

colour and size; but as it is an animal of little value and bred by poor people, there has been no selection, and distinct races have not been formed. We must not attribute the inferiority of our asses to climate, for in India they are of even smaller size than in Europe. But when selection is brought to bear on the ass, all is changed. Near Cordova, as I am informed (Feb. 1860) by Mr. W. E. Webb, C.E., they are carefully bred, as much as 200*l.* having been paid for a stallion ass, and they have been immensely improved. In Kentucky, asses have been imported (for breeding mules) from Spain, Malta, and France; these "seldom averaged more than fourteen hands high: but the Kentuckians, by great care, have raised them up to fifteen hands, and sometimes even to sixteen. The prices paid for these splendid animals, for such they really are, will prove how much they are in request. One male, of great celebrity, was sold for upwards of one thousand pounds sterling." These choice asses are sent to cattle-shows, a day being given for their exhibition.⁵⁰

Analogous facts have been observed with plants: the nutmeg-tree in the Malay archipelago is highly variable, but there has been no selection, and there are no distinct races.⁵¹ The common mignonette (*Reseda odorata*), from bearing inconspicuous flowers, valued solely for their fragrance, "remains in the same unimproved condition as when first introduced."⁵² Our common forest-trees are very variable, as may be seen in every extensive nursery-ground; but as they are not valued like fruit-trees, and as they seed late in life, no selection has been applied to them; consequently, as Mr. Patrick Matthews remarks,⁵³ they have not yielded distinct races, leafing at different periods, growing to different sizes, and producing timber fit for different purposes. We have gained only some fanciful and semi-monstrous varieties, which no doubt appeared suddenly as we now see them.

Some botanists have argued that plants cannot have so

⁵⁰ Capt. Marryat, quoted by Blyth in 'Journ. Asiatic Soc. of Bengal,' vol. xxviii. p. 229.

⁵¹ Mr. Oxley, 'Journal of the Indian Archipelago,' vol. ii., 1848, p.

645.

⁵² Mr. Abbey, in 'Journal of Horticulture,' Dec. 1, 1863, p. 430.

⁵³ 'On Naval Timber,' 1831, p. 107.