases, in which the breed has not been crossed, but some ancient character