

circumstances inconceivably complex and liable to change, modifications of the most varied nature in the internal organs as well as in external characters, in the functions and mutual relations of parts, will be rigorously tested, preserved, or rejected. Natural selection often checks man's comparatively feeble and capricious attempts at improvement; and if it were not so, the result of his work, and of nature's work, would be even still more different. Nevertheless, we must not overrate the amount of difference between natural species and domestic races; the most experienced naturalists have often disputed whether the latter are descended from one or from several aboriginal stocks, and this clearly shows that there is no palpable difference between species and races.

Domestic races propagate their kind far more truly, and endure for much longer periods, than most naturalists are willing to admit. Breeders feel no doubt on this head: ask a man who has long reared Shorthorn or Hereford cattle, Leicester or Southdown sheep, Spanish or Game poultry, tumbler or carrier-pigeons, whether these races may not have been derived from common progenitors, and he will probably laugh you to scorn. The breeder admits that he may hope to produce sheep with finer or longer wool and with better carcasses, or handsomer fowls, or carrier-pigeons with beaks just perceptibly longer to the practised eye, and thus be successful at an exhibition. Thus far he will go, but no farther. He does not reflect on what follows from adding up during a long course of time many slight, successive modifications; nor does he reflect on the former existence of numerous varieties, connecting the links in each divergent line of descent. He concludes, as was shown in the earlier chapters, that all the chief breeds to which he has long attended are aboriginal productions. The systematic naturalist, on the other hand, who generally knows nothing of the art of breeding, who does not pretend to know how and when the several domestic races were formed, who cannot have seen the intermediate gradations, for they do not now exist, nevertheless feels no doubt that these races are sprung from a single source. But ask him whether the closely allied natural species which he has studied may not have