

country, the two lots being supplied with different kinds of food, would they after many generations differ? When we reflect on the cases given in the twenty-third chapter, and on such facts as the difference in former times between the breeds of cattle, sheep, &c., in almost every district of Europe, we are strongly inclined to admit that the two lots would be differently modified through the influence of climate and food. But the evidence on the definite action of changed conditions is in most cases insufficient; and, with respect to pigeons, I have had the opportunity of examining a large collection of domesticated kinds, sent to me by Sir W. Elliot from India, and they varied in a remarkably similar manner with our European birds.

If two distinct breeds were mingled together in equal numbers, there is reason to suspect that they would to a certain extent prefer pairing with their own kind; but they would often intercross. From the greater vigour and fertility of the crossed offspring, the whole body would by this means become interblended sooner than would otherwise have occurred. From certain breeds being prepotent over others, it does not follow that the interblended progeny would be strictly intermediate in character. I have, also, proved that the act of crossing in itself gives a strong tendency to reversion, so that the crossed offspring would tend to revert to the state of the aboriginal rock-pigeon; and in the course of time they would probably be not much more heterogeneous in character than in our first case, when birds of the same breed were confined together.

I have just said that the crossed offspring would gain in vigour and fertility. From the facts given in the seventeenth chapter there can be no doubt of this fact; and there can be little doubt, though the evidence on this head is not so easily acquired, that long-continued close interbreeding leads to evil results. With hermaphrodites of all kinds, if the sexual elements of the same individual habitually acted on each other, the closest possible interbreeding would be perpetual. But we should bear in mind that the structure of all hermaphrodite animals, as far as I can learn, permits and frequently necessitates a cross with a distinct individual. With