

instance of a plant which has not become hardier since its first introduction into Britain. We hear, however, on excellent authority,⁸⁰ that some very fine seed, imported from abroad, produced plants "which blossomed most profusely, but were "nearly all but abortive, whilst plants grown alongside from "English seed podded abundantly;" and this apparently shows some degree of acclimatisation in our English plants. We have also seen that seedlings of the kidney-bean occasionally appear with a marked power of resisting frost; but no one, as far as I can hear, has ever separated such hardy seedlings, so as to prevent accidental crossing, and then gathered their seed, and repeated the process year after year. It may, however, be objected with truth that natural selection ought to have had a decided effect on the hardiness of our kidney-beans; for the tenderest individuals must have been killed during every severe spring, and the hardier preserved. But it should be borne in mind that the result of increased hardiness would simply be that gardeners, who are always anxious for as early a crop as possible, would sow their seed a few days earlier than formerly. Now, as the period of sowing depends much on the soil and elevation of each district, and varies with the season; and as new varieties have often been imported from abroad, can we feel sure that our kidney-beans are not somewhat hardier? I have not been able, by searching old horticultural works, to answer this question satisfactorily.

On the whole the facts now given show that, though habit does something towards acclimatisation, yet that the appearance of constitutionally different individuals is a far more effective agent. As no single instance has been recorded either with animals or plants of hardier individuals having been long and steadily selected, though such selection is admitted to be indispensable for the improvement of any other character, it is not surprising that man has done little in the acclimatisation of domesticated animals and cultivated plants.

We need not, however, doubt that under nature new races and new species would become adapted to widely different climates, by variation, aided by habit, and regulated by natural selection.

⁸⁰ Messrs. Hardy and Son, in 'Gard. Chronicle,' 1856, p. 589.