

obscured, is never lost. There is no ground, in short, for supposing that nature has ever produced such an individual as a chimera or centaur. And Lucretius's scepticism in this point is justified on truly philosophical principles; on the difference namely of the physical constitution of the horse and of man: the horse at the end of his third year being full-grown, while man is yet almost an infant; and the horse being decrepit in his twenty-fifth or thirtieth year, when man is in his full vigour^p.

In pursuing this investigation, it would be obvious to ask, what are the limits which separate a *lusus naturæ* from the ordinary individuals of the same species? and we shall soon find that these limits are, in the majority of instances, undefinable.

If, indeed, in comparing the several organs, agreement with respect to number be the criterion, the limits are for the most part fixed. Thus the human hand so very generally consists of five fingers, that an instance of an individual having more or less than five fingers would be justly esteemed an instance of a *lusus naturæ*. But even number is not always an ac-

^p Sed neque Centauri fuerunt, neque tempore in ullo
Esse queat duplici natura, et corpore bino
Ex alienigenis membris compacta potestas—
Principio, circum tribus actis impiger annis
Floret equus, puer haudquaquam, &c.—

Lib. V. 876—889.