

there is, through the prolonged action of methodical and unconscious selection, a constant tendency in every breed to become more and more different from its parent-stock; and when several breeds have been produced and are valued for different qualities, to differ more and more from each other. This leads to Divergence of Character. As improved sub-varieties and races are slowly formed, the older and less improved breeds are neglected and decrease in number. When few individuals of any breed exist within the same locality, close interbreeding, by lessening their vigour and fertility, aids in their final extinction. Thus the intermediate links are lost, and the remaining breeds gain in Distinctness of Character.

In the chapters on the Pigeon, it was proved by historical evidence and by the existence of connecting sub-varieties in distant lands that several breeds have steadily diverged in character, and that many old and intermediate sub-breeds have been lost. Other cases could be adduced of the extinction of domestic breeds, as of the Irish wolf-dog, the old English hound, and of two breeds in France, one of which was formerly highly valued.⁴ Mr. Pickering remarks⁵ that "the sheep figured on the most ancient Egyptian monuments is unknown at the present day; and at least one variety of the bullock, formerly known in Egypt, has in like manner become extinct." So it has been with some animals and with several plants cultivated by the ancient inhabitants of Europe during the neolithic period. In Peru, Von Tschudi⁶ found in certain tombs, apparently prior to the dynasty of the Incas, two kinds of maize not now known in the country. With our flowers and culinary vegetables, the production of new varieties and their extinction has incessantly recurred. At the present time improved breeds sometimes displace older breeds at an extraordinarily rapid rate; as has recently occurred throughout England with pigs. The Long-horn cattle in their native home were "suddenly swept away as if by some murderous pestilence," by the introduction of Short-horns.⁷

⁴ M. Ruz de Lavison, in 'Bull. Soc. Imp. d'Acclimat.,' Dec. 1862, p. 1009.

⁵ 'Races of Man,' 1850, p. 315.

⁶ 'Travels in Peru,' Eng. Translat.,

p. 177.

⁷ Youatt on Cattle, 1834, p. 200. On Pigs, see 'Gard. Chronicle,' 1854 p. 410.