

that "they are all very glad to get a European kangaroo dog, and several instances have been known of the father killing his own infant that the mother might suckle the much-prized puppy." Different kinds of dogs would be useful to the Australian for hunting opossums and kangaroos, and to the Fuegian for catching fish and otters; and the occasional preservation in the two countries of the most useful animals would ultimately lead to the formation of two widely distinct breeds.

With plants, from the earliest dawn of civilisation, the best variety which was known would generally have been cultivated at each period and its seeds occasionally sown; so that there will have been some selection from an extremely remote period, but without any prefixed standard of excellence or thought of the future. We at the present day profit by a course of selection occasionally and unconsciously carried on during thousands of years. This is proved in an interesting manner by Oswald Heer's researches on the lake-inhabitants of Switzerland, as given in a former chapter; for he shows that the grain and seed of our present varieties of wheat, barley, oats, peas, beans, lentils, and poppy, exceed in size those which were cultivated in Switzerland during the Neolithic and Bronze periods. These ancient people, during the Neolithic period, possessed also a crab considerably larger than that now growing wild on the Jura.⁸¹ The pears described by Pliny were evidently extremely inferior in quality to our present pears. We can realise the effects of long-continued selection and cultivation in another way, for would any one in his senses expect to raise a first-rate apple from the seed of a truly wild crab, or a luscious melting pear from the wild pear? Alphonse de Candolle informs me that he has lately seen on an ancient mosaic at Rome a representation of the melon; and as the Romans, who were such gourmands, are silent on this fruit, he infers that the melon has been greatly ameliorated since the classical period.

Coming to later times, Buffon,⁸² on comparing the flowers,

⁸¹ See also Dr. Christ, in Rüttemeyer's 'Pfaflbauten,' 1861, s. 226.

⁸² The passage is given, 'Bull. Soc. d'Acclimat.,' 1858, p. 11.