

be a fair chance of variations of the desired nature arising, and of every individual with the slightest blemish or in any degree inferior being freely rejected. Hence length of time is an important element of success. Thus, also, reproduction at an early age and at short intervals favours the work. Facility in pairing animals, or their inhabiting a confined area, is advantageous as a check to free crossing. Whenever and wherever selection is not practised, distinct races are not formed within the same country. When any one part of the body or one quality is not attended to, it remains either unchanged or varies in a fluctuating manner, whilst at the same time other parts and other qualities may become permanently and greatly modified. But from the tendency to reversion and to continued variability, those parts or organs which are now undergoing rapid improvement through selection, are likewise found to vary much. Consequently highly-bred animals when neglected soon degenerate; but we have no reason to believe that the effects of long-continued selection would, if the conditions of life remained the same, be soon and completely lost.

Man always tends to go to an extreme point in the selection, whether methodical or unconscious, of all useful and pleasing qualities. This is an important principle, as it leads to continued divergence, and in some rare cases to convergence of character. The possibility of continued divergence rests on the tendency in each part or organ to go on varying in the same manner in which it has already varied; and that this occurs, is proved by the steady and gradual improvement of many animals and plants during lengthened periods. The principle of divergence of character, combined with the neglect and final extinction of all previous, less-valued, and intermediate varieties, explains the amount of difference and the distinctness of our several races. Although we may have reached the utmost limit to which certain characters can be modified, yet we are far from having reached, as we have good reason to believe, the limit in the majority of cases. Finally, from the difference between selection as carried on by man and by nature, we can understand how it is that domestic races often, though by no means always, differ in general aspect from closely allied natural species.