

effects of close interbreeding may be checked or quite prevented by the related individuals being separated for a few generations and exposed to different conditions of life. This conclusion is now held by many breeders; for instance Mr. Carr² remarks, it is a well-known "fact that a change of soil and climate effects perhaps almost as great a change in the constitution as would result from an infusion of fresh blood." I hope to show in a future work that consanguinity by itself counts for nothing, but acts solely from related organisms generally having a similar constitution, and having been exposed in most cases to similar conditions.

That any evil directly follows from the closest interbreeding has been denied by many persons; but rarely by any practical breeder; and never, as far as I know, by one who has largely bred animals which propagate their kind quickly. Many physiologists attribute the evil exclusively to the combination and consequent increase of morbid tendencies common to both parents; and that this is an active source of mischief there can be no doubt. It is unfortunately too notorious that men and various domestic animals endowed with a wretched constitution, and with a strong hereditary disposition to disease, if not actually ill, are fully capable of procreating their kind. Close interbreeding, on the other hand, often induces sterility; and this indicates something quite distinct from the augmentation of morbid tendencies common to both parents. The evidence immediately to be given convinces me that it is a great law of nature, that all organic beings profit from an occasional cross with individuals not closely related to them in blood; and that, on the other hand, long-continued close interbreeding is injurious.

Various general considerations have had much influence in leading me to this conclusion; but the reader will probably rely more on special facts and opinions. The authority of experienced observers, even when they do not advance the grounds of their belief, is of some little value. Now almost all men who have bred many kinds of animals and have written on the subject, such as Sir J. Sebright, Andrew

² 'The History of the Rise and Progress of the Killerby, &c. Herds,' p. 41.