

character—and the change was probably desired owing to the increased fleetness of our hunters—it rapidly spread throughout the country, and is now everywhere nearly uniform. But the process of improvement is still going on for every one tries to improve his strain by occasionally procuring dogs from the best kennels. Through this process of gradual substitution the old English hound has been lost; and so it has been with the Irish wolf-dog, the old English bulldog, and several other breeds, such as the alaunt, as I am informed by Mr. Jesse. But the extinction of former breeds is apparently aided by another cause; for whenever a breed is kept in scanty numbers, as at present with the bloodhound, it is reared with some difficulty, apparently from the evil effects of long-continued close interbreeding. As several breeds of the dog have been slightly but sensibly modified within so short a period as the last one or two centuries, by the selection of the best individuals, modified in many cases by crosses with other breeds; and as we shall hereafter see that the breeding of dogs was attended to in ancient times, as it still is by savages, we may conclude that we have in selection, even if only occasionally practised, a potent means of modification.

#### DOMESTIC CATS.

CATS have been domesticated in the East from an ancient period; Mr. Blyth informs me that they are mentioned in a Sanskrit writing 2000 years old, and in Egypt their antiquity is known to be even greater, as shown by monumental drawings and their mummied bodies. These mummies, according to De Blainville,<sup>88</sup> who has particularly studied the subject, belong to no less than three species, namely, *F. caligulata*, *bubastes*, and *chaus*. The two former species are said to be still found, both wild and domesticated, in parts of Egypt. *F. caligulata* presents a difference in the first inferior milk molar tooth, as compared with the domestic cats of Europe, which makes De Blainville conclude that it is not one of the

<sup>88</sup> De Blainville, 'Ostéographie, Felis,' p. 65, on the character of *F. caligulata*; pp. 85, 89, 90, 175, on the

other mummied species. He quotes Ehrenburg on *F. maniculata* being mummied.