

over the snow, may have become partially webbed from the stimulus of widely extending their toes; but it is more probable that the webbing, like the membrane between the toes of certain pigeons, spontaneously appeared and was afterwards increased by the best swimmers and the best snow-travellers being preserved during many generations. A fancier who wished to decrease the size of his bantams or tumbler-pigeons would never think of starving them, but would select the smallest individuals which spontaneously appeared. Quadrupeds are sometimes born destitute of hair and hairless breeds have been formed, but there is no reason to believe that this is caused by a hot climate. Within the tropics heat often causes sheep to lose their fleeces; on the other hand, wet and cold act as a direct stimulus to the growth of hair; but who will pretend to decide how far the thick fur of arctic animals, or their white colour, is due to the direct action of a severe climate, and how far to the preservation of the best-protected individuals during a long succession of generations?

Of all the laws governing variability, that of correlation is one of the most important. In many cases of slight deviations of structure as well as of grave monstrosities, we cannot even conjecture what is the nature of the bond of connexion. But between homologous parts—between the fore and hind limbs—between the hair, hoofs, horns, and teeth—which are closely similar during their early development and which are exposed to similar conditions, we can see that they would be eminently liable to be modified in the same manner. Homologous parts, from having the same nature, are apt to blend together, and, when many exist, to vary in number.

Although every variation is either directly or indirectly caused by some change in the surrounding conditions, we must never forget that the nature of the organisation which is acted on, is by far the more important factor in the result. We see this in different organisms, which when placed under similar conditions vary in a different manner, whilst closely-allied organisms under dissimilar conditions often vary in nearly the same manner. We see this, in the same modification frequently reappearing in the same variety at long