

their offspring change colour as they grow old, or when the crossed turbit acquired the characteristic frill after its third moult, or when purely-bred bantams partially assume the red plumage of their prototype, we cannot doubt that these qualities were from the first present, though latent, in the individual animal, like the characters of a moth in the caterpillar. Now, if these animals had produced offspring before they had acquired with advancing age their new characters, nothing is more probable than that they would have transmitted them to some of their offspring, who in this case would in appearance have received such characters from their grandparents or more distant progenitors. We should then have had a case of reversion, that is, of the reappearance in the child of an ancestral character, actually present, though during youth completely latent, in the parent; and this we may safely conclude is what occurs in all reversions to progenitors, however remote.

This view of the latency in each generation of all the characters which appear through reversion, is also supported by their actual presence in some cases during early youth alone, or by their more frequent appearance and greater distinctness at this age than during maturity. We have seen that this is often the case with the stripes on the legs and faces of the several species of the horse-genus. The Himalayan rabbit, when crossed, sometimes produces offspring which revert to the parent silver-grey breed, and we have seen that in purely bred animals pale-grey fur occasionally reappears during early youth. Black cats, we may feel assured, would occasionally produce by reversion tabbies; and on young black kittens, with a pedigree<sup>66</sup> known to have been long pure, faint traces of stripes may almost always be seen which afterwards disappear. Hornless Suffolk cattle occasionally produce by reversion horned animals; and Youatt<sup>67</sup> asserts that even in hornless individuals "the rudiment of a horn may be often felt at an early age."

No doubt it appears at first sight in the highest degree improbable that in every horse of every generation there should

<sup>66</sup> Carl Vogt, 'Lectures on Man,'  
Eng. transl., 1864, p. 411.

<sup>67</sup> 'On Cattle,' p. 174.