

able to man ; for every one tries to get the best dogs, horses, cows, or sheep, without thinking about their future progeny, yet these animals would transmit more or less surely their good qualities to their offspring. Nor is any one so careless as to breed from his worst animals. Even savages, when compelled from extreme want to kill some of their animals, would destroy the worst and preserve the best. With animals kept for use and not for mere amusement, different fashions prevail in different districts, leading to the preservation, and consequently to the transmission, of all sorts of trifling peculiarities of character. The same process will have been pursued with our fruit-trees and vegetables, for the best will always have been the most largely cultivated, and will occasionally have yielded seedlings better than their parents.

The different strains, just alluded to, which have been actually produced by breeders without any wish on their part to obtain such a result, afford excellent evidence of the power of unconscious selection. This form of selection has probably led to far more important results than methodical selection, and is likewise more important under a theoretical point of view from closely resembling natural selection. For during this process the best or most valued individuals are not separated and prevented from crossing with others of the same breed, but are simply preferred and preserved ; yet this inevitably leads to their gradual modification and improvement ; so that finally they prevail, to the exclusion of the old parent-form.

With our domesticated animals natural selection checks the production of races with any injurious deviation of structure. In the case of animals which, from being kept by savages or semi-civilised people, have to provide largely for their own wants under different circumstances, natural selection will have played a more important part. Hence it probably is that they often closely resemble natural species.

As there is no limit to man's desire to possess animals and plants more and more useful in any respect, and as the fancier always wishes, owing to fashions running into extremes, to produce each character more and more strongly pronounced,