

# DARWIN CHARLES

THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES  
BY MEANS OF NATURAL  
SELECTION

**Charles Darwin**  
**The Origin of Species by**  
**Means of Natural Selection**

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*The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection Or, the Preservation of  
Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life, 6th Edition:*

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"But with regard to the material world, we can at least go so far as this – we can perceive that events are brought about not by insulated interpositions of Divine power, exerted in each particular case, but by the establishment of general laws." – Whewell: "Bridgewater Treatise".

"The only distinct meaning of the word 'natural' is STATED, FIXED or SETTLED; since what is natural as much requires and presupposes an intelligent agent to render it so, i.e., to effect it continually or at stated times, as what is supernatural or miraculous does to effect it for once." – Butler: "Analogy of Revealed Religion".

"To conclude, therefore, let no man out of a weak conceit of sobriety, or an ill-applied moderation, think or maintain, that a man can search too far or be too well studied in the book of God's word, or in the book of God's works; divinity or philosophy; but

rather let men endeavour an endless progress or proficiencie in both." – Bacon: "Advancement of Learning".

# **AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE PROGRESS OF OPINION ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES, PREVIOUSLY TO THE PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST EDITION OF THIS WORK**

I will here give a brief sketch of the progress of opinion on the Origin of Species. Until recently the great majority of naturalists believed that species were immutable productions, and had been separately created. This view has been ably maintained by many authors. Some few naturalists, on the other hand, have believed that species undergo modification, and that the existing forms of life are the descendants by true generation of pre existing forms. Passing over allusions to the subject in the classical writers (Aristotle, in his "Physicae Auscultationes" (lib.2, cap.8, s.2), after remarking that rain does not fall in order to make the corn grow, any more than it falls to spoil the farmer's corn when threshed out of doors, applies the same argument to organisation; and adds (as translated by Mr. Clair Grece, who first pointed out the passage to me), "So what hinders the different parts (of the body) from having this merely accidental relation in

nature? as the teeth, for example, grow by necessity, the front ones sharp, adapted for dividing, and the grinders flat, and serviceable for masticating the food; since they were not made for the sake of this, but it was the result of accident. And in like manner as to other parts in which there appears to exist an adaptation to an end. Wheresoever, therefore, all things together (that is all the parts of one whole) happened like as if they were made for the sake of something, these were preserved, having been appropriately constituted by an internal spontaneity; and whatsoever things were not thus constituted, perished and still perish." We here see the principle of natural selection shadowed forth, but how little Aristotle fully comprehended the principle, is shown by his remarks on the formation of the teeth.), the first author who in modern times has treated it in a scientific spirit was Buffon. But as his opinions fluctuated greatly at different periods, and as he does not enter on the causes or means of the transformation of species, I need not here enter on details.

Lamarck was the first man whose conclusions on the subject excited much attention. This justly celebrated naturalist first published his views in 1801; he much enlarged them in 1809 in his "Philosophie Zoologique", and subsequently, 1815, in the Introduction to his "Hist. Nat. des Animaux sans Vertebres". In these works he up holds the doctrine that all species, including man, are descended from other species. He first did the eminent service of arousing attention to the probability of all change in the organic, as well as in the inorganic world, being the result

of law, and not of miraculous interposition. Lamarck seems to have been chiefly led to his conclusion on the gradual change of species, by the difficulty of distinguishing species and varieties, by the almost perfect gradation of forms in certain groups, and by the analogy of domestic productions. With respect to the means of modification, he attributed something to the direct action of the physical conditions of life, something to the crossing of already existing forms, and much to use and disuse, that is, to the effects of habit. To this latter agency he seems to attribute all the beautiful adaptations in nature; such as the long neck of the giraffe for browsing on the branches of trees. But he likewise believed in a law of progressive development, and as all the forms of life thus tend to progress, in order to account for the existence at the present day of simple productions, he maintains that such forms are now spontaneously generated. (I have taken the date of the first publication of Lamarck from Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire's ("Hist. Nat. Generale", tom. ii. page 405, 1859) excellent history of opinion on this subject. In this work a full account is given of Buffon's conclusions on the same subject. It is curious how largely my grandfather, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, anticipated the views and erroneous grounds of opinion of Lamarck in his "Zoonomia" (vol. i. pages 500-510), published in 1794. According to Isid. Geoffroy there is no doubt that Goethe was an extreme partisan of similar views, as shown in the introduction to a work written in 1794 and 1795, but not published till long afterward; he has pointedly remarked

("Goethe als Naturforscher", von Dr. Karl Meding, s. 34) that the future question for naturalists will be how, for instance, cattle got their horns and not for what they are used. It is rather a singular instance of the manner in which similar views arise at about the same time, that Goethe in Germany, Dr. Darwin in England, and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (as we shall immediately see) in France, came to the same conclusion on the origin of species, in the years 1794-5.)

Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, as is stated in his "Life", written by his son, suspected, as early as 1795, that what we call species are various degenerations of the same type. It was not until 1828 that he published his conviction that the same forms have not been perpetuated since the origin of all things. Geoffroy seems to have relied chiefly on the conditions of life, or the "monde ambiant" as the cause of change. He was cautious in drawing conclusions, and did not believe that existing species are now undergoing modification; and, as his son adds, "C'est donc un probleme a reserver entierement a l'avenir, suppose meme que l'avenir doive avoir prise sur lui."

In 1813 Dr. W.C. Wells read before the Royal Society "An Account of a White Female, part of whose skin resembles that of a Negro"; but his paper was not published until his famous "Two Essays upon Dew and Single Vision" appeared in 1818. In this paper he distinctly recognises the principle of natural selection, and this is the first recognition which has been indicated; but he applies it only to the races of man, and to certain characters

alone. After remarking that negroes and mulattoes enjoy an immunity from certain tropical diseases, he observes, firstly, that all animals tend to vary in some degree, and, secondly, that agriculturists improve their domesticated animals by selection; and then, he adds, but what is done in this latter case "by art, seems to be done with equal efficacy, though more slowly, by nature, in the formation of varieties of mankind, fitted for the country which they inhabit. Of the accidental varieties of man, which would occur among the first few and scattered inhabitants of the middle regions of Africa, some one would be better fitted than others to bear the diseases of the country. This race would consequently multiply, while the others would decrease; not only from their inability to sustain the attacks of disease, but from their incapacity of contending with their more vigorous neighbours. The colour of this vigorous race I take for granted, from what has been already said, would be dark. But the same disposition to form varieties still existing, a darker and a darker race would in the course of time occur: and as the darkest would be the best fitted for the climate, this would at length become the most prevalent, if not the only race, in the particular country in which it had originated." He then extends these same views to the white inhabitants of colder climates. I am indebted to Mr. Rowley, of the United States, for having called my attention, through Mr. Brace, to the above passage of Dr. Wells' work.

The Hon. and Rev. W. Herbert, afterward Dean of Manchester, in the fourth volume of the "Horticultural

Transactions", 1822, and in his work on the "Amaryllidaceae" (1837, pages 19, 339), declares that "horticultural experiments have established, beyond the possibility of refutation, that botanical species are only a higher and more permanent class of varieties." He extends the same view to animals. The dean believes that single species of each genus were created in an originally highly plastic condition, and that these have produced, chiefly by inter-crossing, but likewise by variation, all our existing species.

In 1826 Professor Grant, in the concluding paragraph in his well-known paper ("Edinburgh Philosophical Journal", vol. XIV, page 283) on the *Spongilla*, clearly declares his belief that species are descended from other species, and that they become improved in the course of modification. This same view was given in his Fifty-fifth Lecture, published in the "Lancet" in 1834.

In 1831 Mr. Patrick Matthew published his work on "Naval Timber and Arboriculture", in which he gives precisely the same view on the origin of species as that (presently to be alluded to) propounded by Mr. Wallace and myself in the "Linnean Journal", and as that enlarged in the present volume. Unfortunately the view was given by Mr. Matthew very briefly in scattered passages in an appendix to a work on a different subject, so that it remained unnoticed until Mr. Matthew himself drew attention to it in the "Gardeners' Chronicle", on April 7, 1860. The differences of Mr. Matthew's views from mine are not of much

importance: he seems to consider that the world was nearly depopulated at successive periods, and then restocked; and he gives as an alternative, that new forms may be generated "without the presence of any mold or germ of former aggregates." I am not sure that I understand some passages; but it seems that he attributes much influence to the direct action of the conditions of life. He clearly saw, however, the full force of the principle of natural selection.

The celebrated geologist and naturalist, Von Buch, in his excellent "Description Physique des Isles Canaries" (1836, page 147), clearly expresses his belief that varieties slowly become changed into permanent species, which are no longer capable of intercrossing.

Rafinesque, in his "New Flora of North America", published in 1836, wrote (page 6) as follows: "All species might have been varieties once, and many varieties are gradually becoming species by assuming constant and peculiar characters;" but further on (page 18) he adds, "except the original types or ancestors of the genus."

In 1843-44 Professor Haldeman ("Boston Journal of Nat. Hist. U. States", vol. iv, page 468) has ably given the arguments for and against the hypothesis of the development and modification of species: he seems to lean toward the side of change.

The "Vestiges of Creation" appeared in 1844. In the tenth and much improved edition (1853) the anonymous author

says (page 155): "The proposition determined on after much consideration is, that the several series of animated beings, from the simplest and oldest up to the highest and most recent, are, under the providence of God, the results, FIRST, of an impulse which has been imparted to the forms of life, advancing them, in definite times, by generation, through grades of organisation terminating in the highest dicotyledons and vertebrata, these grades being few in number, and generally marked by intervals of organic character, which we find to be a practical difficulty in ascertaining affinities; SECOND, of another impulse connected with the vital forces, tending, in the course of generations, to modify organic structures in accordance with external circumstances, as food, the nature of the habitat, and the meteoric agencies, these being the 'adaptations' of the natural theologian." The author apparently believes that organisation progresses by sudden leaps, but that the effects produced by the conditions of life are gradual. He argues with much force on general grounds that species are not immutable productions. But I cannot see how the two supposed "impulses" account in a scientific sense for the numerous and beautiful coadaptations which we see throughout nature; I cannot see that we thus gain any insight how, for instance, a woodpecker has become adapted to its peculiar habits of life. The work, from its powerful and brilliant style, though displaying in the early editions little accurate knowledge and a great want of scientific caution, immediately had a very wide circulation. In my opinion

it has done excellent service in this country in calling attention to the subject, in removing prejudice, and in thus preparing the ground for the reception of analogous views.

In 1846 the veteran geologist M.J. d'Omalius d'Halloy published in an excellent though short paper ("Bulletins de l'Acad. Roy. Bruxelles", tom. xiii, page 581) his opinion that it is more probable that new species have been produced by descent with modification than that they have been separately created: the author first promulgated this opinion in 1831.

Professor Owen, in 1849 ("Nature of Limbs", page 86), wrote as follows: "The archetypal idea was manifested in the flesh under diverse such modifications, upon this planet, long prior to the existence of those animal species that actually exemplify it. To what natural laws or secondary causes the orderly succession and progression of such organic phenomena may have been committed, we, as yet, are ignorant." In his address to the British Association, in 1858, he speaks (page li) of "the axiom of the continuous operation of creative power, or of the ordained becoming of living things." Further on (page xc), after referring to geographical distribution, he adds, "These phenomena shake our confidence in the conclusion that the Apteryx of New Zealand and the Red Grouse of England were distinct creations in and for those islands respectively. Always, also, it may be well to bear in mind that by the word 'creation' the zoologist means 'a process he knows not what.'" He amplifies this idea by adding that when such cases as that of the Red Grouse are "enumerated

by the zoologist as evidence of distinct creation of the bird in and for such islands, he chiefly expresses that he knows not how the Red Grouse came to be there, and there exclusively; signifying also, by this mode of expressing such ignorance, his belief that both the bird and the islands owed their origin to a great first Creative Cause." If we interpret these sentences given in the same address, one by the other, it appears that this eminent philosopher felt in 1858 his confidence shaken that the Apteryx and the Red Grouse first appeared in their respective homes "he knew not how," or by some process "he knew not what."

This address was delivered after the papers by Mr. Wallace and myself on the Origin of Species, presently to be referred to, had been read before the Linnean Society. When the first edition of this work was published, I was so completely deceived, as were many others, by such expressions as "the continuous operation of creative power," that I included Professor Owen with other palaeontologists as being firmly convinced of the immutability of species; but it appears ("Anat. of Vertebrates", vol. iii, page 796) that this was on my part a preposterous error. In the last edition of this work I inferred, and the inference still seems to me perfectly just, from a passage beginning with the words "no doubt the type-form," etc. (Ibid., vol. i, page xxxv), that Professor Owen admitted that natural selection may have done something in the formation of a new species; but this it appears (Ibid., vol. iii, page 798) is inaccurate and without evidence. I also gave some extracts from a correspondence between Professor Owen and the

editor of the "London Review", from which it appeared manifest to the editor as well as to myself, that Professor Owen claimed to have promulgated the theory of natural selection before I had done so; and I expressed my surprise and satisfaction at this announcement; but as far as it is possible to understand certain recently published passages (Ibid., vol. iii. page 798) I have either partially or wholly again fallen into error. It is consolatory to me that others find Professor Owen's controversial writings as difficult to understand and to reconcile with each other, as I do. As far as the mere enunciation of the principle of natural selection is concerned, it is quite immaterial whether or not Professor Owen preceded me, for both of us, as shown in this historical sketch, were long ago preceded by Dr. Wells and Mr. Matthews.

M. Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, in his lectures delivered in 1850 (of which a Resume appeared in the "Revue et Mag. de Zoolog.", Jan., 1851), briefly gives his reason for believing that specific characters "sont fixes, pour chaque espece, tant qu'elle se perpetue au milieu des memes circonstances: ils se modifient, si les circonstances ambiantes viennent a changer. En resume, L'OBSERVATION des animaux sauvages demontre deja la variabilite LIMITEE des especes. Les EXPERIENCES sur les animaux sauvages devenus domestiques, et sur les animaux domestiques redevenus sauvages, la demontrent plus clairement encore. Ces memes experiences prouvent, de plus, que les differences produites peuvent etre de VALEUR GENERIQUE."

In his "Hist. Nat. Generale" (tom. ii, page 430, 1859) he amplifies analogous conclusions.

From a circular lately issued it appears that Dr. Freke, in 1851 ("Dublin Medical Press", page 322), propounded the doctrine that all organic beings have descended from one primordial form. His grounds of belief and treatment of the subject are wholly different from mine; but as Dr. Freke has now (1861) published his Essay on the "Origin of Species by means of Organic Affinity", the difficult attempt to give any idea of his views would be superfluous on my part.

Mr. Herbert Spencer, in an Essay (originally published in the "Leader", March, 1852, and republished in his "Essays", in 1858), has contrasted the theories of the Creation and the Development of organic beings with remarkable skill and force. He argues from the analogy of domestic productions, from the changes which the embryos of many species undergo, from the difficulty of distinguishing species and varieties, and from the principle of general gradation, that species have been modified; and he attributes the modification to the change of circumstances. The author (1855) has also treated Psychology on the principle of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation.

In 1852 M. Naudin, a distinguished botanist, expressly stated, in an admirable paper on the Origin of Species ("Revue Horticole", page 102; since partly republished in the "Nouvelles Archives du Museum", tom. i, page 171), his belief that species

are formed in an analogous manner as varieties are under cultivation; and the latter process he attributes to man's power of selection. But he does not show how selection acts under nature. He believes, like Dean Herbert, that species, when nascent, were more plastic than at present. He lays weight on what he calls the principle of finality, "puissance mysterieuse, indeterminee; fatalite pour les uns; pour les autres volonte providentielle, dont l'action incessante sur les etres vivantes determine, a toutes les epoques de l'existence du monde, la forme, le volume, et la duree de chacun d'eux, en raison de sa destinee dans l'ordre de choses dont il fait partie. C'est cette puissance qui harmonise chaque membre a l'ensemble, en l'appropriant a la fonction qu'il doit remplir dans l'organisme general de la nature, fonction qui est pour lui sa raison d'etre." (From references in Bronn's "Untersuchungen uber die Entwickelungs-Gesetze", it appears that the celebrated botanist and palaeontologist Unger published, in 1852, his belief that species undergo development and modification. Dalton, likewise, in Pander and Dalton's work on Fossil Sloths, expressed, in 1821, a similar belief. Similar views have, as is well known, been maintained by Oken in his mystical "Natur-Philosophie". From other references in Godron's work "Sur l'Espece", it seems that Bory St. Vincent, Burdach, Poiret and Fries, have all admitted that new species are continually being produced. I may add, that of the thirty-four authors named in this Historical Sketch, who believe in the modification of species, or at least disbelieve in separate acts

of creation, twenty-seven have written on special branches of natural history or geology.)

In 1853 a celebrated geologist, Count Keyserling ("Bulletin de la Soc. Geolog.", 2nd Ser., tom. x, page 357), suggested that as new diseases, supposed to have been caused by some miasma have arisen and spread over the world, so at certain periods the germs of existing species may have been chemically affected by circumambient molecules of a particular nature, and thus have given rise to new forms.

In this same year, 1853, Dr. Schaaffhausen published an excellent pamphlet ("Verhand. des Naturhist. Vereins der Preuss. Rheinlands", etc.), in which he maintains the development of organic forms on the earth. He infers that many species have kept true for long periods, whereas a few have become modified. The distinction of species he explains by the destruction of intermediate graduated forms. "Thus living plants and animals are not separated from the extinct by new creations, but are to be regarded as their descendants through continued reproduction."

A well-known French botanist, M. Lecoq, writes in 1854 ("Etudes sur Geograph." Bot. tom. i, page 250), "On voit que nos recherches sur la fixite ou la variation de l'espece, nous conduisent directement aux idees emises par deux hommes justement celebres, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire et Goethe." Some other passages scattered through M. Lecoq's large work make it a little doubtful how far he extends his views on the modification of species.

The "Philosophy of Creation" has been treated in a masterly manner by the Rev. Baden Powell, in his "Essays on the Unity of Worlds", 1855. Nothing can be more striking than the manner in which he shows that the introduction of new species is "a regular, not a casual phenomenon," or, as Sir John Herschel expresses it, "a natural in contradistinction to a miraculous process."

The third volume of the "Journal of the Linnean Society" contains papers, read July 1, 1858, by Mr. Wallace and myself, in which, as stated in the introductory remarks to this volume, the theory of Natural Selection is promulgated by Mr. Wallace with admirable force and clearness.

Von Baer, toward whom all zoologists feel so profound a respect, expressed about the year 1859 (see Prof. Rudolph Wagner, "Zoologisch-Anthropologische Untersuchungen", 1861, s. 51) his conviction, chiefly grounded on the laws of geographical distribution, that forms now perfectly distinct have descended from a single parent-form.

In June, 1859, Professor Huxley gave a lecture before the Royal Institution on the "Persistent Types of Animal Life". Referring to such cases, he remarks, "It is difficult to comprehend the meaning of such facts as these, if we suppose that each species of animal and plant, or each great type of organisation, was formed and placed upon the surface of the globe at long intervals by a distinct act of creative power; and it is well to recollect that such an assumption is as unsupported by tradition or revelation as it is opposed to the general analogy

of nature. If, on the other hand, we view "Persistent Types" in relation to that hypothesis which supposes the species living at any time to be the result of the gradual modification of pre-existing species, a hypothesis which, though unproven, and sadly damaged by some of its supporters, is yet the only one to which physiology lends any countenance; their existence would seem to show that the amount of modification which living beings have undergone during geological time is but very small in relation to the whole series of changes which they have suffered."

In December, 1859, Dr. Hooker published his "Introduction to the Australian Flora". In the first part of this great work he admits the truth of the descent and modification of species, and supports this doctrine by many original observations.

The first edition of this work was published on November 24, 1859, and the second edition on January 7, 1860.

# INTRODUCTION

When on board H.M.S. Beagle, as naturalist, I was much struck with certain facts in the distribution of the organic beings inhabiting South America, and in the geological relations of the present to the past inhabitants of that continent. These facts, as will be seen in the latter chapters of this volume, seemed to throw some light on the origin of species – that mystery of mysteries, as it has been called by one of our greatest philosophers. On my return home, it occurred to me, in 1837, that something might perhaps be made out on this question by patiently accumulating and reflecting on all sorts of facts which could possibly have any bearing on it. After five years' work I allowed myself to speculate on the subject, and drew up some short notes; these I enlarged in 1844 into a sketch of the conclusions, which then seemed to me probable: from that period to the present day I have steadily pursued the same object. I hope that I may be excused for entering on these personal details, as I give them to show that I have not been hasty in coming to a decision.

My work is now (1859) nearly finished; but as it will take me many more years to complete it, and as my health is far from strong, I have been urged to publish this abstract. I have more especially been induced to do this, as Mr. Wallace, who is now studying the natural history of the Malay Archipelago, has arrived at almost exactly the same general conclusions that I

have on the origin of species. In 1858 he sent me a memoir on this subject, with a request that I would forward it to Sir Charles Lyell, who sent it to the Linnean Society, and it is published in the third volume of the Journal of that Society. Sir C. Lyell and Dr. Hooker, who both knew of my work – the latter having read my sketch of 1844 – honoured me by thinking it advisable to publish, with Mr. Wallace's excellent memoir, some brief extracts from my manuscripts.

This abstract, which I now publish, must necessarily be imperfect. I cannot here give references and authorities for my several statements; and I must trust to the reader reposing some confidence in my accuracy. No doubt errors may have crept in, though I hope I have always been cautious in trusting to good authorities alone. I can here give only the general conclusions at which I have arrived, with a few facts in illustration, but which, I hope, in most cases will suffice. No one can feel more sensible than I do of the necessity of hereafter publishing in detail all the facts, with references, on which my conclusions have been grounded; and I hope in a future work to do this. For I am well aware that scarcely a single point is discussed in this volume on which facts cannot be adduced, often apparently leading to conclusions directly opposite to those at which I have arrived. A fair result can be obtained only by fully stating and balancing the facts and arguments on both sides of each question; and this is here impossible.

I much regret that want of space prevents my having

the satisfaction of acknowledging the generous assistance which I have received from very many naturalists, some of them personally unknown to me. I cannot, however, let this opportunity pass without expressing my deep obligations to Dr. Hooker, who, for the last fifteen years, has aided me in every possible way by his large stores of knowledge and his excellent judgment.

In considering the origin of species, it is quite conceivable that a naturalist, reflecting on the mutual affinities of organic beings, on their embryological relations, their geographical distribution, geological succession, and other such facts, might come to the conclusion that species had not been independently created, but had descended, like varieties, from other species. Nevertheless, such a conclusion, even if well founded, would be unsatisfactory, until it could be shown how the innumerable species, inhabiting this world have been modified, so as to acquire that perfection of structure and coadaptation which justly excites our admiration. Naturalists continually refer to external conditions, such as climate, food, etc., as the only possible cause of variation. In one limited sense, as we shall hereafter see, this may be true; but it is preposterous to attribute to mere external conditions, the structure, for instance, of the woodpecker, with its feet, tail, beak, and tongue, so admirably adapted to catch insects under the bark of trees. In the case of the mistletoe, which draws its nourishment from certain trees, which has seeds that must be transported by certain birds, and which has flowers with separate

sexes absolutely requiring the agency of certain insects to bring pollen from one flower to the other, it is equally preposterous to account for the structure of this parasite, with its relations to several distinct organic beings, by the effects of external conditions, or of habit, or of the volition of the plant itself.

It is, therefore, of the highest importance to gain a clear insight into the means of modification and coadaptation. At the commencement of my observations it seemed to me probable that a careful study of domesticated animals and of cultivated plants would offer the best chance of making out this obscure problem. Nor have I been disappointed; in this and in all other perplexing cases I have invariably found that our knowledge, imperfect though it be, of variation under domestication, afforded the best and safest clue. I may venture to express my conviction of the high value of such studies, although they have been very commonly neglected by naturalists.

From these considerations, I shall devote the first chapter of this abstract to variation under domestication. We shall thus see that a large amount of hereditary modification is at least possible; and, what is equally or more important, we shall see how great is the power of man in accumulating by his selection successive slight variations. I will then pass on to the variability of species in a state of nature; but I shall, unfortunately, be compelled to treat this subject far too briefly, as it can be treated properly only by giving long catalogues of facts. We shall, however, be enabled to discuss what circumstances are

most favourable to variation. In the next chapter the struggle for existence among all organic beings throughout the world, which inevitably follows from the high geometrical ratio of their increase, will be considered. This is the doctrine of Malthus, applied to the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms. As many more individuals of each species are born than can possibly survive; and as, consequently, there is a frequently recurring struggle for existence, it follows that any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be NATURALLY SELECTED. From the strong principle of inheritance, any selected variety will tend to propagate its new and modified form.

This fundamental subject of natural selection will be treated at some length in the fourth chapter; and we shall then see how natural selection almost inevitably causes much extinction of the less improved forms of life, and leads to what I have called divergence of character. In the next chapter I shall discuss the complex and little known laws of variation. In the five succeeding chapters, the most apparent and gravest difficulties in accepting the theory will be given: namely, first, the difficulties of transitions, or how a simple being or a simple organ can be changed and perfected into a highly developed being or into an elaborately constructed organ; secondly the subject of instinct, or the mental powers of animals; thirdly, hybridism, or the infertility of species and the fertility of varieties when

intercrossed; and fourthly, the imperfection of the geological record. In the next chapter I shall consider the geological succession of organic beings throughout time; in the twelfth and thirteenth, their geographical distribution throughout space; in the fourteenth, their classification or mutual affinities, both when mature and in an embryonic condition. In the last chapter I shall give a brief recapitulation of the whole work, and a few concluding remarks.

No one ought to feel surprise at much remaining as yet unexplained in regard to the origin of species and varieties, if he make due allowance for our profound ignorance in regard to the mutual relations of the many beings which live around us. Who can explain why one species ranges widely and is very numerous, and why another allied species has a narrow range and is rare? Yet these relations are of the highest importance, for they determine the present welfare and, as I believe, the future success and modification of every inhabitant of this world. Still less do we know of the mutual relations of the innumerable inhabitants of the world during the many past geological epochs in its history. Although much remains obscure, and will long remain obscure, I can entertain no doubt, after the most deliberate study and dispassionate judgment of which I am capable, that the view which most naturalists until recently entertained, and which I formerly entertained – namely, that each species has been independently created – is erroneous. I am fully convinced that species are not immutable; but that those belonging to

what are called the same genera are lineal descendants of some other and generally extinct species, in the same manner as the acknowledged varieties of any one species are the descendants of that species. Furthermore, I am convinced that natural selection has been the most important, but not the exclusive, means of modification.

# CHAPTER I. VARIATION UNDER DOMESTICATION

Causes of Variability – Effects of Habit and the use and disuse of Parts – Correlated Variation – Inheritance – Character of Domestic Varieties – Difficulty of distinguishing between Varieties and Species – Origin of Domestic Varieties from one or more Species – Domestic Pigeons, their Differences and Origin – Principles of Selection, anciently followed, their Effects – Methodical and Unconscious Selection – Unknown Origin of our Domestic Productions – Circumstances favourable to Man's power of Selection.

## CAUSES OF VARIABILITY.

When we compare the individuals of the same variety or sub-variety of our older cultivated plants and animals, one of the first points which strikes us is, that they generally differ more from each other than do the individuals of any one species or variety in a state of nature. And if we reflect on the vast diversity of the plants and animals which have been cultivated, and which have varied during all ages under the most different climates and treatment, we are driven to conclude that this great variability is due to our domestic productions having been raised under conditions of life not so uniform as, and somewhat different from, those to which the parent species had been exposed under

nature. There is, also, some probability in the view propounded by Andrew Knight, that this variability may be partly connected with excess of food. It seems clear that organic beings must be exposed during several generations to new conditions to cause any great amount of variation; and that, when the organisation has once begun to vary, it generally continues varying for many generations. No case is on record of a variable organism ceasing to vary under cultivation. Our oldest cultivated plants, such as wheat, still yield new varieties: our oldest domesticated animals are still capable of rapid improvement or modification.

As far as I am able to judge, after long attending to the subject, the conditions of life appear to act in two ways – directly on the whole organisation or on certain parts alone and indirectly by affecting the reproductive system. With respect to the direct action, we must bear in mind that in every case, as Professor Weismann has lately insisted, and as I have incidently shown in my work on "Variation under Domestication," there are two factors: namely, the nature of the organism and the nature of the conditions. The former seems to be much the more important; for nearly similar variations sometimes arise under, as far as we can judge, dissimilar conditions; and, on the other hand, dissimilar variations arise under conditions which appear to be nearly uniform. The effects on the offspring are either definite or indefinite. They may be considered as definite when all or nearly all the offspring of individuals exposed to certain conditions during several generations are modified in the same manner. It

is extremely difficult to come to any conclusion in regard to the extent of the changes which have been thus definitely induced. There can, however, be little doubt about many slight changes, such as size from the amount of food, colour from the nature of the food, thickness of the skin and hair from climate, etc. Each of the endless variations which we see in the plumage of our fowls must have had some efficient cause; and if the same cause were to act uniformly during a long series of generations on many individuals, all probably would be modified in the same manner. Such facts as the complex and extraordinary out growths which variably follow from the insertion of a minute drop of poison by a gall-producing insect, shows us what singular modifications might result in the case of plants from a chemical change in the nature of the sap.

In definite variability is a much more common result of changed conditions than definite variability, and has probably played a more important part in the formation of our domestic races. We see in definite variability in the endless slight peculiarities which distinguish the individuals of the same species, and which cannot be accounted for by inheritance from either parent or from some more remote ancestor. Even strongly-marked differences occasionally appear in the young of the same litter, and in seedlings from the same seed-capsule. At long intervals of time, out of millions of individuals reared in the same country and fed on nearly the same food, deviations of structure so strongly pronounced as to deserve to be called monstrosities

arise; but monstrosities cannot be separated by any distinct line from slighter variations. All such changes of structure, whether extremely slight or strongly marked, which appear among many individuals living together, may be considered as the indefinite effects of the conditions of life on each individual organism, in nearly the same manner as the chill effects different men in an indefinite manner, according to their state of body or constitution, causing coughs or colds, rheumatism, or inflammation of various organs.

With respect to what I have called the indirect action of changed conditions, namely, through the reproductive system of being affected, we may infer that variability is thus induced, partly from the fact of this system being extremely sensitive to any change in the conditions, and partly from the similarity, as Kolreuter and others have remarked, between the variability which follows from the crossing of distinct species, and that which may be observed with plants and animals when reared under new or unnatural conditions. Many facts clearly show how eminently susceptible the reproductive system is to very slight changes in the surrounding conditions. Nothing is more easy than to tame an animal, and few things more difficult than to get it to breed freely under confinement, even when the male and female unite. How many animals there are which will not breed, though kept in an almost free state in their native country! This is generally, but erroneously attributed to vitiated instincts. Many cultivated plants display the utmost vigour, and yet rarely

or never seed! In some few cases it has been discovered that a very trifling change, such as a little more or less water at some particular period of growth, will determine whether or not a plant will produce seeds. I cannot here give the details which I have collected and elsewhere published on this curious subject; but to show how singular the laws are which determine the reproduction of animals under confinement, I may mention that carnivorous animals, even from the tropics, breed in this country pretty freely under confinement, with the exception of the plantigrades or bear family, which seldom produce young; whereas, carnivorous birds, with the rarest exception, hardly ever lay fertile eggs. Many exotic plants have pollen utterly worthless, in the same condition as in the most sterile hybrids. When, on the one hand, we see domesticated animals and plants, though often weak and sickly, breeding freely under confinement; and when, on the other hand, we see individuals, though taken young from a state of nature perfectly tamed, long-lived, and healthy (of which I could give numerous instances), yet having their reproductive system so seriously affected by unperceived causes as to fail to act, we need not be surprised at this system, when it does act under confinement, acting irregularly, and producing offspring somewhat unlike their parents. I may add that as some organisms breed freely under the most unnatural conditions – for instance, rabbits and ferrets kept in hutches – showing that their reproductive organs are not easily affected; so will some animals and plants withstand domestication or cultivation, and vary very

slightly – perhaps hardly more than in a state of nature.

Some naturalists have maintained that all variations are connected with the act of sexual reproduction; but this is certainly an error; for I have given in another work a long list of "sporting plants;" as they are called by gardeners; that is, of plants which have suddenly produced a single bud with a new and sometimes widely different character from that of the other buds on the same plant. These bud variations, as they may be named, can be propagated by grafts, offsets, etc., and sometimes by seed. They occur rarely under nature, but are far from rare under culture. As a single bud out of many thousands produced year after year on the same tree under uniform conditions, has been known suddenly to assume a new character; and as buds on distinct trees, growing under different conditions, have sometimes yielded nearly the same variety – for instance, buds on peach-trees producing nectarines, and buds on common roses producing moss-roses – we clearly see that the nature of the conditions is of subordinate importance in comparison with the nature of the organism in determining each particular form of variation; perhaps of not more importance than the nature of the spark, by which a mass of combustible matter is ignited, has in determining the nature of the flames.

**EFFECTS OF HABIT AND OF THE USE OR DISUSE OF PARTS; CORRELATED VARIATION; INHERITANCE.**

Changed habits produce an inherited effect as in the period of the flowering of plants when transported from one climate

to another. With animals the increased use or disuse of parts has had a more marked influence; thus I find in the domestic duck that the bones of the wing weigh less and the bones of the leg more, in proportion to the whole skeleton, than do the same bones in the wild duck; and this change may be safely attributed to the domestic duck flying much less, and walking more, than its wild parents. The great and inherited development of the udders in cows and goats in countries where they are habitually milked, in comparison with these organs in other countries, is probably another instance of the effects of use. Not one of our domestic animals can be named which has not in some country drooping ears; and the view which has been suggested that the drooping is due to disuse of the muscles of the ear, from the animals being seldom much alarmed, seems probable.

Many laws regulate variation, some few of which can be dimly seen, and will hereafter be briefly discussed. I will here only allude to what may be called correlated variation. Important changes in the embryo or larva will probably entail changes in the mature animal. In monstrosities, the correlations between quite distinct parts are very curious; and many instances are given in Isidore Geoffroy St. Hilaire's great work on this subject. Breeders believe that long limbs are almost always accompanied by an elongated head. Some instances of correlation are quite whimsical; thus cats which are entirely white and have blue eyes are generally deaf; but it has been lately stated by Mr. Tait that this is confined to the males. Colour and constitutional

peculiarities go together, of which many remarkable cases could be given among animals and plants. From facts collected by Heusinger, it appears that white sheep and pigs are injured by certain plants, while dark-coloured individuals escape: Professor Wyman has recently communicated to me a good illustration of this fact; on asking some farmers in Virginia how it was that all their pigs were black, they informed him that the pigs ate the paint-root (*Lachnanthes*), which coloured their bones pink, and which caused the hoofs of all but the black varieties to drop off; and one of the "crackers" (i.e. Virginia squatters) added, "we select the black members of a litter for raising, as they alone have a good chance of living." Hairless dogs have imperfect teeth; long-haired and coarse-haired animals are apt to have, as is asserted, long or many horns; pigeons with feathered feet have skin between their outer toes; pigeons with short beaks have small feet, and those with long beaks large feet. Hence if man goes on selecting, and thus augmenting, any peculiarity, he will almost certainly modify unintentionally other parts of the structure, owing to the mysterious laws of correlation.

The results of the various, unknown, or but dimly understood laws of variation are infinitely complex and diversified. It is well worth while carefully to study the several treatises on some of our old cultivated plants, as on the hyacinth, potato, even the dahlia, etc.; and it is really surprising to note the endless points of structure and constitution in which the varieties and sub-varieties differ slightly from each other. The whole organisation seems to

have become plastic, and departs in a slight degree from that of the parental type.

Any variation which is not inherited is unimportant for us. But the number and diversity of inheritable deviations of structure, both those of slight and those of considerable physiological importance, are endless. Dr. Prosper Lucas' treatise, in two large volumes, is the fullest and the best on this subject. No breeder doubts how strong is the tendency to inheritance; that like produces like is his fundamental belief: doubts have been thrown on this principle only by theoretical writers. When any deviation of structure often appears, and we see it in the father and child, we cannot tell whether it may not be due to the same cause having acted on both; but when among individuals, apparently exposed to the same conditions, any very rare deviation, due to some extraordinary combination of circumstances, appears in the parent – say, once among several million individuals – and it reappears in the child, the mere doctrine of chances almost compels us to attribute its reappearance to inheritance. Every one must have heard of cases of albinism, prickly skin, hairy bodies, etc., appearing in several members of the same family. If strange and rare deviations of structure are truly inherited, less strange and commoner deviations may be freely admitted to be inheritable. Perhaps the correct way of viewing the whole subject would be, to look at the inheritance of every character whatever as the rule, and non-inheritance as the anomaly.

The laws governing inheritance are for the most part

unknown; no one can say why the same peculiarity in different individuals of the same species, or in different species, is sometimes inherited and sometimes not so; why the child often reverts in certain characteristics to its grandfather or grandmother or more remote ancestor; why a peculiarity is often transmitted from one sex to both sexes, or to one sex alone, more commonly but not exclusively to the like sex. It is a fact of some importance to us, that peculiarities appearing in the males of our domestic breeds are often transmitted, either exclusively or in a much greater degree, to the males alone. A much more important rule, which I think may be trusted, is that, at whatever period of life a peculiarity first appears, it tends to reappear in the offspring at a corresponding age, though sometimes earlier. In many cases this could not be otherwise; thus the inherited peculiarities in the horns of cattle could appear only in the offspring when nearly mature; peculiarities in the silk-worm are known to appear at the corresponding caterpillar or cocoon stage. But hereditary diseases and some other facts make me believe that the rule has a wider extension, and that, when there is no apparent reason why a peculiarity should appear at any particular age, yet that it does tend to appear in the offspring at the same period at which it first appeared in the parent. I believe this rule to be of the highest importance in explaining the laws of embryology. These remarks are of course confined to the first APPEARANCE of the peculiarity, and not to the primary cause which may have acted on the ovules or on the male element; in nearly the same

manner as the increased length of the horns in the offspring from a short-horned cow by a long-horned bull, though appearing late in life, is clearly due to the male element.

Having alluded to the subject of reversion, I may here refer to a statement often made by naturalists – namely, that our domestic varieties, when run wild, gradually but invariably revert in character to their aboriginal stocks. Hence it has been argued that no deductions can be drawn from domestic races to species in a state of nature. I have in vain endeavoured to discover on what decisive facts the above statement has so often and so boldly been made. There would be great difficulty in proving its truth: we may safely conclude that very many of the most strongly marked domestic varieties could not possibly live in a wild state. In many cases we do not know what the aboriginal stock was, and so could not tell whether or not nearly perfect reversion had ensued. It would be necessary, in order to prevent the effects of intercrossing, that only a single variety should be turned loose in its new home. Nevertheless, as our varieties certainly do occasionally revert in some of their characters to ancestral forms, it seems to me not improbable that if we could succeed in naturalising, or were to cultivate, during many generations, the several races, for instance, of the cabbage, in very poor soil – in which case, however, some effect would have to be attributed to the DEFINITE action of the poor soil – that they would, to a large extent, or even wholly, revert to the wild aboriginal stock. Whether or not the experiment would succeed is not of great

importance for our line of argument; for by the experiment itself the conditions of life are changed. If it could be shown that our domestic varieties manifested a strong tendency to reversion – that is, to lose their acquired characters, while kept under the same conditions and while kept in a considerable body, so that free intercrossing might check, by blending together, any slight deviations in their structure, in such case, I grant that we could deduce nothing from domestic varieties in regard to species. But there is not a shadow of evidence in favour of this view: to assert that we could not breed our cart and race-horses, long and short-horned cattle, and poultry of various breeds, and esculent vegetables, for an unlimited number of generations, would be opposed to all experience.

CHARACTER OF DOMESTIC VARIETIES;  
DIFFICULTY OF DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN  
VARIETIES AND SPECIES; ORIGIN OF DOMESTIC  
VARIETIES FROM ONE OR MORE SPECIES.

When we look to the hereditary varieties or races of our domestic animals and plants, and compare them with closely allied species, we generally perceive in each domestic race, as already remarked, less uniformity of character than in true species. Domestic races often have a somewhat monstrous character; by which I mean, that, although differing from each other and from other species of the same genus, in several trifling respects, they often differ in an extreme degree in some one part, both when compared one with another, and more especially

when compared with the species under nature to which they are nearest allied. With these exceptions (and with that of the perfect fertility of varieties when crossed – a subject hereafter to be discussed), domestic races of the same species differ from each other in the same manner as do the closely allied species of the same genus in a state of nature, but the differences in most cases are less in degree. This must be admitted as true, for the domestic races of many animals and plants have been ranked by some competent judges as the descendants of aboriginally distinct species, and by other competent judges as mere varieties. If any well marked distinction existed between a domestic race and a species, this source of doubt would not so perpetually recur. It has often been stated that domestic races do not differ from each other in characters of generic value. It can be shown that this statement is not correct; but naturalists differ much in determining what characters are of generic value; all such valuations being at present empirical. When it is explained how genera originate under nature, it will be seen that we have no right to expect often to find a generic amount of difference in our domesticated races.

In attempting to estimate the amount of structural difference between allied domestic races, we are soon involved in doubt, from not knowing whether they are descended from one or several parent species. This point, if it could be cleared up, would be interesting; if, for instance, it could be shown that the greyhound, bloodhound, terrier, spaniel and bull-dog, which

we all know propagate their kind truly, were the offspring of any single species, then such facts would have great weight in making us doubt about the immutability of the many closely allied natural species – for instance, of the many foxes – inhabiting the different quarters of the world. I do not believe, as we shall presently see, that the whole amount of difference between the several breeds of the dog has been produced under domestication; I believe that a small part of the difference is due to their being descended from distinct species. In the case of strongly marked races of some other domesticated species, there is presumptive or even strong evidence that all are descended from a single wild stock.

It has often been assumed that man has chosen for domestication animals and plants having an extraordinary inherent tendency to vary, and likewise to withstand diverse climates. I do not dispute that these capacities have added largely to the value of most of our domesticated productions; but how could a savage possibly know, when he first tamed an animal, whether it would vary in succeeding generations, and whether it would endure other climates? Has the little variability of the ass and goose, or the small power of endurance of warmth by the reindeer, or of cold by the common camel, prevented their domestication? I cannot doubt that if other animals and plants, equal in number to our domesticated productions, and belonging to equally diverse classes and countries, were taken from a state of nature, and could be made to breed for an equal number

of generations under domestication, they would on an average vary as largely as the parent species of our existing domesticated productions have varied.

In the case of most of our anciently domesticated animals and plants, it is not possible to come to any definite conclusion, whether they are descended from one or several wild species. The argument mainly relied on by those who believe in the multiple origin of our domestic animals is, that we find in the most ancient times, on the monuments of Egypt, and in the lake-habitations of Switzerland, much diversity in the breeds; and that some of these ancient breeds closely resemble, or are even identical with, those still existing. But this only throws far backward the history of civilisation, and shows that animals were domesticated at a much earlier period than has hitherto been supposed. The lake-inhabitants of Switzerland cultivated several kinds of wheat and barley, the pea, the poppy for oil and flax; and they possessed several domesticated animals. They also carried on commerce with other nations. All this clearly shows, as Heer has remarked, that they had at this early age progressed considerably in civilisation; and this again implies a long continued previous period of less advanced civilisation, during which the domesticated animals, kept by different tribes in different districts, might have varied and given rise to distinct races. Since the discovery of flint tools in the superficial formations of many parts of the world, all geologists believe that barbarian men existed at an enormously remote period; and we

know that at the present day there is hardly a tribe so barbarous as not to have domesticated at least the dog.

The origin of most of our domestic animals will probably forever remain vague. But I may here state that, looking to the domestic dogs of the whole world, I have, after a laborious collection of all known facts, come to the conclusion that several wild species of Canidae have been tamed, and that their blood, in some cases mingled together, flows in the veins of our domestic breeds. In regard to sheep and goats I can form no decided opinion. From facts communicated to me by Mr. Blyth, on the habits, voice, constitution and structure of the humped Indian cattle, it is almost certain that they are descended from a different aboriginal stock from our European cattle; and some competent judges believe that these latter have had two or three wild progenitors, whether or not these deserve to be called species. This conclusion, as well as that of the specific distinction between the humped and common cattle, may, indeed, be looked upon as established by the admirable researches of Professor Rutimeyer. With respect to horses, from reasons which I cannot here give, I am doubtfully inclined to believe, in opposition to several authors, that all the races belong to the same species. Having kept nearly all the English breeds of the fowl alive, having bred and crossed them, and examined their skeletons, it appears to me almost certain that all are the descendants of the wild Indian fowl, *Gallus bankiva*; and this is the conclusion of Mr. Blyth, and of others who have studied this bird in India. In regard

to ducks and rabbits, some breeds of which differ much from each other, the evidence is clear that they are all descended from the common duck and wild rabbit.

The doctrine of the origin of our several domestic races from several aboriginal stocks, has been carried to an absurd extreme by some authors. They believe that every race which breeds true, let the distinctive characters be ever so slight, has had its wild prototype. At this rate there must have existed at least a score of species of wild cattle, as many sheep, and several goats, in Europe alone, and several even within Great Britain. One author believes that there formerly existed eleven wild species of sheep peculiar to Great Britain! When we bear in mind that Britain has now not one peculiar mammal, and France but few distinct from those of Germany, and so with Hungary, Spain, etc., but that each of these kingdoms possesses several peculiar breeds of cattle, sheep, etc., we must admit that many domestic breeds must have originated in Europe; for whence otherwise could they have been derived? So it is in India. Even in the case of the breeds of the domestic dog throughout the world, which I admit are descended from several wild species, it cannot be doubted that there has been an immense amount of inherited variation; for who will believe that animals closely resembling the Italian greyhound, the bloodhound, the bull-dog, pug-dog, or Blenheim spaniel, etc. – so unlike all wild Canidae – ever existed in a state of nature? It has often been loosely said that all our races of dogs have been produced by the crossing of a

few aboriginal species; but by crossing we can only get forms in some degree intermediate between their parents; and if we account for our several domestic races by this process, we must admit the former existence of the most extreme forms, as the Italian greyhound, bloodhound, bull-dog, etc., in the wild state. Moreover, the possibility of making distinct races by crossing has been greatly exaggerated. Many cases are on record showing that a race may be modified by occasional crosses if aided by the careful selection of the individuals which present the desired character; but to obtain a race intermediate between two quite distinct races would be very difficult. Sir J. Sebright expressly experimented with this object and failed. The offspring from the first cross between two pure breeds is tolerably and sometimes (as I have found with pigeons) quite uniform in character, and every thing seems simple enough; but when these mongrels are crossed one with another for several generations, hardly two of them are alike, and then the difficulty of the task becomes manifest.

## BREEDS OF THE DOMESTIC PIGEON, THEIR DIFFERENCES AND ORIGIN.

Believing that it is always best to study some special group, I have, after deliberation, taken up domestic pigeons. I have kept every breed which I could purchase or obtain, and have been most kindly favoured with skins from several quarters of the world, more especially by the Hon. W. Elliot from India, and by the Hon. C. Murray from Persia. Many treatises in

different languages have been published on pigeons, and some of them are very important, as being of considerable antiquity. I have associated with several eminent fanciers, and have been permitted to join two of the London Pigeon Clubs. The diversity of the breeds is something astonishing. Compare the English carrier and the short-faced tumbler, and see the wonderful difference in their beaks, entailing corresponding differences in their skulls. The carrier, more especially the male bird, is also remarkable from the wonderful development of the carunculated skin about the head, and this is accompanied by greatly elongated eyelids, very large external orifices to the nostrils, and a wide gape of mouth. The short-faced tumbler has a beak in outline almost like that of a finch; and the common tumbler has the singular inherited habit of flying at a great height in a compact flock, and tumbling in the air head over heels. The runt is a bird of great size, with long, massive beak and large feet; some of the sub-breeds of runts have very long necks, others very long wings and tails, others singularly short tails. The barb is allied to the carrier, but, instead of a long beak, has a very short and broad one. The pouter has a much elongated body, wings, and legs; and its enormously developed crop, which it glories in inflating, may well excite astonishment and even laughter. The turbit has a short and conical beak, with a line of reversed feathers down the breast; and it has the habit of continually expanding, slightly, the upper part of the oesophagus. The Jacobin has the feathers so much reversed along the back of the neck that they form a

hood, and it has, proportionally to its size, elongated wing and tail feathers. The trumpeter and laugher, as their names express, utter a very different coo from the other breeds. The fantail has thirty or even forty tail-feathers, instead of twelve or fourteen, the normal number in all the members of the great pigeon family: these feathers are kept expanded and are carried so erect that in good birds the head and tail touch: the oil-gland is quite aborted. Several other less distinct breeds might be specified.

In the skeletons of the several breeds, the development of the bones of the face, in length and breadth and curvature, differs enormously. The shape, as well as the breadth and length of the ramus of the lower jaw, varies in a highly remarkable manner. The caudal and sacral vertebrae vary in number; as does the number of the ribs, together with their relative breadth and the presence of processes. The size and shape of the apertures in the sternum are highly variable; so is the degree of divergence and relative size of the two arms of the furcula. The proportional width of the gape of mouth, the proportional length of the eyelids, of the orifice of the nostrils, of the tongue (not always in strict correlation with the length of beak), the size of the crop and of the upper part of the oesophagus; the development and abortion of the oil-gland; the number of the primary wing and caudal feathers; the relative length of the wing and tail to each other and to the body; the relative length of the leg and foot; the number of scutellae on the toes, the development of skin between the toes, are all points of structure which are variable. The

period at which the perfect plumage is acquired varies, as does the state of the down with which the nestling birds are clothed when hatched. The shape and size of the eggs vary. The manner of flight, and in some breeds the voice and disposition, differ remarkably. Lastly, in certain breeds, the males and females have come to differ in a slight degree from each other.

Altogether at least a score of pigeons might be chosen, which, if shown to an ornithologist, and he were told that they were wild birds, would certainly be ranked by him as well-defined species. Moreover, I do not believe that any ornithologist would in this case place the English carrier, the short-faced tumbler, the runt, the barb, pouter, and fantail in the same genus; more especially as in each of these breeds several truly-inherited sub-breeds, or species, as he would call them, could be shown him.

Great as are the differences between the breeds of the pigeon, I am fully convinced that the common opinion of naturalists is correct, namely, that all are descended from the rock-pigeon (*Columba livia*), including under this term several geographical races or sub-species, which differ from each other in the most trifling respects. As several of the reasons which have led me to this belief are in some degree applicable in other cases, I will here briefly give them. If the several breeds are not varieties, and have not proceeded from the rock-pigeon, they must have descended from at least seven or eight aboriginal stocks; for it is impossible to make the present domestic breeds by the crossing of any lesser number: how, for instance, could a pouter be produced by

crossing two breeds unless one of the parent-stocks possessed the characteristic enormous crop? The supposed aboriginal stocks must all have been rock-pigeons, that is, they did not breed or willingly perch on trees. But besides *C. livia*, with its geographical sub-species, only two or three other species of rock-pigeons are known; and these have not any of the characters of the domestic breeds. Hence the supposed aboriginal stocks must either still exist in the countries where they were originally domesticated, and yet be unknown to ornithologists; and this, considering their size, habits and remarkable characters, seems improbable; or they must have become extinct in the wild state. But birds breeding on precipices, and good flyers, are unlikely to be exterminated; and the common rock-pigeon, which has the same habits with the domestic breeds, has not been exterminated even on several of the smaller British islets, or on the shores of the Mediterranean. Hence the supposed extermination of so many species having similar habits with the rock-pigeon seems a very rash assumption. Moreover, the several above-named domesticated breeds have been transported to all parts of the world, and, therefore, some of them must have been carried back again into their native country; but not one has become wild or feral, though the dovecot-pigeon, which is the rock-pigeon in a very slightly altered state, has become feral in several places. Again, all recent experience shows that it is difficult to get wild animals to breed freely under domestication; yet on the hypothesis of the multiple origin of our pigeons, it must be

assumed that at least seven or eight species were so thoroughly domesticated in ancient times by half-civilized man, as to be quite prolific under confinement.

An argument of great weight, and applicable in several other cases, is, that the above-specified breeds, though agreeing generally with the wild rock-pigeon in constitution, habits, voice, colouring, and in most parts of their structure, yet are certainly highly abnormal in other parts; we may look in vain through the whole great family of Columbidae for a beak like that of the English carrier, or that of the short-faced tumbler, or barb; for reversed feathers like those of the Jacobin; for a crop like that of the pouter; for tail-feathers like those of the fantail. Hence it must be assumed, not only that half-civilized man succeeded in thoroughly domesticating several species, but that he intentionally or by chance picked out extraordinarily abnormal species; and further, that these very species have since all become extinct or unknown. So many strange contingencies are improbable in the highest degree.

Some facts in regard to the colouring of pigeons well deserve consideration. The rock-pigeon is of a slaty-blue, with white loins; but the Indian sub-species, *C. intermedia* of Strickland, has this part bluish. The tail has a terminal dark bar, with the outer feathers externally edged at the base with white. The wings have two black bars. Some semi-domestic breeds, and some truly wild breeds, have, besides the two black bars, the wings chequered with black. These several marks do not occur together

in any other species of the whole family. Now, in every one of the domestic breeds, taking thoroughly well-bred birds, all the above marks, even to the white edging of the outer tail-feathers, sometimes concur perfectly developed. Moreover, when birds belonging to two or more distinct breeds are crossed, none of which are blue or have any of the above-specified marks, the mongrel offspring are very apt suddenly to acquire these characters. To give one instance out of several which I have observed: I crossed some white fantails, which breed very true, with some black barbs – and it so happens that blue varieties of barbs are so rare that I never heard of an instance in England; and the mongrels were black, brown and mottled. I also crossed a barb with a spot, which is a white bird with a red tail and red spot on the forehead, and which notoriously breeds very true; the mongrels were dusky and mottled. I then crossed one of the mongrel barb-fantails with a mongrel barb-spot, and they produced a bird of as beautiful a blue colour, with the white loins, double black wing-bar, and barred and white-edged tail-feathers, as any wild rock-pigeon! We can understand these facts, on the well-known principle of reversion to ancestral characters, if all the domestic breeds are descended from the rock-pigeon. But if we deny this, we must make one of the two following highly improbable suppositions. Either, first, that all the several imagined aboriginal stocks were coloured and marked like the rock-pigeon, although no other existing species is thus coloured and marked, so that in each separate breed there might be a

tendency to revert to the very same colours and markings. Or, secondly, that each breed, even the purest, has within a dozen, or at most within a score, of generations, been crossed by the rock-pigeon: I say within a dozen or twenty generations, for no instance is known of crossed descendants reverting to an ancestor of foreign blood, removed by a greater number of generations. In a breed which has been crossed only once the tendency to revert to any character derived from such a cross will naturally become less and less, as in each succeeding generation there will be less of the foreign blood; but when there has been no cross, and there is a tendency in the breed to revert to a character which was lost during some former generation, this tendency, for all that we can see to the contrary, may be transmitted undiminished for an indefinite number of generations. These two distinct cases of reversion are often confounded together by those who have written on inheritance.

Lastly, the hybrids or mongrels from between all the breeds of the pigeon are perfectly fertile, as I can state from my own observations, purposely made, on the most distinct breeds. Now, hardly any cases have been ascertained with certainty of hybrids from two quite distinct species of animals being perfectly fertile. Some authors believe that long-continued domestication eliminates this strong tendency to sterility in species. From the history of the dog, and of some other domestic animals, this conclusion is probably quite correct, if applied to species closely related to each other. But to extend it so far as to suppose that

species, aboriginally as distinct as carriers, tumblers, pouters, and fantails now are, should yield offspring perfectly fertile, inter se, seems to me rash in the extreme.

From these several reasons, namely, the improbability of man having formerly made seven or eight supposed species of pigeons to breed freely under domestication – these supposed species being quite unknown in a wild state, and their not having become anywhere feral – these species presenting certain very abnormal characters, as compared with all other Columbidae, though so like the rock-pigeon in most other respects – the occasional reappearance of the blue colour and various black marks in all the breeds, both when kept pure and when crossed – and lastly, the mongrel offspring being perfectly fertile – from these several reasons, taken together, we may safely conclude that all our domestic breeds are descended from the rock-pigeon or *Columba livia* with its geographical sub-species.

In favour of this view, I may add, firstly, that the wild *C. livia* has been found capable of domestication in Europe and in India; and that it agrees in habits and in a great number of points of structure with all the domestic breeds. Secondly, that although an English carrier or a short-faced tumbler differs immensely in certain characters from the rock-pigeon, yet that by comparing the several sub-breeds of these two races, more especially those brought from distant countries, we can make, between them and the rock-pigeon, an almost perfect series; so we can in some other cases, but not with all the breeds. Thirdly,

those characters which are mainly distinctive of each breed are in each eminently variable, for instance, the wattle and length of beak of the carrier, the shortness of that of the tumbler, and the number of tail-feathers in the fantail; and the explanation of this fact will be obvious when we treat of selection. Fourthly, pigeons have been watched and tended with the utmost care, and loved by many people. They have been domesticated for thousands of years in several quarters of the world; the earliest known record of pigeons is in the fifth Aegyptian dynasty, about 3000 B.C., as was pointed out to me by Professor Lepsius; but Mr. Birch informs me that pigeons are given in a bill of fare in the previous dynasty. In the time of the Romans, as we hear from Pliny, immense prices were given for pigeons; "nay, they are come to this pass, that they can reckon up their pedigree and race." Pigeons were much valued by Akber Khan in India, about the year 1600; never less than 20,000 pigeons were taken with the court. "The monarchs of Iran and Turan sent him some very rare birds;" and, continues the courtly historian, "His Majesty, by crossing the breeds, which method was never practised before, has improved them astonishingly." About this same period the Dutch were as eager about pigeons as were the old Romans. The paramount importance of these considerations in explaining the immense amount of variation which pigeons have undergone, will likewise be obvious when we treat of selection. We shall then, also, see how it is that the several breeds so often have a somewhat monstrous character. It is also a most favourable

circumstance for the production of distinct breeds, that male and female pigeons can be easily mated for life; and thus different breeds can be kept together in the same aviary.

I have discussed the probable origin of domestic pigeons at some, yet quite insufficient, length; because when I first kept pigeons and watched the several kinds, well knowing how truly they breed, I felt fully as much difficulty in believing that since they had been domesticated they had all proceeded from a common parent, as any naturalist could in coming to a similar conclusion in regard to the many species of finches, or other groups of birds, in nature. One circumstance has struck me much; namely, that nearly all the breeders of the various domestic animals and the cultivators of plants, with whom I have conversed, or whose treatises I have read, are firmly convinced that the several breeds to which each has attended, are descended from so many aboriginally distinct species. Ask, as I have asked, a celebrated raiser of Hereford cattle, whether his cattle might not have descended from Long-horns, or both from a common parent-stock, and he will laugh you to scorn. I have never met a pigeon, or poultry, or duck, or rabbit fancier, who was not fully convinced that each main breed was descended from a distinct species. Van Mons, in his treatise on pears and apples, shows how utterly he disbelieves that the several sorts, for instance a Ribston-pippin or Codlin-apple, could ever have proceeded from the seeds of the same tree. Innumerable other examples could be given. The explanation, I think, is simple: from long-

continued study they are strongly impressed with the differences between the several races; and though they well know that each race varies slightly, for they win their prizes by selecting such slight differences, yet they ignore all general arguments, and refuse to sum up in their minds slight differences accumulated during many successive generations. May not those naturalists who, knowing far less of the laws of inheritance than does the breeder, and knowing no more than he does of the intermediate links in the long lines of descent, yet admit that many of our domestic races are descended from the same parents – may they not learn a lesson of caution, when they deride the idea of species in a state of nature being lineal descendants of other species?

#### PRINCIPLES OF SELECTION ANCIENTLY FOLLOWED, AND THEIR EFFECTS.

Let us now briefly consider the steps by which domestic races have been produced, either from one or from several allied species. Some effect may be attributed to the direct and definite action of the external conditions of life, and some to habit; but he would be a bold man who would account by such agencies for the differences between a dray and race-horse, a greyhound and bloodhound, a carrier and tumbler pigeon. One of the most remarkable features in our domesticated races is that we see in them adaptation, not indeed to the animal's or plant's own good, but to man's use or fancy. Some variations useful to him have probably arisen suddenly, or by one step; many botanists, for instance, believe that the fuller's teasel, with its hooks, which

can not be rivalled by any mechanical contrivance, is only a variety of the wild *Dipsacus*; and this amount of change may have suddenly arisen in a seedling. So it has probably been with the turnspit dog; and this is known to have been the case with the ancon sheep. But when we compare the dray-horse and race-horse, the dromedary and camel, the various breeds of sheep fitted either for cultivated land or mountain pasture, with the wool of one breed good for one purpose, and that of another breed for another purpose; when we compare the many breeds of dogs, each good for man in different ways; when we compare the game-cock, so pertinacious in battle, with other breeds so little quarrelsome, with "everlasting layers" which never desire to sit, and with the bantam so small and elegant; when we compare the host of agricultural, culinary, orchard, and flower-garden races of plants, most useful to man at different seasons and for different purposes, or so beautiful in his eyes, we must, I think, look further than to mere variability. We can not suppose that all the breeds were suddenly produced as perfect and as useful as we now see them; indeed, in many cases, we know that this has not been their history. The key is man's power of accumulative selection: nature gives successive variations; man adds them up in certain directions useful to him. In this sense he may be said to have made for himself useful breeds.

The great power of this principle of selection is not hypothetical. It is certain that several of our eminent breeders have, even within a single lifetime, modified to a large extent

their breeds of cattle and sheep. In order fully to realise what they have done it is almost necessary to read several of the many treatises devoted to this subject, and to inspect the animals. Breeders habitually speak of an animal's organisation as something plastic, which they can model almost as they please. If I had space I could quote numerous passages to this effect from highly competent authorities. Youatt, who was probably better acquainted with the works of agriculturalists than almost any other individual, and who was himself a very good judge of animals, speaks of the principle of selection as "that which enables the agriculturist, not only to modify the character of his flock, but to change it altogether. It is the magician's wand, by means of which he may summon into life whatever form and mould he pleases." Lord Somerville, speaking of what breeders have done for sheep, says: "It would seem as if they had chalked out upon a wall a form perfect in itself, and then had given it existence." In Saxony the importance of the principle of selection in regard to merino sheep is so fully recognised, that men follow it as a trade: the sheep are placed on a table and are studied, like a picture by a connoisseur; this is done three times at intervals of months, and the sheep are each time marked and classed, so that the very best may ultimately be selected for breeding.

What English breeders have actually effected is proved by the enormous prices given for animals with a good pedigree; and these have been exported to almost every quarter of the world. The improvement is by no means generally due to crossing

different breeds; all the best breeders are strongly opposed to this practice, except sometimes among closely allied sub-breeds. And when a cross has been made, the closest selection is far more indispensable even than in ordinary cases. If selection consisted merely in separating some very distinct variety and breeding from it, the principle would be so obvious as hardly to be worth notice; but its importance consists in the great effect produced by the accumulation in one direction, during successive generations, of differences absolutely inappreciable by an uneducated eye – differences which I for one have vainly attempted to appreciate. Not one man in a thousand has accuracy of eye and judgment sufficient to become an eminent breeder. If gifted with these qualities, and he studies his subject for years, and devotes his lifetime to it with indomitable perseverance, he will succeed, and may make great improvements; if he wants any of these qualities, he will assuredly fail. Few would readily believe in the natural capacity and years of practice requisite to become even a skilful pigeon-fancier.

The same principles are followed by horticulturists; but the variations are here often more abrupt. No one supposes that our choicest productions have been produced by a single variation from the aboriginal stock. We have proofs that this is not so in several cases in which exact records have been kept; thus, to give a very trifling instance, the steadily increasing size of the common gooseberry may be quoted. We see an astonishing improvement in many florists' flowers, when the flowers of

the present day are compared with drawings made only twenty or thirty years ago. When a race of plants is once pretty well established, the seed-raisers do not pick out the best plants, but merely go over their seed-beds, and pull up the "rogues," as they call the plants that deviate from the proper standard. With animals this kind of selection is, in fact, likewise followed; for hardly any one is so careless as to breed from his worst animals.

In regard to plants, there is another means of observing the accumulated effects of selection – namely, by comparing the diversity of flowers in the different varieties of the same species in the flower-garden; the diversity of leaves, pods, or tubers, or whatever part is valued, in the kitchen-garden, in comparison with the flowers of the same varieties; and the diversity of fruit of the same species in the orchard, in comparison with the leaves and flowers of the same set of varieties. See how different the leaves of the cabbage are, and how extremely alike the flowers; how unlike the flowers of the heartsease are, and how alike the leaves; how much the fruit of the different kinds of gooseberries differ in size, colour, shape, and hairiness, and yet the flowers present very slight differences. It is not that the varieties which differ largely in some one point do not differ at all in other points; this is hardly ever – I speak after careful observation – perhaps never, the case. The law of correlated variation, the importance of which should never be overlooked, will ensure some differences; but, as a general rule, it cannot be doubted that the continued selection of slight variations, either in the leaves,

the flowers, or the fruit, will produce races differing from each other chiefly in these characters.

It may be objected that the principle of selection has been reduced to methodical practice for scarcely more than three-quarters of a century; it has certainly been more attended to of late years, and many treatises have been published on the subject; and the result has been, in a corresponding degree, rapid and important. But it is very far from true that the principle is a modern discovery. I could give several references to works of high antiquity, in which the full importance of the principle is acknowledged. In rude and barbarous periods of English history choice animals were often imported, and laws were passed to prevent their exportation: the destruction of horses under a certain size was ordered, and this may be compared to the "roguing" of plants by nurserymen. The principle of selection I find distinctly given in an ancient Chinese encyclopaedia. Explicit rules are laid down by some of the Roman classical writers. From passages in Genesis, it is clear that the colour of domestic animals was at that early period attended to. Savages now sometimes cross their dogs with wild canine animals, to improve the breed, and they formerly did so, as is attested by passages in Pliny. The savages in South Africa match their draught cattle by colour, as do some of the Esquimaux their teams of dogs. Livingstone states that good domestic breeds are highly valued by the negroes in the interior of Africa who have not associated with Europeans. Some of these facts do not show

actual selection, but they show that the breeding of domestic animals was carefully attended to in ancient times, and is now attended to by the lowest savages. It would, indeed, have been a strange fact, had attention not been paid to breeding, for the inheritance of good and bad qualities is so obvious.

### UNCONSCIOUS SELECTION.

At the present time, eminent breeders try by methodical selection, with a distinct object in view, to make a new strain or sub-breed, superior to anything of the kind in the country. But, for our purpose, a form of selection, which may be called unconscious, and which results from every one trying to possess and breed from the best individual animals, is more important. Thus, a man who intends keeping pointers naturally tries to get as good dogs as he can, and afterwards breeds from his own best dogs, but he has no wish or expectation of permanently altering the breed. Nevertheless we may infer that this process, continued during centuries, would improve and modify any breed, in the same way as Bakewell, Collins, etc., by this very same process, only carried on more methodically, did greatly modify, even during their lifetimes, the forms and qualities of their cattle. Slow and insensible changes of this kind could never be recognised unless actual measurements or careful drawings of the breeds in question have been made long ago, which may serve for comparison. In some cases, however, unchanged, or but little changed, individuals of the same breed exist in less civilised districts, where the breed has been less improved. There is reason

to believe that King Charles' spaniel has been unconsciously modified to a large extent since the time of that monarch. Some highly competent authorities are convinced that the setter is directly derived from the spaniel, and has probably been slowly altered from it. It is known that the English pointer has been greatly changed within the last century, and in this case the change has, it is believed, been chiefly effected by crosses with the foxhound; but what concerns us is, that the change has been effected unconsciously and gradually, and yet so effectually that, though the old Spanish pointer certainly came from Spain, Mr. Borrow has not seen, as I am informed by him, any native dog in Spain like our pointer.

By a similar process of selection, and by careful training, English race-horses have come to surpass in fleetness and size the parent Arabs, so that the latter, by the regulations for the Goodwood Races, are favoured in the weights which they carry. Lord Spencer and others have shown how the cattle of England have increased in weight and in early maturity, compared with the stock formerly kept in this country. By comparing the accounts given in various old treatises of the former and present state of carrier and tumbler pigeons in Britain, India, and Persia, we can trace the stages through which they have insensibly passed, and come to differ so greatly from the rock-pigeon.

Youatt gives an excellent illustration of the effects of a course of selection which may be considered as unconscious, in so far that the breeders could never have expected, or even wished, to

produce the result which ensued – namely, the production of the distinct strains. The two flocks of Leicester sheep kept by Mr. Buckley and Mr. Burgess, as Mr. Youatt remarks, "Have been purely bred from the original stock of Mr. Bakewell for upwards of fifty years. There is not a suspicion existing in the mind of any one at all acquainted with the subject that the owner of either of them has deviated in any one instance from the pure blood of Mr. Bakewell's flock, and yet the difference between the sheep possessed by these two gentlemen is so great that they have the appearance of being quite different varieties."

If there exist savages so barbarous as never to think of the inherited character of the offspring of their domestic animals, yet any one animal particularly useful to them, for any special purpose, would be carefully preserved during famines and other accidents, to which savages are so liable, and such choice animals would thus generally leave more offspring than the inferior ones; so that in this case there would be a kind of unconscious selection going on. We see the value set on animals even by the barbarians of Tierra del Fuego, by their killing and devouring their old women, in times of dearth, as of less value than their dogs.

In plants the same gradual process of improvement through the occasional preservation of the best individuals, whether or not sufficiently distinct to be ranked at their first appearance as distinct varieties, and whether or not two or more species or races have become blended together by crossing, may plainly be recognised in the increased size and beauty which we now

see in the varieties of the heartsease, rose, pelargonium, dahlia, and other plants, when compared with the older varieties or with their parent-stocks. No one would ever expect to get a first-rate heartsease or dahlia from the seed of a wild plant. No one would expect to raise a first-rate melting pear from the seed of a wild pear, though he might succeed from a poor seedling growing wild, if it had come from a garden-stock. The pear, though cultivated in classical times, appears, from Pliny's description, to have been a fruit of very inferior quality. I have seen great surprise expressed in horticultural works at the wonderful skill of gardeners in having produced such splendid results from such poor materials; but the art has been simple, and, as far as the final result is concerned, has been followed almost unconsciously. It has consisted in always cultivating the best known variety, sowing its seeds, and, when a slightly better variety chanced to appear, selecting it, and so onwards. But the gardeners of the classical period, who cultivated the best pears which they could procure, never thought what splendid fruit we should eat; though we owe our excellent fruit in some small degree to their having naturally chosen and preserved the best varieties they could anywhere find.

A large amount of change, thus slowly and unconsciously accumulated, explains, as I believe, the well-known fact, that in a number of cases we cannot recognise, and therefore do not know, the wild parent-stocks of the plants which have been longest cultivated in our flower and kitchen gardens. If it has taken centuries or thousands of years to improve or modify most

of our plants up to their present standard of usefulness to man, we can understand how it is that neither Australia, the Cape of Good Hope, nor any other region inhabited by quite uncivilised man, has afforded us a single plant worth culture. It is not that these countries, so rich in species, do not by a strange chance possess the aboriginal stocks of any useful plants, but that the native plants have not been improved by continued selection up to a standard of perfection comparable with that acquired by the plants in countries anciently civilised.

In regard to the domestic animals kept by uncivilised man, it should not be overlooked that they almost always have to struggle for their own food, at least during certain seasons. And in two countries very differently circumstanced, individuals of the same species, having slightly different constitutions or structure, would often succeed better in the one country than in the other, and thus by a process of "natural selection," as will hereafter be more fully explained, two sub-breeds might be formed. This, perhaps, partly explains why the varieties kept by savages, as has been remarked by some authors, have more of the character of true species than the varieties kept in civilised countries.

On the view here given of the important part which selection by man has played, it becomes at once obvious, how it is that our domestic races show adaptation in their structure or in their habits to man's wants or fancies. We can, I think, further understand the frequently abnormal character of our domestic races, and likewise their differences being so great in external

characters, and relatively so slight in internal parts or organs. Man can hardly select, or only with much difficulty, any deviation of structure excepting such as is externally visible; and indeed he rarely cares for what is internal. He can never act by selection, excepting on variations which are first given to him in some slight degree by nature. No man would ever try to make a fantail till he saw a pigeon with a tail developed in some slight degree in an unusual manner, or a pouter till he saw a pigeon with a crop of somewhat unusual size; and the more abnormal or unusual any character was when it first appeared, the more likely it would be to catch his attention. But to use such an expression as trying to make a fantail is, I have no doubt, in most cases, utterly incorrect. The man who first selected a pigeon with a slightly larger tail, never dreamed what the descendants of that pigeon would become through long-continued, partly unconscious and partly methodical, selection. Perhaps the parent bird of all fantails had only fourteen tail-feathers somewhat expanded, like the present Java fantail, or like individuals of other and distinct breeds, in which as many as seventeen tail-feathers have been counted. Perhaps the first pouter-pigeon did not inflate its crop much more than the turbit now does the upper part of its oesophagus – a habit which is disregarded by all fanciers, as it is not one of the points of the breed.

Nor let it be thought that some great deviation of structure would be necessary to catch the fancier's eye: he perceives extremely small differences, and it is in human nature to value

any novelty, however slight, in one's own possession. Nor must the value which would formerly have been set on any slight differences in the individuals of the same species, be judged of by the value which is now set on them, after several breeds have fairly been established. It is known that with pigeons many slight variations now occasionally appear, but these are rejected as faults or deviations from the standard of perfection in each breed. The common goose has not given rise to any marked varieties; hence the Toulouse and the common breed, which differ only in colour, that most fleeting of characters, have lately been exhibited as distinct at our poultry-shows.

These views appear to explain what has sometimes been noticed, namely, that we know hardly anything about the origin or history of any of our domestic breeds. But, in fact, a breed, like a dialect of a language, can hardly be said to have a distinct origin. A man preserves and breeds from an individual with some slight deviation of structure, or takes more care than usual in matching his best animals, and thus improves them, and the improved animals slowly spread in the immediate neighbourhood. But they will as yet hardly have a distinct name, and from being only slightly valued, their history will have been disregarded. When further improved by the same slow and gradual process, they will spread more widely, and will be recognised as something distinct and valuable, and will then probably first receive a provincial name. In semi-civilised countries, with little free communication, the spreading of a new sub-breed will be a slow

process. As soon as the points of value are once acknowledged, the principle, as I have called it, of unconscious selection will always tend – perhaps more at one period than at another, as the breed rises or falls in fashion – perhaps more in one district than in another, according to the state of civilisation of the inhabitants – slowly to add to the characteristic features of the breed, whatever they may be. But the chance will be infinitely small of any record having been preserved of such slow, varying, and insensible changes.

### CIRCUMSTANCES FAVOURABLE TO MAN'S POWER OF SELECTION.

I will now say a few words on the circumstances, favourable or the reverse, to man's power of selection. A high degree of variability is obviously favourable, as freely giving the materials for selection to work on; not that mere individual differences are not amply sufficient, with extreme care, to allow of the accumulation of a large amount of modification in almost any desired direction. But as variations manifestly useful or pleasing to man appear only occasionally, the chance of their appearance will be much increased by a large number of individuals being kept. Hence number is of the highest importance for success. On this principle Marshall formerly remarked, with respect to the sheep of part of Yorkshire, "As they generally belong to poor people, and are mostly IN SMALL LOTS, they never can be improved." On the other hand, nurserymen, from keeping large stocks of the same plant, are generally far more successful

than amateurs in raising new and valuable varieties. A large number of individuals of an animal or plant can be reared only where the conditions for its propagation are favourable. When the individuals are scanty all will be allowed to breed, whatever their quality may be, and this will effectually prevent selection. But probably the most important element is that the animal or plant should be so highly valued by man, that the closest attention is paid to even the slightest deviations in its qualities or structure. Unless such attention be paid nothing can be effected. I have seen it gravely remarked, that it was most fortunate that the strawberry began to vary just when gardeners began to attend to this plant. No doubt the strawberry had always varied since it was cultivated, but the slight varieties had been neglected. As soon, however, as gardeners picked out individual plants with slightly larger, earlier, or better fruit, and raised seedlings from them, and again picked out the best seedlings and bred from them, then (with some aid by crossing distinct species) those many admirable varieties of the strawberry were raised which have appeared during the last half-century.

With animals, facility in preventing crosses is an important element in the formation of new races – at least, in a country which is already stocked with other races. In this respect enclosure of the land plays a part. Wandering savages or the inhabitants of open plains rarely possess more than one breed of the same species. Pigeons can be mated for life, and this is a great convenience to the fancier, for thus many races may

be improved and kept true, though mingled in the same aviary; and this circumstance must have largely favoured the formation of new breeds. Pigeons, I may add, can be propagated in great numbers and at a very quick rate, and inferior birds may be freely rejected, as when killed they serve for food. On the other hand, cats, from their nocturnal rambling habits, can not be easily matched, and, although so much valued by women and children, we rarely see a distinct breed long kept up; such breeds as we do sometimes see are almost always imported from some other country. Although I do not doubt that some domestic animals vary less than others, yet the rarity or absence of distinct breeds of the cat, the donkey, peacock, goose, etc., may be attributed in main part to selection not having been brought into play: in cats, from the difficulty in pairing them; in donkeys, from only a few being kept by poor people, and little attention paid to their breeding; for recently in certain parts of Spain and of the United States this animal has been surprisingly modified and improved by careful selection; in peacocks, from not being very easily reared and a large stock not kept; in geese, from being valuable only for two purposes, food and feathers, and more especially from no pleasure having been felt in the display of distinct breeds; but the goose, under the conditions to which it is exposed when domesticated, seems to have a singularly inflexible organisation, though it has varied to a slight extent, as I have elsewhere described.

Some authors have maintained that the amount of variation

in our domestic productions is soon reached, and can never afterward be exceeded. It would be somewhat rash to assert that the limit has been attained in any one case; for almost all our animals and plants have been greatly improved in many ways within a recent period; and this implies variation. It would be equally rash to assert that characters now increased to their utmost limit, could not, after remaining fixed for many centuries, again vary under new conditions of life. No doubt, as Mr. Wallace has remarked with much truth, a limit will be at last reached. For instance, there must be a limit to the fleetness of any terrestrial animal, as this will be determined by the friction to be overcome, the weight of the body to be carried, and the power of contraction in the muscular fibres. But what concerns us is that the domestic varieties of the same species differ from each other in almost every character, which man has attended to and selected, more than do the distinct species of the same genera. Isidore Geoffroy St. Hilaire has proved this in regard to size, and so it is with colour, and probably with the length of hair. With respect to fleetness, which depends on many bodily characters, Eclipse was far fleeter, and a dray-horse is comparably stronger, than any two natural species belonging to the same genus. So with plants, the seeds of the different varieties of the bean or maize probably differ more in size than do the seeds of the distinct species in any one genus in the same two families. The same remark holds good in regard to the fruit of the several varieties of the plum, and still more strongly with the melon, as well as in

many other analogous cases.

To sum up on the origin of our domestic races of animals and plants. Changed conditions of life are of the highest importance in causing variability, both by acting directly on the organisation, and indirectly by affecting the reproductive system. It is not probable that variability is an inherent and necessary contingent, under all circumstances. The greater or less force of inheritance and reversion determine whether variations shall endure. Variability is governed by many unknown laws, of which correlated growth is probably the most important. Something, but how much we do not know, may be attributed to the definite action of the conditions of life. Some, perhaps a great, effect may be attributed to the increased use or disuse of parts. The final result is thus rendered infinitely complex. In some cases the intercrossing of aboriginally distinct species appears to have played an important part in the origin of our breeds. When several breeds have once been formed in any country, their occasional intercrossing, with the aid of selection, has, no doubt, largely aided in the formation of new sub-breeds; but the importance of crossing has been much exaggerated, both in regard to animals and to those plants which are propagated by seed. With plants which are temporarily propagated by cuttings, buds, etc., the importance of crossing is immense; for the cultivator may here disregard the extreme variability both of hybrids and of mongrels, and the sterility of hybrids; but plants not propagated by seed are of little importance to us, for their

endurance is only temporary. Over all these causes of change, the accumulative action of selection, whether applied methodically and quickly, or unconsciously and slowly, but more efficiently, seems to have been the predominant power.

# CHAPTER II. VARIATION UNDER NATURE

Variability – Individual differences – Doubtful species – Wide ranging, much diffused, and common species, vary most – Species of the larger genera in each country vary more frequently than the species of the smaller genera – Many of the species of the larger genera resemble varieties in being very closely, but unequally, related to each other, and in having restricted ranges.

Before applying the principles arrived at in the last chapter to organic beings in a state of nature, we must briefly discuss whether these latter are subject to any variation. To treat this subject properly, a long catalogue of dry facts ought to be given; but these I shall reserve for a future work. Nor shall I here discuss the various definitions which have been given of the term species. No one definition has satisfied all naturalists; yet every naturalist knows vaguely what he means when he speaks of a species. Generally the term includes the unknown element of a distinct act of creation. The term "variety" is almost equally difficult to define; but here community of descent is almost universally implied, though it can rarely be proved. We have also what are called monstrosities; but they graduate into varieties. By a monstrosity I presume is meant some considerable deviation of

structure, generally injurious, or not useful to the species. Some authors use the term "variation" in a technical sense, as implying a modification directly due to the physical conditions of life; and "variations" in this sense are supposed not to be inherited; but who can say that the dwarfed condition of shells in the brackish waters of the Baltic, or dwarfed plants on Alpine summits, or the thicker fur of an animal from far northwards, would not in some cases be inherited for at least a few generations? And in this case I presume that the form would be called a variety.

It may be doubted whether sudden and considerable deviations of structure, such as we occasionally see in our domestic productions, more especially with plants, are ever permanently propagated in a state of nature. Almost every part of every organic being is so beautifully related to its complex conditions of life that it seems as improbable that any part should have been suddenly produced perfect, as that a complex machine should have been invented by man in a perfect state. Under domestication monstrosities sometimes occur which resemble normal structures in widely different animals. Thus pigs have occasionally been born with a sort of proboscis, and if any wild species of the same genus had naturally possessed a proboscis, it might have been argued that this had appeared as a monstrosity; but I have as yet failed to find, after diligent search, cases of monstrosities resembling normal structures in nearly allied forms, and these alone bear on the question. If monstrous forms of this kind ever do appear in a state of nature and are capable

of reproduction (which is not always the case), as they occur rarely and singly, their preservation would depend on unusually favourable circumstances. They would, also, during the first and succeeding generations cross with the ordinary form, and thus their abnormal character would almost inevitably be lost. But I shall have to return in a future chapter to the preservation and perpetuation of single or occasional variations.

### INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES.

The many slight differences which appear in the offspring from the same parents, or which it may be presumed have thus arisen, from being observed in the individuals of the same species inhabiting the same confined locality, may be called individual differences. No one supposes that all the individuals of the same species are cast in the same actual mould. These individual differences are of the highest importance for us, for they are often inherited, as must be familiar to every one; and they thus afford materials for natural selection to act on and accumulate, in the same manner as man accumulates in any given direction individual differences in his domesticated productions. These individual differences generally affect what naturalists consider unimportant parts; but I could show, by a long catalogue of facts, that parts which must be called important, whether viewed under a physiological or classificatory point of view, sometimes vary in the individuals of the same species. I am convinced that the most experienced naturalist would be surprised at the number of the cases of variability, even in important parts of structure, which

he could collect on good authority, as I have collected, during a course of years. It should be remembered that systematists are far from being pleased at finding variability in important characters, and that there are not many men who will laboriously examine internal and important organs, and compare them in many specimens of the same species. It would never have been expected that the branching of the main nerves close to the great central ganglion of an insect would have been variable in the same species; it might have been thought that changes of this nature could have been effected only by slow degrees; yet Sir J. Lubbock has shown a degree of variability in these main nerves in *Coccus*, which may almost be compared to the irregular branching of the stem of a tree. This philosophical naturalist, I may add, has also shown that the muscles in the larvae of certain insects are far from uniform. Authors sometimes argue in a circle when they state that important organs never vary; for these same authors practically rank those parts as important (as some few naturalists have honestly confessed) which do not vary; and, under this point of view, no instance will ever be found of an important part varying; but under any other point of view many instances assuredly can be given.

There is one point connected with individual differences which is extremely perplexing: I refer to those genera which have been called "protean" or "polymorphic," in which species present an inordinate amount of variation. With respect to many of these forms, hardly two naturalists agree whether to rank

them as species or as varieties. We may instance *Rubus*, *Rosa*, and *Hieracium* among plants, several genera of insects, and of Brachiopod shells. In most polymorphic genera some of the species have fixed and definite characters. Genera which are polymorphic in one country seem to be, with a few exceptions, polymorphic in other countries, and likewise, judging from Brachiopod shells, at former periods of time. These facts are very perplexing, for they seem to show that this kind of variability is independent of the conditions of life. I am inclined to suspect that we see, at least in some of these polymorphic genera, variations which are of no service or disservice to the species, and which consequently have not been seized on and rendered definite by natural selection, as hereafter to be explained.

Individuals of the same species often present, as is known to every one, great differences of structure, independently of variation, as in the two sexes of various animals, in the two or three castes of sterile females or workers among insects, and in the immature and larval states of many of the lower animals. There are, also, cases of dimorphism and trimorphism, both with animals and plants. Thus, Mr. Wallace, who has lately called attention to the subject, has shown that the females of certain species of butterflies, in the Malayan Archipelago, regularly appear under two or even three conspicuously distinct forms, not connected by intermediate varieties. Fritz Muller has described analogous but more extraordinary cases with the males of certain Brazilian Crustaceans: thus, the male of a *Tanais*

regularly occurs under two distinct forms; one of these has strong and differently shaped pincers, and the other has antennae much more abundantly furnished with smelling-hairs. Although in most of these cases, the two or three forms, both with animals and plants, are not now connected by intermediate gradations, it is possible that they were once thus connected. Mr. Wallace, for instance, describes a certain butterfly which presents in the same island a great range of varieties connected by intermediate links, and the extreme links of the chain closely resemble the two forms of an allied dimorphic species inhabiting another part of the Malay Archipelago. Thus also with ants, the several worker-castes are generally quite distinct; but in some cases, as we shall hereafter see, the castes are connected together by finely graduated varieties. So it is, as I have myself observed, with some dimorphic plants. It certainly at first appears a highly remarkable fact that the same female butterfly should have the power of producing at the same time three distinct female forms and a male; and that an hermaphrodite plant should produce from the same seed-capsule three distinct hermaphrodite forms, bearing three different kinds of females and three or even six different kinds of males. Nevertheless these cases are only exaggerations of the common fact that the female produces offspring of two sexes which sometimes differ from each other in a wonderful manner.

#### DOUBTFUL SPECIES.

The forms which possess in some considerable degree the

character of species, but which are so closely similar to other forms, or are so closely linked to them by intermediate gradations, that naturalists do not like to rank them as distinct species, are in several respects the most important for us. We have every reason to believe that many of these doubtful and closely allied forms have permanently retained their characters for a long time; for as long, as far as we know, as have good and true species. Practically, when a naturalist can unite by means of intermediate links any two forms, he treats the one as a variety of the other, ranking the most common, but sometimes the one first described as the species, and the other as the variety. But cases of great difficulty, which I will not here enumerate, sometimes arise in deciding whether or not to rank one form as a variety of another, even when they are closely connected by intermediate links; nor will the commonly assumed hybrid nature of the intermediate forms always remove the difficulty. In very many cases, however, one form is ranked as a variety of another, not because the intermediate links have actually been found, but because analogy leads the observer to suppose either that they do now somewhere exist, or may formerly have existed; and here a wide door for the entry of doubt and conjecture is opened.

Hence, in determining whether a form should be ranked as a species or a variety, the opinion of naturalists having sound judgment and wide experience seems the only guide to follow. We must, however, in many cases, decide by a majority of naturalists, for few well-marked and well-known varieties can be

named which have not been ranked as species by at least some competent judges.

That varieties of this doubtful nature are far from uncommon cannot be disputed. Compare the several floras of Great Britain, of France, or of the United States, drawn up by different botanists, and see what a surprising number of forms have been ranked by one botanist as good species, and by another as mere varieties. Mr. H.C. Watson, to whom I lie under deep obligation for assistance of all kinds, has marked for me 182 British plants, which are generally considered as varieties, but which have all been ranked by botanists as species; and in making this list he has omitted many trifling varieties, but which nevertheless have been ranked by some botanists as species, and he has entirely omitted several highly polymorphic genera. Under genera, including the most polymorphic forms, Mr. Babington gives 251 species, whereas Mr. Bentham gives only 112 – a difference of 139 doubtful forms! Among animals which unite for each birth, and which are highly locomotive, doubtful forms, ranked by one zoologist as a species and by another as a variety, can rarely be found within the same country, but are common in separated areas. How many of the birds and insects in North America and Europe, which differ very slightly from each other, have been ranked by one eminent naturalist as undoubted species, and by another as varieties, or, as they are often called, geographical races! Mr. Wallace, in several valuable papers on the various animals, especially on the Lepidoptera, inhabiting the islands of

the great Malayan Archipelago, shows that they may be classed under four heads, namely, as variable forms, as local forms, as geographical races or sub-species, and as true representative species. The first or variable forms vary much within the limits of the same island. The local forms are moderately constant and distinct in each separate island; but when all from the several islands are compared together, the differences are seen to be so slight and graduated that it is impossible to define or describe them, though at the same time the extreme forms are sufficiently distinct. The geographical races or sub-species are local forms completely fixed and isolated; but as they do not differ from each other by strongly marked and important characters, "There is no possible test but individual opinion to determine which of them shall be considered as species and which as varieties." Lastly, representative species fill the same place in the natural economy of each island as do the local forms and sub-species; but as they are distinguished from each other by a greater amount of difference than that between the local forms and sub-species, they are almost universally ranked by naturalists as true species. Nevertheless, no certain criterion can possibly be given by which variable forms, local forms, sub species and representative species can be recognised.

Many years ago, when comparing, and seeing others compare, the birds from the closely neighbouring islands of the Galapagos Archipelago, one with another, and with those from the American mainland, I was much struck how entirely vague and

arbitrary is the distinction between species and varieties. On the islets of the little Madeira group there are many insects which are characterized as varieties in Mr. Wollaston's admirable work, but which would certainly be ranked as distinct species by many entomologists. Even Ireland has a few animals, now generally regarded as varieties, but which have been ranked as species by some zoologists. Several experienced ornithologists consider our British red grouse as only a strongly marked race of a Norwegian species, whereas the greater number rank it as an undoubted species peculiar to Great Britain. A wide distance between the homes of two doubtful forms leads many naturalists to rank them as distinct species; but what distance, it has been well asked, will suffice if that between America and Europe is ample, will that between Europe and the Azores, or Madeira, or the Canaries, or between the several islets of these small archipelagos, be sufficient?

Mr. B.D. Walsh, a distinguished entomologist of the United States, has described what he calls Phytophagic varieties and Phytophagic species. Most vegetable-feeding insects live on one kind of plant or on one group of plants; some feed indiscriminately on many kinds, but do not in consequence vary. In several cases, however, insects found living on different plants, have been observed by Mr. Walsh to present in their larval or mature state, or in both states, slight, though constant differences in colour, size, or in the nature of their secretions. In some instances the males alone, in other instances, both males and

females, have been observed thus to differ in a slight degree. When the differences are rather more strongly marked, and when both sexes and all ages are affected, the forms are ranked by all entomologists as good species. But no observer can determine for another, even if he can do so for himself, which of these Phytophagic forms ought to be called species and which varieties. Mr. Walsh ranks the forms which it may be supposed would freely intercross, as varieties; and those which appear to have lost this power, as species. As the differences depend on the insects having long fed on distinct plants, it cannot be expected that intermediate links connecting the several forms should now be found. The naturalist thus loses his best guide in determining whether to rank doubtful forms as varieties or species. This likewise necessarily occurs with closely allied organisms, which inhabit distinct continents or islands. When, on the other hand, an animal or plant ranges over the same continent, or inhabits many islands in the same archipelago, and presents different forms in the different areas, there is always a good chance that intermediate forms will be discovered which will link together the extreme states; and these are then degraded to the rank of varieties.

Some few naturalists maintain that animals never present varieties; but then these same naturalists rank the slightest difference as of specific value; and when the same identical form is met with in two distant countries, or in two geological formations, they believe that two distinct species are hidden

under the same dress. The term species thus comes to be a mere useless abstraction, implying and assuming a separate act of creation. It is certain that many forms, considered by highly competent judges to be varieties, resemble species so completely in character that they have been thus ranked by other highly competent judges. But to discuss whether they ought to be called species or varieties, before any definition of these terms has been generally accepted, is vainly to beat the air.

Many of the cases of strongly marked varieties or doubtful species well deserve consideration; for several interesting lines of argument, from geographical distribution, analogical variation, hybridism, etc., have been brought to bear in the attempt to determine their rank; but space does not here permit me to discuss them. Close investigation, in many cases, will no doubt bring naturalists to agree how to rank doubtful forms. Yet it must be confessed that it is in the best known countries that we find the greatest number of them. I have been struck with the fact that if any animal or plant in a state of nature be highly useful to man, or from any cause closely attracts his attention, varieties of it will almost universally be found recorded. These varieties, moreover, will often be ranked by some authors as species. Look at the common oak, how closely it has been studied; yet a German author makes more than a dozen species out of forms, which are almost universally considered by other botanists to be varieties; and in this country the highest botanical authorities and practical men can be quoted to show that the sessile and pedunculated oaks

are either good and distinct species or mere varieties.

I may here allude to a remarkable memoir lately published by A. de Candolle, on the oaks of the whole world. No one ever had more ample materials for the discrimination of the species, or could have worked on them with more zeal and sagacity. He first gives in detail all the many points of structure which vary in the several species, and estimates numerically the relative frequency of the variations. He specifies above a dozen characters which may be found varying even on the same branch, sometimes according to age or development, sometimes without any assignable reason. Such characters are not of course of specific value, but they are, as Asa Gray has remarked in commenting on this memoir, such as generally enter into specific definitions. De Candolle then goes on to say that he gives the rank of species to the forms that differ by characters never varying on the same tree, and never found connected by intermediate states. After this discussion, the result of so much labour, he emphatically remarks: "They are mistaken, who repeat that the greater part of our species are clearly limited, and that the doubtful species are in a feeble minority. This seemed to be true, so long as a genus was imperfectly known, and its species were founded upon a few specimens, that is to say, were provisional. Just as we come to know them better, intermediate forms flow in, and doubts as to specific limits augment." He also adds that it is the best known species which present the greatest number of spontaneous varieties and sub-varieties. Thus *Quercus robur* has

twenty-eight varieties, all of which, excepting six, are clustered round three sub-species, namely *Q. pedunculata*, *sessiliflora* and *pubescens*. The forms which connect these three sub-species are comparatively rare; and, as Asa Gray again remarks, if these connecting forms which are now rare were to become totally extinct the three sub-species would hold exactly the same relation to each other as do the four or five provisionally admitted species which closely surround the typical *Quercus robur*. Finally, De Candolle admits that out of the 300 species, which will be enumerated in his *Prodromus* as belonging to the oak family, at least two-thirds are provisional species, that is, are not known strictly to fulfil the definition above given of a true species. It should be added that De Candolle no longer believes that species are immutable creations, but concludes that the derivative theory is the most natural one, "and the most accordant with the known facts in palaeontology, geographical botany and zoology, of anatomical structure and classification."

When a young naturalist commences the study of a group of organisms quite unknown to him he is at first much perplexed in determining what differences to consider as specific and what as varietal; for he knows nothing of the amount and kind of variation to which the group is subject; and this shows, at least, how very generally there is some variation. But if he confine his attention to one class within one country he will soon make up his mind how to rank most of the doubtful forms. His general tendency will be to make many species, for he will become

impressed, just like the pigeon or poultry fancier before alluded to, with the amount of difference in the forms which he is continually studying; and he has little general knowledge of analogical variation in other groups and in other countries by which to correct his first impressions. As he extends the range of his observations he will meet with more cases of difficulty; for he will encounter a greater number of closely-allied forms. But if his observations be widely extended he will in the end generally be able to make up his own mind; but he will succeed in this at the expense of admitting much variation, and the truth of this admission will often be disputed by other naturalists. When he comes to study allied forms brought from countries not now continuous, in which case he cannot hope to find intermediate links, he will be compelled to trust almost entirely to analogy, and his difficulties will rise to a climax.

Certainly no clear line of demarcation has as yet been drawn between species and sub-species – that is, the forms which in the opinion of some naturalists come very near to, but do not quite arrive at, the rank of species; or, again, between sub-species and well-marked varieties, or between lesser varieties and individual differences. These differences blend into each other by an insensible series; and a series impresses the mind with the idea of an actual passage.

Hence I look at individual differences, though of small interest to the systematist, as of the highest importance for us, as being the first step towards such slight varieties as are barely thought

worth recording in works on natural history. And I look at varieties which are in any degree more distinct and permanent, as steps toward more strongly marked and permanent varieties; and at the latter, as leading to sub-species, and then to species. The passage from one stage of difference to another may, in many cases, be the simple result of the nature of the organism and of the different physical conditions to which it has long been exposed; but with respect to the more important and adaptive characters, the passage from one stage of difference to another may be safely attributed to the cumulative action of natural selection, hereafter to be explained, and to the effects of the increased use or disuse of parts. A well-marked variety may therefore be called an incipient species; but whether this belief is justifiable must be judged by the weight of the various facts and considerations to be given throughout this work.

It need not be supposed that all varieties or incipient species attain the rank of species. They may become extinct, or they may endure as varieties for very long periods, as has been shown to be the case by Mr. Wollaston with the varieties of certain fossil land-shells in Madeira, and with plants by Gaston de Saporta. If a variety were to flourish so as to exceed in numbers the parent species, it would then rank as the species, and the species as the variety; or it might come to supplant and exterminate the parent species; or both might co-exist, and both rank as independent species. But we shall hereafter return to this subject.

From these remarks it will be seen that I look at the term

species as one arbitrarily given, for the sake of convenience, to a set of individuals closely resembling each other, and that it does not essentially differ from the term variety, which is given to less distinct and more fluctuating forms. The term variety, again, in comparison with mere individual differences, is also applied arbitrarily, for convenience sake.

### WIDE-RANGING, MUCH DIFFUSED, AND COMMON SPECIES VARY MOST.

Guided by theoretical considerations, I thought that some interesting results might be obtained in regard to the nature and relations of the species which vary most, by tabulating all the varieties in several well-worked floras. At first this seemed a simple task; but Mr. H.C. Watson, to whom I am much indebted for valuable advice and assistance on this subject, soon convinced me that there were many difficulties, as did subsequently Dr. Hooker, even in stronger terms. I shall reserve for a future work the discussion of these difficulties, and the tables of the proportional numbers of the varying species. Dr. Hooker permits me to add that after having carefully read my manuscript, and examined the tables, he thinks that the following statements are fairly well established. The whole subject, however, treated as it necessarily here is with much brevity, is rather perplexing, and allusions cannot be avoided to the "struggle for existence," "divergence of character," and other questions, hereafter to be discussed.

Alphonse de Candolle and others have shown that plants

which have very wide ranges generally present varieties; and this might have been expected, as they are exposed to diverse physical conditions, and as they come into competition (which, as we shall hereafter see, is a far more important circumstance) with different sets of organic beings. But my tables further show that, in any limited country, the species which are the most common, that is abound most in individuals, and the species which are most widely diffused within their own country (and this is a different consideration from wide range, and to a certain extent from commonness), oftenest give rise to varieties sufficiently well-marked to have been recorded in botanical works. Hence it is the most flourishing, or, as they may be called, the dominant species – those which range widely, are the most diffused in their own country, and are the most numerous in individuals – which oftenest produce well-marked varieties, or, as I consider them, incipient species. And this, perhaps, might have been anticipated; for, as varieties, in order to become in any degree permanent, necessarily have to struggle with the other inhabitants of the country, the species which are already dominant will be the most likely to yield offspring, which, though in some slight degree modified, still inherit those advantages that enabled their parents to become dominant over their compatriots. In these remarks on predominance, it should be understood that reference is made only to the forms which come into competition with each other, and more especially to the members of the same genus or class having nearly similar habits of life. With respect to the number

of individuals or commonness of species, the comparison of course relates only to the members of the same group. One of the higher plants may be said to be dominant if it be more numerous in individuals and more widely diffused than the other plants of the same country, which live under nearly the same conditions. A plant of this kind is not the less dominant because some conferva inhabiting the water or some parasitic fungus is infinitely more numerous in individuals, and more widely diffused. But if the conferva or parasitic fungus exceeds its allies in the above respects, it will then be dominant within its own class.

**SPECIES OF THE LARGER GENERA IN EACH COUNTRY VARY MORE FREQUENTLY THAN THE SPECIES OF THE SMALLER GENERA.**

If the plants inhabiting a country as described in any Flora, be divided into two equal masses, all those in the larger genera (i.e., those including many species) being placed on one side, and all those in the smaller genera on the other side, the former will be found to include a somewhat larger number of the very common and much diffused or dominant species. This might have been anticipated, for the mere fact of many species of the same genus inhabiting any country, shows that there is something in the organic or inorganic conditions of that country favourable to the genus; and, consequently, we might have expected to have found in the larger genera, or those including many species, a larger proportional number of dominant species. But so many

causes tend to obscure this result, that I am surprised that my tables show even a small majority on the side of the larger genera. I will here allude to only two causes of obscurity. Fresh water and salt-loving plants generally have very wide ranges and are much diffused, but this seems to be connected with the nature of the stations inhabited by them, and has little or no relation to the size of the genera to which the species belong. Again, plants low in the scale of organisation are generally much more widely diffused than plants higher in the scale; and here again there is no close relation to the size of the genera. The cause of lowly-organised plants ranging widely will be discussed in our chapter on Geographical Distribution.

From looking at species as only strongly marked and well-defined varieties, I was led to anticipate that the species of the larger genera in each country would oftener present varieties, than the species of the smaller genera; for wherever many closely related species (i.e., species of the same genus) have been formed, many varieties or incipient species ought, as a general rule, to be now forming. Where many large trees grow, we expect to find saplings. Where many species of a genus have been formed through variation, circumstances have been favourable for variation; and hence we might expect that the circumstances would generally still be favourable to variation. On the other hand, if we look at each species as a special act of creation, there is no apparent reason why more varieties should occur in a group having many species, than in one having few.

To test the truth of this anticipation I have arranged the plants of twelve countries, and the coleopterous insects of two districts, into two nearly equal masses, the species of the larger genera on one side, and those of the smaller genera on the other side, and it has invariably proved to be the case that a larger proportion of the species on the side of the larger genera presented varieties, than on the side of the smaller genera. Moreover, the species of the large genera which present any varieties, invariably present a larger average number of varieties than do the species of the small genera. Both these results follow when another division is made, and when all the least genera, with from only one to four species, are altogether excluded from the tables. These facts are of plain signification on the view that species are only strongly marked and permanent varieties; for wherever many species of the same genus have been formed, or where, if we may use the expression, the manufactory of species has been active, we ought generally to find the manufactory still in action, more especially as we have every reason to believe the process of manufacturing new species to be a slow one. And this certainly holds true if varieties be looked at as incipient species; for my tables clearly show, as a general rule, that, wherever many species of a genus have been formed, the species of that genus present a number of varieties, that is, of incipient species, beyond the average. It is not that all large genera are now varying much, and are thus increasing in the number of their species, or that no small genera are now varying and increasing; for if this had been so, it would

have been fatal to my theory; inasmuch as geology plainly tells us that small genera have in the lapse of time often increased greatly in size; and that large genera have often come to their maxima, declined, and disappeared. All that we want to show is, that where many species of a genus have been formed, on an average many are still forming; and this certainly holds good.

MANY OF THE SPECIES INCLUDED WITHIN THE LARGER GENERA RESEMBLE VARIETIES IN BEING VERY CLOSELY, BUT UNEQUALLY, RELATED TO EACH OTHER, AND IN HAVING RESTRICTED RANGES.

There are other relations between the species of large genera and their recorded varieties which deserve notice. We have seen that there is no infallible criterion by which to distinguish species and well-marked varieties; and when intermediate links have not been found between doubtful forms, naturalists are compelled to come to a determination by the amount of difference between them, judging by analogy whether or not the amount suffices to raise one or both to the rank of species. Hence the amount of difference is one very important criterion in settling whether two forms should be ranked as species or varieties. Now Fries has remarked in regard to plants, and Westwood in regard to insects, that in large genera the amount of difference between the species is often exceedingly small. I have endeavoured to test this numerically by averages, and, as far as my imperfect results go, they confirm the view. I have also consulted some sagacious and experienced observers, and, after deliberation, they concur

in this view. In this respect, therefore, the species of the larger genera resemble varieties, more than do the species of the smaller genera. Or the case may be put in another way, and it may be said, that in the larger genera, in which a number of varieties or incipient species greater than the average are now manufacturing, many of the species already manufactured still to a certain extent resemble varieties, for they differ from each other by a less than the usual amount of difference.

Moreover, the species of the larger genera are related to each other, in the same manner as the varieties of any one species are related to each other. No naturalist pretends that all the species of a genus are equally distinct from each other; they may generally be divided into sub-genera, or sections, or lesser groups. As Fries has well remarked, little groups of species are generally clustered like satellites around other species. And what are varieties but groups of forms, unequally related to each other, and clustered round certain forms – that is, round their parent-species. Undoubtedly there is one most important point of difference between varieties and species, namely, that the amount of difference between varieties, when compared with each other or with their parent-species, is much less than that between the species of the same genus. But when we come to discuss the principle, as I call it, of divergence of character, we shall see how this may be explained, and how the lesser differences between varieties tend to increase into the greater differences between species.

There is one other point which is worth notice. Varieties generally have much restricted ranges. This statement is indeed scarcely more than a truism, for if a variety were found to have a wider range than that of its supposed parent-species, their denominations would be reversed. But there is reason to believe that the species which are very closely allied to other species, and in so far resemble varieties, often have much restricted ranges. For instance, Mr. H.C. Watson has marked for me in the well-sifted London catalogue of Plants (4th edition) sixty-three plants which are therein ranked as species, but which he considers as so closely allied to other species as to be of doubtful value: these sixty-three reputed species range on an average over 6.9 of the provinces into which Mr. Watson has divided Great Britain. Now, in this same catalogue, fifty-three acknowledged varieties are recorded, and these range over 7.7 provinces; whereas, the species to which these varieties belong range over 14.3 provinces. So that the acknowledged varieties have very nearly the same restricted average range, as have the closely allied forms, marked for me by Mr. Watson as doubtful species, but which are almost universally ranked by British botanists as good and true species.

#### SUMMARY.

Finally, varieties cannot be distinguished from species – except, first, by the discovery of intermediate linking forms; and, secondly, by a certain indefinite amount of difference between them; for two forms, if differing very little, are generally ranked as varieties, notwithstanding that they cannot be closely

connected; but the amount of difference considered necessary to give to any two forms the rank of species cannot be defined. In genera having more than the average number of species in any country, the species of these genera have more than the average number of varieties. In large genera the species are apt to be closely but unequally allied together, forming little clusters round other species. Species very closely allied to other species apparently have restricted ranges. In all these respects the species of large genera present a strong analogy with varieties. And we can clearly understand these analogies, if species once existed as varieties, and thus originated; whereas, these analogies are utterly inexplicable if species are independent creations.

We have also seen that it is the most flourishing or dominant species of the larger genera within each class which on an average yield the greatest number of varieties, and varieties, as we shall hereafter see, tend to become converted into new and distinct species. Thus the larger genera tend to become larger; and throughout nature the forms of life which are now dominant tend to become still more dominant by leaving many modified and dominant descendants. But, by steps hereafter to be explained, the larger genera also tend to break up into smaller genera. And thus, the forms of life throughout the universe become divided into groups subordinate to groups.

# CHAPTER III. STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

Its bearing on natural selection – The term used in a wide sense – Geometrical ratio of increase – Rapid increase of naturalised animals and plants – Nature of the checks to increase – Competition universal – Effects of climate – Protection from the number of individuals – Complex relations of all animals and plants throughout nature – Struggle for life most severe between individuals and varieties of the same species: often severe between species of the same genus – The relation of organism to organism the most important of all relations.

Before entering on the subject of this chapter I must make a few preliminary remarks to show how the struggle for existence bears on natural selection. It has been seen in the last chapter that among organic beings in a state of nature there is some individual variability: indeed I am not aware that this has ever been disputed. It is immaterial for us whether a multitude of doubtful forms be called species or sub-species or varieties; what rank, for instance, the two or three hundred doubtful forms of British plants are entitled to hold, if the existence of any well-marked varieties be admitted. But the mere existence of individual variability and of some few well-marked varieties, though necessary as the foundation for the work, helps us but

little in understanding how species arise in nature. How have all those exquisite adaptations of one part of the organisation to another part, and to the conditions of life and of one organic being to another being, been perfected? We see these beautiful co-adaptations most plainly in the woodpecker and the mistletoe, and only a little less plainly in the humblest parasite which clings to the hairs of a quadruped or feathers of a bird; in the structure of the beetle which dives through the water; in the plumed seed which is wafted by the gentlest breeze; in short, we see beautiful adaptations everywhere and in every part of the organic world.

Again, it may be asked, how is it that varieties, which I have called incipient species, become ultimately converted into good and distinct species, which in most cases obviously differ from each other far more than do the varieties of the same species? How do those groups of species, which constitute what are called distinct genera and which differ from each other more than do the species of the same genus, arise? All these results, as we shall more fully see in the next chapter, follow from the struggle for life. Owing to this struggle, variations, however slight and from whatever cause proceeding, if they be in any degree profitable to the individuals of a species, in their infinitely complex relations to other organic beings and to their physical conditions of life, will tend to the preservation of such individuals, and will generally be inherited by the offspring. The offspring, also, will thus have a better chance of surviving, for, of the many individuals of any species which are periodically born,

but a small number can survive. I have called this principle, by which each slight variation, if useful, is preserved, by the term natural selection, in order to mark its relation to man's power of selection. But the expression often used by Mr. Herbert Spencer, of the Survival of the Fittest, is more accurate, and is sometimes equally convenient. We have seen that man by selection can certainly produce great results, and can adapt organic beings to his own uses, through the accumulation of slight but useful variations, given to him by the hand of Nature. But Natural Selection, we shall hereafter see, is a power incessantly ready for action, and is as immeasurably superior to man's feeble efforts, as the works of Nature are to those of Art.

We will now discuss in a little more detail the struggle for existence. In my future work this subject will be treated, as it well deserves, at greater length. The elder De Candolle and Lyell have largely and philosophically shown that all organic beings are exposed to severe competition. In regard to plants, no one has treated this subject with more spirit and ability than W. Herbert, Dean of Manchester, evidently the result of his great horticultural knowledge. Nothing is easier than to admit in words the truth of the universal struggle for life, or more difficult – at least I found it so – than constantly to bear this conclusion in mind. Yet unless it be thoroughly engrained in the mind, the whole economy of nature, with every fact on distribution, rarity, abundance, extinction, and variation, will be dimly seen or quite misunderstood. We behold the face of nature bright

with gladness, we often see superabundance of food; we do not see or we forget that the birds which are idly singing round us mostly live on insects or seeds, and are thus constantly destroying life; or we forget how largely these songsters, or their eggs, or their nestlings, are destroyed by birds and beasts of prey; we do not always bear in mind, that, though food may be now superabundant, it is not so at all seasons of each recurring year.

**THE TERM, STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE, USED IN A LARGE SENSE.**

I should premise that I use this term in a large and metaphorical sense, including dependence of one being on another, and including (which is more important) not only the life of the individual, but success in leaving progeny. Two canine animals, in a time of dearth, may be truly said to struggle with each other which shall get food and live. But a plant on the edge of a desert is said to struggle for life against the drought, though more properly it should be said to be dependent on the moisture. A plant which annually produces a thousand seeds, of which only one of an average comes to maturity, may be more truly said to struggle with the plants of the same and other kinds which already clothe the ground. The mistletoe is dependent on the apple and a few other trees, but can only in a far-fetched sense be said to struggle with these trees, for, if too many of these parasites grow on the same tree, it languishes and dies. But several seedling mistletoes, growing close together on the same branch, may more truly be said to struggle with each other.

As the mistletoe is disseminated by birds, its existence depends on them; and it may metaphorically be said to struggle with other fruit-bearing plants, in tempting the birds to devour and thus disseminate its seeds. In these several senses, which pass into each other, I use for convenience sake the general term of Struggle for Existence.

### GEOMETRICAL RATIO OF INCREASE.

A struggle for existence inevitably follows from the high rate at which all organic beings tend to increase. Every being, which during its natural lifetime produces several eggs or seeds, must suffer destruction during some period of its life, and during some season or occasional year, otherwise, on the principle of geometrical increase, its numbers would quickly become so inordinately great that no country could support the product. Hence, as more individuals are produced than can possibly survive, there must in every case be a struggle for existence, either one individual with another of the same species, or with the individuals of distinct species, or with the physical conditions of life. It is the doctrine of Malthus applied with manifold force to the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms; for in this case there can be no artificial increase of food, and no prudential restraint from marriage. Although some species may be now increasing, more or less rapidly, in numbers, all cannot do so, for the world would not hold them.

There is no exception to the rule that every organic being naturally increases at so high a rate, that, if not destroyed, the

earth would soon be covered by the progeny of a single pair. Even slow-breeding man has doubled in twenty-five years, and at this rate, in less than a thousand years, there would literally not be standing room for his progeny. Linnaeus has calculated that if an annual plant produced only two seeds – and there is no plant so unproductive as this – and their seedlings next year produced two, and so on, then in twenty years there would be a million plants. The elephant is reckoned the slowest breeder of all known animals, and I have taken some pains to estimate its probable minimum rate of natural increase; it will be safest to assume that it begins breeding when thirty years old, and goes on breeding till ninety years old, bringing forth six young in the interval, and surviving till one hundred years old; if this be so, after a period of from 740 to 750 years there would be nearly nineteen million elephants alive descended from the first pair.

But we have better evidence on this subject than mere theoretical calculations, namely, the numerous recorded cases of the astonishingly rapid increase of various animals in a state of nature, when circumstances have been favourable to them during two or three following seasons. Still more striking is the evidence from our domestic animals of many kinds which have run wild in several parts of the world; if the statements of the rate of increase of slow-breeding cattle and horses in South America, and latterly in Australia, had not been well authenticated, they would have been incredible. So it is with plants; cases could be given of introduced plants which have become common

throughout whole islands in a period of less than ten years. Several of the plants, such as the cardoon and a tall thistle, which are now the commonest over the wide plains of La Plata, clothing square leagues of surface almost to the exclusion of every other plant, have been introduced from Europe; and there are plants which now range in India, as I hear from Dr. Falconer, from Cape Comorin to the Himalaya, which have been imported from America since its discovery. In such cases, and endless others could be given, no one supposes that the fertility of the animals or plants has been suddenly and temporarily increased in any sensible degree. The obvious explanation is that the conditions of life have been highly favourable, and that there has consequently been less destruction of the old and young and that nearly all the young have been enabled to breed. Their geometrical ratio of increase, the result of which never fails to be surprising, simply explains their extraordinarily rapid increase and wide diffusion in their new homes.

In a state of nature almost every full-grown plant annually produces seed, and among animals there are very few which do not annually pair. Hence we may confidently assert that all plants and animals are tending to increase at a geometrical ratio – that all would rapidly stock every station in which they could any how exist, and that this geometrical tendency to increase must be checked by destruction at some period of life. Our familiarity with the larger domestic animals tends, I think, to mislead us; we see no great destruction falling on them, and we do not keep in

mind that thousands are annually slaughtered for food, and that in a state of nature an equal number would have somehow to be disposed of.

The only difference between organisms which annually produce eggs or seeds by the thousand, and those which produce extremely few, is, that the slow breeders would require a few more years to people, under favourable conditions, a whole district, let it be ever so large. The condor lays a couple of eggs and the ostrich a score, and yet in the same country the condor may be the more numerous of the two. The Fulmar petrel lays but one egg, yet it is believed to be the most numerous bird in the world. One fly deposits hundreds of eggs, and another, like the hippobosca, a single one. But this difference does not determine how many individuals of the two species can be supported in a district. A large number of eggs is of some importance to those species which depend on a fluctuating amount of food, for it allows them rapidly to increase in number. But the real importance of a large number of eggs or seeds is to make up for much destruction at some period of life; and this period in the great majority of cases is an early one. If an animal can in any way protect its own eggs or young, a small number may be produced, and yet the average stock be fully kept up; but if many eggs or young are destroyed, many must be produced or the species will become extinct. It would suffice to keep up the full number of a tree, which lived on an average for a thousand years, if a single seed were produced once in a thousand years, supposing that this

seed were never destroyed and could be ensured to germinate in a fitting place; so that, in all cases, the average number of any animal or plant depends only indirectly on the number of its eggs or seeds.

In looking at Nature, it is most necessary to keep the foregoing considerations always in mind – never to forget that every single organic being may be said to be striving to the utmost to increase in numbers; that each lives by a struggle at some period of its life; that heavy destruction inevitably falls either on the young or old during each generation or at recurrent intervals. Lighten any check, mitigate the destruction ever so little, and the number of the species will almost instantaneously increase to any amount.

#### NATURE OF THE CHECKS TO INCREASE.

The causes which check the natural tendency of each species to increase are most obscure. Look at the most vigorous species; by as much as it swarms in numbers, by so much will it tend to increase still further. We know not exactly what the checks are even in a single instance. Nor will this surprise any one who reflects how ignorant we are on this head, even in regard to mankind, although so incomparably better known than any other animal. This subject of the checks to increase has been ably treated by several authors, and I hope in a future work to discuss it at considerable length, more especially in regard to the feral animals of South America. Here I will make only a few remarks, just to recall to the reader's mind some of the chief points. Eggs or very young animals seem generally to suffer most, but this is

not invariably the case. With plants there is a vast destruction of seeds, but from some observations which I have made it appears that the seedlings suffer most from germinating in ground already thickly stocked with other plants. Seedlings, also, are destroyed in vast numbers by various enemies; for instance, on a piece of ground three feet long and two wide, dug and cleared, and where there could be no choking from other plants, I marked all the seedlings of our native weeds as they came up, and out of 357 no less than 295 were destroyed, chiefly by slugs and insects. If turf which has long been mown, and the case would be the same with turf closely browsed by quadrupeds, be let to grow, the more vigorous plants gradually kill the less vigorous, though fully grown plants; thus out of twenty species grown on a little plot of mown turf (three feet by four) nine species perished, from the other species being allowed to grow up freely.

The amount of food for each species, of course, gives the extreme limit to which each can increase; but very frequently it is not the obtaining food, but the serving as prey to other animals, which determines the average number of a species. Thus, there seems to be little doubt that the stock of partridges, grouse, and hares on any large estate depends chiefly on the destruction of vermin. If not one head of game were shot during the next twenty years in England, and, at the same time, if no vermin were destroyed, there would, in all probability, be less game than at present, although hundreds of thousands of game animals are now annually shot. On the other hand, in some cases, as with the

elephant, none are destroyed by beasts of prey; for even the tiger in India most rarely dares to attack a young elephant protected by its dam.

Climate plays an important part in determining the average numbers of a species, and periodical seasons of extreme cold or drought seem to be the most effective of all checks. I estimated (chiefly from the greatly reduced numbers of nests in the spring) that the winter of 1854-5 destroyed four-fifths of the birds in my own grounds; and this is a tremendous destruction, when we remember that ten per cent. is an extraordinarily severe mortality from epidemics with man. The action of climate seems at first sight to be quite independent of the struggle for existence; but in so far as climate chiefly acts in reducing food, it brings on the most severe struggle between the individuals, whether of the same or of distinct species, which subsist on the same kind of food. Even when climate, for instance, extreme cold, acts directly, it will be the least vigorous individuals, or those which have got least food through the advancing winter, which will suffer the most. When we travel from south to north, or from a damp region to a dry, we invariably see some species gradually getting rarer and rarer, and finally disappearing; and the change of climate being conspicuous, we are tempted to attribute the whole effect to its direct action. But this is a false view; we forget that each species, even where it most abounds, is constantly suffering enormous destruction at some period of its life, from enemies or from competitors for the same place and food; and

if these enemies or competitors be in the least degree favoured by any slight change of climate, they will increase in numbers; and as each area is already fully stocked with inhabitants, the other species must decrease. When we travel southward and see a species decreasing in numbers, we may feel sure that the cause lies quite as much in other species being favoured, as in this one being hurt. So it is when we travel northward, but in a somewhat lesser degree, for the number of species of all kinds, and therefore of competitors, decreases northward; hence in going northward, or in ascending a mountain, we far oftener meet with stunted forms, due to the **DIRECTLY** injurious action of climate, than we do in proceeding southward or in descending a mountain. When we reach the Arctic regions, or snow-capped summits, or absolute deserts, the struggle for life is almost exclusively with the elements.

That climate acts in main part indirectly by favouring other species we clearly see in the prodigious number of plants which in our gardens can perfectly well endure our climate, but which never become naturalised, for they cannot compete with our native plants nor resist destruction by our native animals.

When a species, owing to highly favourable circumstances, increases inordinately in numbers in a small tract, epidemics – at least, this seems generally to occur with our game animals – often ensue; and here we have a limiting check independent of the struggle for life. But even some of these so-called epidemics appear to be due to parasitic worms, which have from some

cause, possibly in part through facility of diffusion among the crowded animals, been disproportionally favoured: and here comes in a sort of struggle between the parasite and its prey.

On the other hand, in many cases, a large stock of individuals of the same species, relatively to the numbers of its enemies, is absolutely necessary for its preservation. Thus we can easily raise plenty of corn and rape-seed, etc., in our fields, because the seeds are in great excess compared with the number of birds which feed on them; nor can the birds, though having a superabundance of food at this one season, increase in number proportionally to the supply of seed, as their numbers are checked during the winter; but any one who has tried knows how troublesome it is to get seed from a few wheat or other such plants in a garden; I have in this case lost every single seed. This view of the necessity of a large stock of the same species for its preservation, explains, I believe, some singular facts in nature such as that of very rare plants being sometimes extremely abundant, in the few spots where they do exist; and that of some social plants being social, that is abounding in individuals, even on the extreme verge of their range. For in such cases, we may believe, that a plant could exist only where the conditions of its life were so favourable that many could exist together, and thus save the species from utter destruction. I should add that the good effects of intercrossing, and the ill effects of close interbreeding, no doubt come into play in many of these cases; but I will not here enlarge on this subject.

COMPLEX RELATIONS OF ALL ANIMALS AND

## PLANTS TO EACH OTHER IN THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE.

Many cases are on record showing how complex and unexpected are the checks and relations between organic beings, which have to struggle together in the same country. I will give only a single instance, which, though a simple one, interested me. In Staffordshire, on the estate of a relation, where I had ample means of investigation, there was a large and extremely barren heath, which had never been touched by the hand of man; but several hundred acres of exactly the same nature had been enclosed twenty-five years previously and planted with Scotch fir. The change in the native vegetation of the planted part of the heath was most remarkable, more than is generally seen in passing from one quite different soil to another: not only the proportional numbers of the heath-plants were wholly changed, but twelve species of plants (not counting grasses and carices) flourished in the plantations, which could not be found on the heath. The effect on the insects must have been still greater, for six insectivorous birds were very common in the plantations, which were not to be seen on the heath; and the heath was frequented by two or three distinct insectivorous birds. Here we see how potent has been the effect of the introduction of a single tree, nothing whatever else having been done, with the exception of the land having been enclosed, so that cattle could not enter. But how important an element enclosure is, I plainly saw near Farnham, in Surrey. Here there are extensive heaths, with a few

clumps of old Scotch firs on the distant hill-tops: within the last ten years large spaces have been enclosed, and self-sown firs are now springing up in multitudes, so close together that all cannot live. When I ascertained that these young trees had not been sown or planted I was so much surprised at their numbers that I went to several points of view, whence I could examine hundreds of acres of the unenclosed heath, and literally I could not see a single Scotch fir, except the old planted clumps. But on looking closely between the stems of the heath, I found a multitude of seedlings and little trees, which had been perpetually browsed down by the cattle. In one square yard, at a point some hundred yards distant from one of the old clumps, I counted thirty-two little trees; and one of them, with twenty-six rings of growth, had, during many years tried to raise its head above the stems of the heath, and had failed. No wonder that, as soon as the land was enclosed, it became thickly clothed with vigorously growing young firs. Yet the heath was so extremely barren and so extensive that no one would ever have imagined that cattle would have so closely and effectually searched it for food.

Here we see that cattle absolutely determine the existence of the Scotch fir; but in several parts of the world insects determine the existence of cattle. Perhaps Paraguay offers the most curious instance of this; for here neither cattle nor horses nor dogs have ever run wild, though they swarm southward and northward in a feral state; and Azara and Rengger have shown that this is caused by the greater number in Paraguay of a certain fly, which lays its

eggs in the navels of these animals when first born. The increase of these flies, numerous as they are, must be habitually checked by some means, probably by other parasitic insects. Hence, if certain insectivorous birds were to decrease in Paraguay, the parasitic insects would probably increase; and this would lessen the number of the navel-frequenting flies – then cattle and horses would become feral, and this would certainly greatly alter (as indeed I have observed in parts of South America) the vegetation: this again would largely affect the insects; and this, as we have just seen in Staffordshire, the insectivorous birds, and so onwards in ever-increasing circles of complexity. Not that under nature the relations will ever be as simple as this. Battle within battle must be continually recurring with varying success; and yet in the long-run the forces are so nicely balanced that the face of nature remains for long periods of time uniform, though assuredly the merest trifle would give the victory to one organic being over another. Nevertheless, so profound is our ignorance, and so high our presumption, that we marvel when we hear of the extinction of an organic being; and as we do not see the cause, we invoke cataclysms to desolate the world, or invent laws on the duration of the forms of life!

I am tempted to give one more instance showing how plants and animals, remote in the scale of nature, are bound together by a web of complex relations. I shall hereafter have occasion to show that the exotic *Lobelia fulgens* is never visited in my garden by insects, and consequently, from its peculiar structure,

never sets a seed. Nearly all our orchidaceous plants absolutely require the visits of insects to remove their pollen-masses and thus to fertilise them. I find from experiments that humble-bees are almost indispensable to the fertilisation of the heartsease (*Viola tricolor*), for other bees do not visit this flower. I have also found that the visits of bees are necessary for the fertilisation of some kinds of clover; for instance twenty heads of Dutch clover (*Trifolium repens*) yielded 2,290 seeds, but twenty other heads, protected from bees, produced not one. Again, 100 heads of red clover (*T. pratense*) produced 2,700 seeds, but the same number of protected heads produced not a single seed. Humble bees alone visit red clover, as other bees cannot reach the nectar. It has been suggested that moths may fertilise the clovers; but I doubt whether they could do so in the case of the red clover, from their weight not being sufficient to depress the wing petals. Hence we may infer as highly probable that, if the whole genus of humble-bees became extinct or very rare in England, the heartsease and red clover would become very rare, or wholly disappear. The number of humble-bees in any district depends in a great measure upon the number of field-mice, which destroy their combs and nests; and Colonel Newman, who has long attended to the habits of humble-bees, believes that "more than two-thirds of them are thus destroyed all over England." Now the number of mice is largely dependent, as every one knows, on the number of cats; and Colonel Newman says, "Near villages and small towns I have found the nests of humble-bees more numerous than

elsewhere, which I attribute to the number of cats that destroy the mice." Hence it is quite credible that the presence of a feline animal in large numbers in a district might determine, through the intervention first of mice and then of bees, the frequency of certain flowers in that district!

In the case of every species, many different checks, acting at different periods of life, and during different seasons or years, probably come into play; some one check or some few being generally the most potent, but all will concur in determining the average number, or even the existence of the species. In some cases it can be shown that widely-different checks act on the same species in different districts. When we look at the plants and bushes clothing an entangled bank, we are tempted to attribute their proportional numbers and kinds to what we call chance. But how false a view is this! Every one has heard that when an American forest is cut down, a very different vegetation springs up; but it has been observed that ancient Indian ruins in the Southern United States, which must formerly have been cleared of trees, now display the same beautiful diversity and proportion of kinds as in the surrounding virgin forests. What a struggle must have gone on during long centuries between the several kinds of trees, each annually scattering its seeds by the thousand; what war between insect and insect – between insects, snails, and other animals with birds and beasts of prey – all striving to increase, all feeding on each other, or on the trees, their seeds and seedlings, or on the other plants which first clothed the ground

and thus checked the growth of the trees. Throw up a handful of feathers, and all fall to the ground according to definite laws; but how simple is the problem where each shall fall compared to that of the action and reaction of the innumerable plants and animals which have determined, in the course of centuries, the proportional numbers and kinds of trees now growing on the old Indian ruins!

The dependency of one organic being on another, as of a parasite on its prey, lies generally between beings remote in the scale of nature. This is likewise sometimes the case with those which may strictly be said to struggle with each other for existence, as in the case of locusts and grass-feeding quadrupeds. But the struggle will almost invariably be most severe between the individuals of the same species, for they frequent the same districts, require the same food, and are exposed to the same dangers. In the case of varieties of the same species, the struggle will generally be almost equally severe, and we sometimes see the contest soon decided: for instance, if several varieties of wheat be sown together, and the mixed seed be resown, some of the varieties which best suit the soil or climate, or are naturally the most fertile, will beat the others and so yield more seed, and will consequently in a few years supplant the other varieties. To keep up a mixed stock of even such extremely close varieties as the variously coloured sweet-peas, they must be each year harvested separately, and the seed then mixed in due proportion, otherwise the weaker kinds will steadily decrease in

number and disappear. So again with the varieties of sheep: it has been asserted that certain mountain-varieties will starve out other mountain-varieties, so that they cannot be kept together. The same result has followed from keeping together different varieties of the medicinal leech. It may even be doubted whether the varieties of any of our domestic plants or animals have so exactly the same strength, habits, and constitution, that the original proportions of a mixed stock (crossing being prevented) could be kept up for half-a-dozen generations, if they were allowed to struggle together, in the same manner as beings in a state of nature, and if the seed or young were not annually preserved in due proportion.

#### STRUGGLE FOR LIFE MOST SEVERE BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND VARIETIES OF THE SAME SPECIES.

As the species of the same genus usually have, though by no means invariably, much similarity in habits and constitution, and always in structure, the struggle will generally be more severe between them, if they come into competition with each other, than between the species of distinct genera. We see this in the recent extension over parts of the United States of one species of swallow having caused the decrease of another species. The recent increase of the missel-thrush in parts of Scotland has caused the decrease of the song-thrush. How frequently we hear of one species of rat taking the place of another species under the most different climates! In Russia the small Asiatic cockroach has everywhere driven before it its great congener.

In Australia the imported hive-bee is rapidly exterminating the small, stingless native bee. One species of charlock has been known to supplant another species; and so in other cases. We can dimly see why the competition should be most severe between allied forms, which fill nearly the same place in the economy of nature; but probably in no one case could we precisely say why one species has been victorious over another in the great battle of life.

A corollary of the highest importance may be deduced from the foregoing remarks, namely, that the structure of every organic being is related, in the most essential yet often hidden manner, to that of all other organic beings, with which it comes into competition for food or residence, or from which it has to escape, or on which it preys. This is obvious in the structure of the teeth and talons of the tiger; and in that of the legs and claws of the parasite which clings to the hair on the tiger's body. But in the beautifully plumed seed of the dandelion, and in the flattened and fringed legs of the water-beetle, the relation seems at first confined to the elements of air and water. Yet the advantage of the plumed seeds no doubt stands in the closest relation to the land being already thickly clothed with other plants; so that the seeds may be widely distributed and fall on unoccupied ground. In the water-beetle, the structure of its legs, so well adapted for diving, allows it to compete with other aquatic insects, to hunt for its own prey, and to escape serving as prey to other animals.

The store of nutriment laid up within the seeds of many plants

seems at first sight to have no sort of relation to other plants. But from the strong growth of young plants produced from such seeds, as peas and beans, when sown in the midst of long grass, it may be suspected that the chief use of the nutriment in the seed is to favour the growth of the seedlings, whilst struggling with other plants growing vigorously all around.

Look at a plant in the midst of its range! Why does it not double or quadruple its numbers? We know that it can perfectly well withstand a little more heat or cold, dampness or dryness, for elsewhere it ranges into slightly hotter or colder, damper or drier districts. In this case we can clearly see that if we wish in imagination to give the plant the power of increasing in numbers, we should have to give it some advantage over its competitors, or over the animals which prey on it. On the confines of its geographical range, a change of constitution with respect to climate would clearly be an advantage to our plant; but we have reason to believe that only a few plants or animals range so far, that they are destroyed exclusively by the rigour of the climate. Not until we reach the extreme confines of life, in the Arctic regions or on the borders of an utter desert, will competition cease. The land may be extremely cold or dry, yet there will be competition between some few species, or between the individuals of the same species, for the warmest or dampest spots.

Hence we can see that when a plant or animal is placed in a new country, among new competitors, the conditions of its life

will generally be changed in an essential manner, although the climate may be exactly the same as in its former home. If its average numbers are to increase in its new home, we should have to modify it in a different way to what we should have had to do in its native country; for we should have to give it some advantage over a different set of competitors or enemies.

It is good thus to try in imagination to give any one species an advantage over another. Probably in no single instance should we know what to do. This ought to convince us of our ignorance on the mutual relations of all organic beings; a conviction as necessary, as it is difficult to acquire. All that we can do is to keep steadily in mind that each organic being is striving to increase in a geometrical ratio; that each, at some period of its life, during some season of the year, during each generation, or at intervals, has to struggle for life and to suffer great destruction. When we reflect on this struggle we may console ourselves with the full belief that the war of nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply.

# CHAPTER IV. NATURAL SELECTION; OR THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Natural Selection – its power compared with man's selection – its power on characters of trifling importance – its power at all ages and on both sexes – Sexual Selection – On the generality of intercrosses between individuals of the same species – Circumstances favourable and unfavourable to the results of Natural Selection, namely, intercrossing, isolation, number of individuals – Slow action – Extinction caused by Natural Selection – Divergence of Character, related to the diversity of inhabitants of any small area and to naturalisation – Action of Natural Selection, through Divergence of Character and Extinction, on the descendants from a common parent – Explains the Grouping of all organic beings – Advance in organisation – Low forms preserved – Convergence of character – Indefinite multiplication of species – Summary.

How will the struggle for existence, briefly discussed in the last chapter, act in regard to variation? Can the principle of selection, which we have seen is so potent in the hands of man, apply under nature? I think we shall see that it can act most efficiently. Let the endless number of slight variations and individual differences occurring in our domestic productions,

and, in a lesser degree, in those under nature, be borne in mind; as well as the strength of the hereditary tendency. Under domestication, it may truly be said that the whole organisation becomes in some degree plastic. But the variability, which we almost universally meet with in our domestic productions is not directly produced, as Hooker and Asa Gray have well remarked, by man; he can neither originate varieties nor prevent their occurrence; he can only preserve and accumulate such as do occur. Unintentionally he exposes organic beings to new and changing conditions of life, and variability ensues; but similar changes of conditions might and do occur under nature. Let it also be borne in mind how infinitely complex and close-fitting are the mutual relations of all organic beings to each other and to their physical conditions of life; and consequently what infinitely varied diversities of structure might be of use to each being under changing conditions of life. Can it then be thought improbable, seeing that variations useful to man have undoubtedly occurred, that other variations useful in some way to each being in the great and complex battle of life, should occur in the course of many successive generations? If such do occur, can we doubt (remembering that many more individuals are born than can possibly survive) that individuals having any advantage, however slight, over others, would have the best chance of surviving and procreating their kind? On the other hand, we may feel sure that any variation in the least degree injurious would be rigidly destroyed. This preservation of favourable individual differences

and variations, and the destruction of those which are injurious, I have called Natural Selection, or the Survival of the Fittest. Variations neither useful nor injurious would not be affected by natural selection, and would be left either a fluctuating element, as perhaps we see in certain polymorphic species, or would ultimately become fixed, owing to the nature of the organism and the nature of the conditions.

Several writers have misapprehended or objected to the term Natural Selection. Some have even imagined that natural selection induces variability, whereas it implies only the preservation of such variations as arise and are beneficial to the being under its conditions of life. No one objects to agriculturists speaking of the potent effects of man's selection; and in this case the individual differences given by nature, which man for some object selects, must of necessity first occur. Others have objected that the term selection implies conscious choice in the animals which become modified; and it has even been urged that, as plants have no volition, natural selection is not applicable to them! In the literal sense of the word, no doubt, natural selection is a false term; but who ever objected to chemists speaking of the elective affinities of the various elements? – and yet an acid cannot strictly be said to elect the base with which it in preference combines. It has been said that I speak of natural selection as an active power or Deity; but who objects to an author speaking of the attraction of gravity as ruling the movements of the planets? Every one knows what is meant and is implied by

such metaphorical expressions; and they are almost necessary for brevity. So again it is difficult to avoid personifying the word Nature; but I mean by nature, only the aggregate action and product of many natural laws, and by laws the sequence of events as ascertained by us. With a little familiarity such superficial objections will be forgotten.

We shall best understand the probable course of natural selection by taking the case of a country undergoing some slight physical change, for instance, of climate. The proportional numbers of its inhabitants will almost immediately undergo a change, and some species will probably become extinct. We may conclude, from what we have seen of the intimate and complex manner in which the inhabitants of each country are bound together, that any change in the numerical proportions of the inhabitants, independently of the change of climate itself, would seriously affect the others. If the country were open on its borders, new forms would certainly immigrate, and this would likewise seriously disturb the relations of some of the former inhabitants. Let it be remembered how powerful the influence of a single introduced tree or mammal has been shown to be. But in the case of an island, or of a country partly surrounded by barriers, into which new and better adapted forms could not freely enter, we should then have places in the economy of nature which would assuredly be better filled up if some of the original inhabitants were in some manner modified; for, had the area been open to immigration, these same places would have

been seized on by intruders. In such cases, slight modifications, which in any way favoured the individuals of any species, by better adapting them to their altered conditions, would tend to be preserved; and natural selection would have free scope for the work of improvement.

We have good reason to believe, as shown in the first chapter, that changes in the conditions of life give a tendency to increased variability; and in the foregoing cases the conditions the changed, and this would manifestly be favourable to natural selection, by affording a better chance of the occurrence of profitable variations. Unless such occur, natural selection can do nothing. Under the term of "variations," it must never be forgotten that mere individual differences are included. As man can produce a great result with his domestic animals and plants by adding up in any given direction individual differences, so could natural selection, but far more easily from having incomparably longer time for action. Nor do I believe that any great physical change, as of climate, or any unusual degree of isolation, to check immigration, is necessary in order that new and unoccupied places should be left for natural selection to fill up by improving some of the varying inhabitants. For as all the inhabitants of each country are struggling together with nicely balanced forces, extremely slight modifications in the structure or habits of one species would often give it an advantage over others; and still further modifications of the same kind would often still further increase the advantage, as long as the species continued under

the same conditions of life and profited by similar means of subsistence and defence. No country can be named in which all the native inhabitants are now so perfectly adapted to each other and to the physical conditions under which they live, that none of them could be still better adapted or improved; for in all countries, the natives have been so far conquered by naturalised productions that they have allowed some foreigners to take firm possession of the land. And as foreigners have thus in every country beaten some of the natives, we may safely conclude that the natives might have been modified with advantage, so as to have better resisted the intruders.

As man can produce, and certainly has produced, a great result by his methodical and unconscious means of selection, what may not natural selection effect? Man can act only on external and visible characters: Nature, if I may be allowed to personify the natural preservation or survival of the fittest, cares nothing for appearances, except in so far as they are useful to any being. She can act on every internal organ, on every shade of constitutional difference, on the whole machinery of life. Man selects only for his own good; Nature only for that of the being which she tends. Every selected character is fully exercised by her, as is implied by the fact of their selection. Man keeps the natives of many climates in the same country. He seldom exercises each selected character in some peculiar and fitting manner; he feeds a long and a short-beaked pigeon on the same food; he does not exercise a long-backed or long-legged quadruped

in any peculiar manner; he exposes sheep with long and short wool to the same climate; does not allow the most vigorous males to struggle for the females; he does not rigidly destroy all inferior animals, but protects during each varying season, as far as lies in his power, all his productions. He often begins his selection by some half-monstrous form, or at least by some modification prominent enough to catch the eye or to be plainly useful to him. Under nature, the slightest differences of structure or constitution may well turn the nicely-balanced scale in the struggle for life, and so be preserved. How fleeting are the wishes and efforts of man! How short his time, and consequently how poor will be his results, compared with those accumulated by Nature during whole geological periods! Can we wonder, then, that Nature's productions should be far "truer" in character than man's productions; that they should be infinitely better adapted to the most complex conditions of life, and should plainly bear the stamp of far higher workmanship?

It may metaphorically be said that natural selection is daily and hourly scrutinising, throughout the world, the slightest variations; rejecting those that are bad, preserving and adding up all that are good; silently and insensibly working, **WHENEVER AND WHEREVER OPPORTUNITY OFFERS**, at the improvement of each organic being in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of life. We see nothing of these slow changes in progress, until the hand of time has marked the long lapse of ages, and then so imperfect is our view into long-past geological

ages that we see only that the forms of life are now different from what they formerly were.

In order that any great amount of modification should be effected in a species, a variety, when once formed must again, perhaps after a long interval of time, vary or present individual differences of the same favourable nature as before; and these must again be preserved, and so onward, step by step. Seeing that individual differences of the same kind perpetually recur, this can hardly be considered as an unwarrantable assumption. But whether it is true, we can judge only by seeing how far the hypothesis accords with and explains the general phenomena of nature. On the other hand, the ordinary belief that the amount of possible variation is a strictly limited quantity, is likewise a simple assumption.

Although natural selection can act only through and for the good of each being, yet characters and structures, which we are apt to consider as of very trifling importance, may thus be acted on. When we see leaf-eating insects green, and bark-feeders mottled-grey; the alpine ptarmigan white in winter, the red-grouse the colour of heather, we must believe that these tints are of service to these birds and insects in preserving them from danger. Grouse, if not destroyed at some period of their lives, would increase in countless numbers; they are known to suffer largely from birds of prey; and hawks are guided by eyesight to their prey, – so much so that on parts of the continent persons are warned not to keep white pigeons, as being

the most liable to destruction. Hence natural selection might be effective in giving the proper colour to each kind of grouse, and in keeping that colour, when once acquired, true and constant. Nor ought we to think that the occasional destruction of an animal of any particular colour would produce little effect; we should remember how essential it is in a flock of white sheep to destroy a lamb with the faintest trace of black. We have seen how the colour of hogs, which feed on the "paint-root" in Virginia, determines whether they shall live or die. In plants, the down on the fruit and the colour of the flesh are considered by botanists as characters of the most trifling importance; yet we hear from an excellent horticulturist, Downing, that in the United States smooth-skinned fruits suffer far more from a beetle, a *Curculio*, than those with down; that purple plums suffer far more from a certain disease than yellow plums; whereas another disease attacks yellow-fleshed peaches far more than those with other coloured flesh. If, with all the aids of art, these slight differences make a great difference in cultivating the several varieties, assuredly, in a state of nature, where the trees would have to struggle with other trees and with a host of enemies, such differences would effectually settle which variety, whether a smooth or downy, a yellow or a purple-fleshed fruit, should succeed.

In looking at many small points of difference between species, which, as far as our ignorance permits us to judge, seem quite unimportant, we must not forget that climate, food, etc., have no

doubt produced some direct effect. It is also necessary to bear in mind that, owing to the law of correlation, when one part varies and the variations are accumulated through natural selection, other modifications, often of the most unexpected nature, will ensue.

As we see that those variations which, under domestication, appear at any particular period of life, tend to reappear in the offspring at the same period; for instance, in the shape, size and flavour of the seeds of the many varieties of our culinary and agricultural plants; in the caterpillar and cocoon stages of the varieties of the silkworm; in the eggs of poultry, and in the colour of the down of their chickens; in the horns of our sheep and cattle when nearly adult; so in a state of nature natural selection will be enabled to act on and modify organic beings at any age, by the accumulation of variations profitable at that age, and by their inheritance at a corresponding age. If it profit a plant to have its seeds more and more widely disseminated by the wind, I can see no greater difficulty in this being effected through natural selection, than in the cotton-planter increasing and improving by selection the down in the pods on his cotton-trees. Natural selection may modify and adapt the larva of an insect to a score of contingencies, wholly different from those which concern the mature insect; and these modifications may affect, through correlation, the structure of the adult. So, conversely, modifications in the adult may affect the structure of the larva; but in all cases natural selection will ensure that

they shall not be injurious: for if they were so, the species would become extinct.

Natural selection will modify the structure of the young in relation to the parent and of the parent in relation to the young. In social animals it will adapt the structure of each individual for the benefit of the whole community; if the community profits by the selected change. What natural selection cannot do, is to modify the structure of one species, without giving it any advantage, for the good of another species; and though statements to this effect may be found in works of natural history, I cannot find one case which will bear investigation. A structure used only once in an animal's life, if of high importance to it, might be modified to any extent by natural selection; for instance, the great jaws possessed by certain insects, used exclusively for opening the cocoon – or the hard tip to the beak of unhatched birds, used for breaking the eggs. It has been asserted, that of the best short-beaked tumbler-pigeons a greater number perish in the egg than are able to get out of it; so that fanciers assist in the act of hatching. Now, if nature had to make the beak of a full-grown pigeon very short for the bird's own advantage, the process of modification would be very slow, and there would be simultaneously the most rigorous selection of all the young birds within the egg, which had the most powerful and hardest beaks, for all with weak beaks would inevitably perish: or, more delicate and more easily broken shells might be selected, the thickness of the shell being known to vary like every other structure.

It may be well here to remark that with all beings there must be much fortuitous destruction, which can have little or no influence on the course of natural selection. For instance, a vast number of eggs or seeds are annually devoured, and these could be modified through natural selection only if they varied in some manner which protected them from their enemies. Yet many of these eggs or seeds would perhaps, if not destroyed, have yielded individuals better adapted to their conditions of life than any of those which happened to survive. So again a vast number of mature animals and plants, whether or not they be the best adapted to their conditions, must be annually destroyed by accidental causes, which would not be in the least degree mitigated by certain changes of structure or constitution which would in other ways be beneficial to the species. But let the destruction of the adults be ever so heavy, if the number which can exist in any district be not wholly kept down by such causes – or again let the destruction of eggs or seeds be so great that only a hundredth or a thousandth part are developed – yet of those which do survive, the best adapted individuals, supposing that there is any variability in a favourable direction, will tend to propagate their kind in larger numbers than the less well adapted. If the numbers be wholly kept down by the causes just indicated, as will often have been the case, natural selection will be powerless in certain beneficial directions; but this is no valid objection to its efficiency at other times and in other ways; for we are far from having any reason to suppose that many species

ever undergo modification and improvement at the same time in the same area.

### SEXUAL SELECTION.

Inasmuch as peculiarities often appear under domestication in one sex and become hereditarily attached to that sex, so no doubt it will be under nature. Thus it is rendered possible for the two sexes to be modified through natural selection in relation to different habits of life, as is sometimes the case; or for one sex to be modified in relation to the other sex, as commonly occurs. This leads me to say a few words on what I have called sexual selection. This form of selection depends, not on a struggle for existence in relation to other organic beings or to external conditions, but on a struggle between the individuals of one sex, generally the males, for the possession of the other sex. The result is not death to the unsuccessful competitor, but few or no offspring. Sexual selection is, therefore, less rigorous than natural selection. Generally, the most vigorous males, those which are best fitted for their places in nature, will leave most progeny. But in many cases victory depends not so much on general vigour, but on having special weapons, confined to the male sex. A hornless stag or spurless cock would have a poor chance of leaving numerous offspring. Sexual selection, by always allowing the victor to breed, might surely give indomitable courage, length of spur, and strength to the wing to strike in the spurred leg, in nearly the same manner as does the brutal cockfighter by the careful selection of his best cocks. How low

in the scale of nature the law of battle descends I know not; male alligators have been described as fighting, bellowing, and whirling round, like Indians in a war-dance, for the possession of the females; male salmons have been observed fighting all day long; male stag-beetles sometimes bear wounds from the huge mandibles of other males; the males of certain hymenopterous insects have been frequently seen by that inimitable observer M. Fabre, fighting for a particular female who sits by, an apparently unconcerned beholder of the struggle, and then retires with the conqueror. The war is, perhaps, severest between the males of polygamous animals, and these seem oftenest provided with special weapons. The males of carnivorous animals are already well armed; though to them and to others, special means of defence may be given through means of sexual selection, as the mane of the lion, and the hooked jaw to the male salmon; for the shield may be as important for victory as the sword or spear.

Among birds, the contest is often of a more peaceful character. All those who have attended to the subject, believe that there is the severest rivalry between the males of many species to attract, by singing, the females. The rock-thrush of Guiana, birds of paradise, and some others, congregate, and successive males display with the most elaborate care, and show off in the best manner, their gorgeous plumage; they likewise perform strange antics before the females, which, standing by as spectators, at last choose the most attractive partner. Those who have closely attended to birds in confinement well know that they

often take individual preferences and dislikes: thus Sir R. Heron has described how a pied peacock was eminently attractive to all his hen birds. I cannot here enter on the necessary details; but if man can in a short time give beauty and an elegant carriage to his bantams, according to his standard of beauty, I can see no good reason to doubt that female birds, by selecting, during thousands of generations, the most melodious or beautiful males, according to their standard of beauty, might produce a marked effect. Some well-known laws, with respect to the plumage of male and female birds, in comparison with the plumage of the young, can partly be explained through the action of sexual selection on variations occurring at different ages, and transmitted to the males alone or to both sexes at corresponding ages; but I have not space here to enter on this subject.

Thus it is, as I believe, that when the males and females of any animal have the same general habits of life, but differ in structure, colour, or ornament, such differences have been mainly caused by sexual selection: that is, by individual males having had, in successive generations, some slight advantage over other males, in their weapons, means of defence, or charms; which they have transmitted to their male offspring alone. Yet, I would not wish to attribute all sexual differences to this agency: for we see in our domestic animals peculiarities arising and becoming attached to the male sex, which apparently have not been augmented through selection by man. The tuft of hair on the breast of the wild turkey-cock cannot be of any use, and it is

doubtful whether it can be ornamental in the eyes of the female bird; indeed, had the tuft appeared under domestication it would have been called a monstrosity.

## ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE ACTION OF NATURAL SELECTION, OR THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

In order to make it clear how, as I believe, natural selection acts, I must beg permission to give one or two imaginary illustrations. Let us take the case of a wolf, which preys on various animals, securing some by craft, some by strength, and some by fleetness; and let us suppose that the fleetest prey, a deer for instance, had from any change in the country increased in numbers, or that other prey had decreased in numbers, during that season of the year when the wolf was hardest pressed for food. Under such circumstances the swiftest and slimmest wolves have the best chance of surviving, and so be preserved or selected, provided always that they retained strength to master their prey at this or some other period of the year, when they were compelled to prey on other animals. I can see no more reason to doubt that this would be the result, than that man should be able to improve the fleetness of his greyhounds by careful and methodical selection, or by that kind of unconscious selection which follows from each man trying to keep the best dogs without any thought of modifying the breed. I may add that, according to Mr. Pierce, there are two varieties of the wolf inhabiting the Catskill Mountains, in the United States, one with a light greyhound-like form, which pursues deer, and the other

more bulky, with shorter legs, which more frequently attacks the shepherd's flocks.

Even without any change in the proportional numbers of the animals on which our wolf preyed, a cub might be born with an innate tendency to pursue certain kinds of prey. Nor can this be thought very improbable; for we often observe great differences in the natural tendencies of our domestic animals; one cat, for instance, taking to catch rats, another mice; one cat, according to Mr. St. John, bringing home winged game, another hares or rabbits, and another hunting on marshy ground and almost nightly catching woodcocks or snipes. The tendency to catch rats rather than mice is known to be inherited. Now, if any slight innate change of habit or of structure benefited an individual wolf, it would have the best chance of surviving and of leaving offspring. Some of its young would probably inherit the same habits or structure, and by the repetition of this process, a new variety might be formed which would either supplant or coexist with the parent-form of wolf. Or, again, the wolves inhabiting a mountainous district, and those frequenting the lowlands, would naturally be forced to hunt different prey; and from the continued preservation of the individuals best fitted for the two sites, two varieties might slowly be formed. These varieties would cross and blend where they met; but to this subject of intercrossing we shall soon have to return. I may add, that, according to Mr. Pierce, there are two varieties of the wolf inhabiting the Catskill Mountains in the United States, one with a light greyhound-like

form, which pursues deer, and the other more bulky, with shorter legs, which more frequently attacks the shepherd's flocks.

It should be observed that in the above illustration, I speak of the slimmest individual wolves, and not of any single strongly marked variation having been preserved. In former editions of this work I sometimes spoke as if this latter alternative had frequently occurred. I saw the great importance of individual differences, and this led me fully to discuss the results of unconscious selection by man, which depends on the preservation of all the more or less valuable individuals, and on the destruction of the worst. I saw, also, that the preservation in a state of nature of any occasional deviation of structure, such as a monstrosity, would be a rare event; and that, if at first preserved, it would generally be lost by subsequent intercrossing with ordinary individuals. Nevertheless, until reading an able and valuable article in the "North British Review" (1867), I did not appreciate how rarely single variations, whether slight or strongly marked, could be perpetuated. The author takes the case of a pair of animals, producing during their lifetime two hundred offspring, of which, from various causes of destruction, only two on an average survive to pro-create their kind. This is rather an extreme estimate for most of the higher animals, but by no means so for many of the lower organisms. He then shows that if a single individual were born, which varied in some manner, giving it twice as good a chance of life as that of the other individuals, yet the chances would be strongly against its survival. Supposing

it to survive and to breed, and that half its young inherited the favourable variation; still, as the Reviewer goes on to show, the young would have only a slightly better chance of surviving and breeding; and this chance would go on decreasing in the succeeding generations. The justice of these remarks cannot, I think, be disputed. If, for instance, a bird of some kind could procure its food more easily by having its beak curved, and if one were born with its beak strongly curved, and which consequently flourished, nevertheless there would be a very poor chance of this one individual perpetuating its kind to the exclusion of the common form; but there can hardly be a doubt, judging by what we see taking place under domestication, that this result would follow from the preservation during many generations of a large number of individuals with more or less strongly curved beaks, and from the destruction of a still larger number with the straightest beaks.

It should not, however, be overlooked that certain rather strongly marked variations, which no one would rank as mere individual differences, frequently recur owing to a similar organisation being similarly acted on – of which fact numerous instances could be given with our domestic productions. In such cases, if the varying individual did not actually transmit to its offspring its newly-acquired character, it would undoubtedly transmit to them, as long as the existing conditions remained the same, a still stronger tendency to vary in the same manner. There can also be little doubt that the tendency to vary in the same

manner has often been so strong that all the individuals of the same species have been similarly modified without the aid of any form of selection. Or only a third, fifth, or tenth part of the individuals may have been thus affected, of which fact several instances could be given. Thus Graba estimates that about one-fifth of the guillemots in the Faroe Islands consist of a variety so well marked, that it was formerly ranked as a distinct species under the name of *Uria lacrymans*. In cases of this kind, if the variation were of a beneficial nature, the original form would soon be supplanted by the modified form, through the survival of the fittest.

To the effects of intercrossing in eliminating variations of all kinds, I shall have to recur; but it may be here remarked that most animals and plants keep to their proper homes, and do not needlessly wander about; we see this even with migratory birds, which almost always return to the same spot. Consequently each newly-formed variety would generally be at first local, as seems to be the common rule with varieties in a state of nature; so that similarly modified individuals would soon exist in a small body together, and would often breed together. If the new variety were successful in its battle for life, it would slowly spread from a central district, competing with and conquering the unchanged individuals on the margins of an ever-increasing circle.

It may be worth while to give another and more complex illustration of the action of natural selection. Certain plants excrete sweet juice, apparently for the sake of eliminating

something injurious from the sap: this is effected, for instance, by glands at the base of the stipules in some Leguminosae, and at the backs of the leaves of the common laurel. This juice, though small in quantity, is greedily sought by insects; but their visits do not in any way benefit the plant. Now, let us suppose that the juice or nectar was excreted from the inside of the flowers of a certain number of plants of any species. Insects in seeking the nectar would get dusted with pollen, and would often transport it from one flower to another. The flowers of two distinct individuals of the same species would thus get crossed; and the act of crossing, as can be fully proved, gives rise to vigorous seedlings, which consequently would have the best chance of flourishing and surviving. The plants which produced flowers with the largest glands or nectaries, excreting most nectar, would oftenest be visited by insects, and would oftenest be crossed; and so in the long-run would gain the upper hand and form a local variety. The flowers, also, which had their stamens and pistils placed, in relation to the size and habits of the particular insect which visited them, so as to favour in any degree the transportal of the pollen, would likewise be favoured. We might have taken the case of insects visiting flowers for the sake of collecting pollen instead of nectar; and as pollen is formed for the sole purpose of fertilisation, its destruction appears to be a simple loss to the plant; yet if a little pollen were carried, at first occasionally and then habitually, by the pollen-devouring insects from flower to flower, and a cross thus effected, although nine-tenths of the

pollen were destroyed it might still be a great gain to the plant to be thus robbed; and the individuals which produced more and more pollen, and had larger anthers, would be selected.

When our plant, by the above process long continued, had been rendered highly attractive to insects, they would, unintentionally on their part, regularly carry pollen from flower to flower; and that they do this effectually I could easily show by many striking facts. I will give only one, as likewise illustrating one step in the separation of the sexes of plants. Some holly-trees bear only male flowers, which have four stamens producing a rather small quantity of pollen, and a rudimentary pistil; other holly-trees bear only female flowers; these have a full-sized pistil, and four stamens with shrivelled anthers, in which not a grain of pollen can be detected. Having found a female tree exactly sixty yards from a male tree, I put the stigmas of twenty flowers, taken from different branches, under the microscope, and on all, without exception, there were a few pollen-grains, and on some a profusion. As the wind had set for several days from the female to the male tree, the pollen could not thus have been carried. The weather had been cold and boisterous and therefore not favourable to bees, nevertheless every female flower which I examined had been effectually fertilised by the bees, which had flown from tree to tree in search of nectar. But to return to our imaginary case; as soon as the plant had been rendered so highly attractive to insects that pollen was regularly carried from flower to flower, another process might commence. No

naturalist doubts the advantage of what has been called the "physiological division of labour;" hence we may believe that it would be advantageous to a plant to produce stamens alone in one flower or on one whole plant, and pistils alone in another flower or on another plant. In plants under culture and placed under new conditions of life, sometimes the male organs and sometimes the female organs become more or less impotent; now if we suppose this to occur in ever so slight a degree under nature, then, as pollen is already carried regularly from flower to flower, and as a more complete separation of the sexes of our plant would be advantageous on the principle of the division of labour, individuals with this tendency more and more increased, would be continually favoured or selected, until at last a complete separation of the sexes might be effected. It would take up too much space to show the various steps, through dimorphism and other means, by which the separation of the sexes in plants of various kinds is apparently now in progress; but I may add that some of the species of holly in North America are, according to Asa Gray, in an exactly intermediate condition, or, as he expresses it, are more or less dioeciously polygamous.

Let us now turn to the nectar-feeding insects; we may suppose the plant of which we have been slowly increasing the nectar by continued selection, to be a common plant; and that certain insects depended in main part on its nectar for food. I could give many facts showing how anxious bees are to save time: for instance, their habit of cutting holes and sucking the nectar

at the bases of certain flowers, which with a very little more trouble they can enter by the mouth. Bearing such facts in mind, it may be believed that under certain circumstances individual differences in the curvature or length of the proboscis, etc., too slight to be appreciated by us, might profit a bee or other insect, so that certain individuals would be able to obtain their food more quickly than others; and thus the communities to which they belonged would flourish and throw off many swarms inheriting the same peculiarities. The tubes of the corolla of the common red or incarnate clovers (*Trifolium pratense* and *incarnatum*) do not on a hasty glance appear to differ in length; yet the hive-bee can easily suck the nectar out of the incarnate clover, but not out of the common red clover, which is visited by humble-bees alone; so that whole fields of the red clover offer in vain an abundant supply of precious nectar to the hive-bee. That this nectar is much liked by the hive-bee is certain; for I have repeatedly seen, but only in the autumn, many hive-bees sucking the flowers through holes bitten in the base of the tube by humble bees. The difference in the length of the corolla in the two kinds of clover, which determines the visits of the hive-bee, must be very trifling; for I have been assured that when red clover has been mown, the flowers of the second crop are somewhat smaller, and that these are visited by many hive-bees. I do not know whether this statement is accurate; nor whether another published statement can be trusted, namely, that the Ligurian bee, which is generally considered a mere variety of the common hive-bee, and which

freely crosses with it, is able to reach and suck the nectar of the red clover. Thus, in a country where this kind of clover abounded, it might be a great advantage to the hive-bee to have a slightly longer or differently constructed proboscis. On the other hand, as the fertility of this clover absolutely depends on bees visiting the flowers, if humble-bees were to become rare in any country, it might be a great advantage to the plant to have a shorter or more deeply divided corolla, so that the hive-bees should be enabled to suck its flowers. Thus I can understand how a flower and a bee might slowly become, either simultaneously or one after the other, modified and adapted to each other in the most perfect manner, by the continued preservation of all the individuals which presented slight deviations of structure mutually favourable to each other.

I am well aware that this doctrine of natural selection, exemplified in the above imaginary instances, is open to the same objections which were first urged against Sir Charles Lyell's noble views on "the modern changes of the earth, as illustrative of geology;" but we now seldom hear the agencies which we see still at work, spoken of as trifling and insignificant, when used in explaining the excavation of the deepest valleys or the formation of long lines of inland cliffs. Natural selection acts only by the preservation and accumulation of small inherited modifications, each profitable to the preserved being; and as modern geology has almost banished such views as the excavation of a great valley by a single diluvial wave, so will natural selection banish the

belief of the continued creation of new organic beings, or of any great and sudden modification in their structure.

### ON THE INTERCROSSING OF INDIVIDUALS.

I must here introduce a short digression. In the case of animals and plants with separated sexes, it is of course obvious that two individuals must always (with the exception of the curious and not well understood cases of parthenogenesis) unite for each birth; but in the case of hermaphrodites this is far from obvious. Nevertheless there is reason to believe that with all hermaphrodites two individuals, either occasionally or habitually, concur for the reproduction of their kind. This view was long ago doubtfully suggested by Sprengel, Knight and Kolreuter. We shall presently see its importance; but I must here treat the subject with extreme brevity, though I have the materials prepared for an ample discussion. All vertebrate animals, all insects and some other large groups of animals, pair for each birth. Modern research has much diminished the number of supposed hermaphrodites and of real hermaphrodites a large number pair; that is, two individuals regularly unite for reproduction, which is all that concerns us. But still there are many hermaphrodite animals which certainly do not habitually pair, and a vast majority of plants are hermaphrodites. What reason, it may be asked, is there for supposing in these cases that two individuals ever concur in reproduction? As it is impossible here to enter on details, I must trust to some general considerations alone.

In the first place, I have collected so large a body of facts, and made so many experiments, showing, in accordance with the almost universal belief of breeders, that with animals and plants a cross between different varieties, or between individuals of the same variety but of another strain, gives vigour and fertility to the offspring; and on the other hand, that CLOSE interbreeding diminishes vigour and fertility; that these facts alone incline me to believe that it is a general law of nature that no organic being fertilises itself for a perpetuity of generations; but that a cross with another individual is occasionally – perhaps at long intervals of time – indispensable.

On the belief that this is a law of nature, we can, I think, understand several large classes of facts, such as the following, which on any other view are inexplicable. Every hybridizer knows how unfavourable exposure to wet is to the fertilisation of a flower, yet what a multitude of flowers have their anthers and stigmas fully exposed to the weather! If an occasional cross be indispensable, notwithstanding that the plant's own anthers and pistil stand so near each other as almost to ensure self-fertilisation, the fullest freedom for the entrance of pollen from another individual will explain the above state of exposure of the organs. Many flowers, on the other hand, have their organs of fructification closely enclosed, as in the great papilionaceous or pea-family; but these almost invariably present beautiful and curious adaptations in relation to the visits of insects. So necessary are the visits of bees to many papilionaceous

flowers, that their fertility is greatly diminished if these visits be prevented. Now, it is scarcely possible for insects to fly from flower to flower, and not to carry pollen from one to the other, to the great good of the plant. Insects act like a camel-hair pencil, and it is sufficient, to ensure fertilisation, just to touch with the same brush the anthers of one flower and then the stigma of another; but it must not be supposed that bees would thus produce a multitude of hybrids between distinct species; for if a plant's own pollen and that from another species are placed on the same stigma, the former is so prepotent that it invariably and completely destroys, as has been shown by Gartner, the influence of the foreign pollen.

When the stamens of a flower suddenly spring towards the pistil, or slowly move one after the other towards it, the contrivance seems adapted solely to ensure self-fertilisation; and no doubt it is useful for this end: but the agency of insects is often required to cause the stamens to spring forward, as Kolreuter has shown to be the case with the barberry; and in this very genus, which seems to have a special contrivance for self-fertilisation, it is well known that, if closely-allied forms or varieties are planted near each other, it is hardly possible to raise pure seedlings, so largely do they naturally cross. In numerous other cases, far from self-fertilisation being favoured, there are special contrivances which effectually prevent the stigma receiving pollen from its own flower, as I could show from the works of Sprengel and others, as well as from my own

observations: for instance, in *Lobelia fulgens*, there is a really beautiful and elaborate contrivance by which all the infinitely numerous pollen-granules are swept out of the conjoined anthers of each flower, before the stigma of that individual flower is ready to receive them; and as this flower is never visited, at least in my garden, by insects, it never sets a seed, though by placing pollen from one flower on the stigma of another, I raise plenty of seedlings. Another species of *Lobelia*, which is visited by bees, seeds freely in my garden. In very many other cases, though there is no special mechanical contrivance to prevent the stigma receiving pollen from the same flower, yet, as Sprengel, and more recently Hildebrand and others have shown, and as I can confirm, either the anthers burst before the stigma is ready for fertilisation, or the stigma is ready before the pollen of that flower is ready, so that these so-named dichogamous plants have in fact separated sexes, and must habitually be crossed. So it is with the reciprocally dimorphic and trimorphic plants previously alluded to. How strange are these facts! How strange that the pollen and stigmatic surface of the same flower, though placed so close together, as if for the very purpose of self-fertilisation, should be in so many cases mutually useless to each other! How simply are these facts explained on the view of an occasional cross with a distinct individual being advantageous or indispensable!

If several varieties of the cabbage, radish, onion, and of some other plants, be allowed to seed near each other, a large majority of the seedlings thus raised turn out, as I found, mongrels: for

instance, I raised 233 seedling cabbages from some plants of different varieties growing near each other, and of these only 78 were true to their kind, and some even of these were not perfectly true. Yet the pistil of each cabbage-flower is surrounded not only by its own six stamens but by those of the many other flowers on the same plant; and the pollen of each flower readily gets on its stigma without insect agency; for I have found that plants carefully protected from insects produce the full number of pods. How, then, comes it that such a vast number of the seedlings are mongrelized? It must arise from the pollen of a distinct VARIETY having a prepotent effect over the flower's own pollen; and that this is part of the general law of good being derived from the intercrossing of distinct individuals of the same species. When distinct SPECIES are crossed the case is reversed, for a plant's own pollen is always prepotent over foreign pollen; but to this subject we shall return in a future chapter.

In the case of a large tree covered with innumerable flowers, it may be objected that pollen could seldom be carried from tree to tree, and at most only from flower to flower on the same tree; and flowers on the same tree can be considered as distinct individuals only in a limited sense. I believe this objection to be valid, but that nature has largely provided against it by giving to trees a strong tendency to bear flowers with separated sexes. When the sexes are separated, although the male and female flowers may be produced on the same tree, pollen must be regularly carried from flower to flower; and this will give a better chance of pollen

being occasionally carried from tree to tree. That trees belonging to all orders have their sexes more often separated than other plants, I find to be the case in this country; and at my request Dr. Hooker tabulated the trees of New Zealand, and Dr. Asa Gray those of the United States, and the result was as I anticipated. On the other hand, Dr. Hooker informs me that the rule does not hold good in Australia: but if most of the Australian trees are dichogamous, the same result would follow as if they bore flowers with separated sexes. I have made these few remarks on trees simply to call attention to the subject.

Turning for a brief space to animals: various terrestrial species are hermaphrodites, such as the land-mollusca and earth-worms; but these all pair. As yet I have not found a single terrestrial animal which can fertilise itself. This remarkable fact, which offers so strong a contrast with terrestrial plants, is intelligible on the view of an occasional cross being indispensable; for owing to the nature of the fertilising element there are no means, analogous to the action of insects and of the wind with plants, by which an occasional cross could be effected with terrestrial animals without the concurrence of two individuals. Of aquatic animals, there are many self-fertilising hermaphrodites; but here the currents of water offer an obvious means for an occasional cross. As in the case of flowers, I have as yet failed, after consultation with one of the highest authorities, namely, Professor Huxley, to discover a single hermaphrodite animal with the organs of reproduction so perfectly enclosed that

access from without, and the occasional influence of a distinct individual, can be shown to be physically impossible. Cirripedes long appeared to me to present, under this point of view, a case of great difficulty; but I have been enabled, by a fortunate chance, to prove that two individuals, though both are self-fertilising hermaphrodites, do sometimes cross.

It must have struck most naturalists as a strange anomaly that, both with animals and plants, some species of the same family and even of the same genus, though agreeing closely with each other in their whole organisation, are hermaphrodites, and some unisexual. But if, in fact, all hermaphrodites do occasionally intercross, the difference between them and unisexual species is, as far as function is concerned, very small.

From these several considerations and from the many special facts which I have collected, but which I am unable here to give, it appears that with animals and plants an occasional intercross between distinct individuals is a very general, if not universal, law of nature.

#### CIRCUMSTANCES FAVOURABLE FOR THE PRODUCTION OF NEW FORMS THROUGH NATURAL SELECTION.

This is an extremely intricate subject. A great amount of variability, under which term individual differences are always included, will evidently be favourable. A large number of individuals, by giving a better chance within any given period for the appearance of profitable variations, will compensate

for a lesser amount of variability in each individual, and is, I believe, a highly important element of success. Though nature grants long periods of time for the work of natural selection, she does not grant an indefinite period; for as all organic beings are striving to seize on each place in the economy of nature, if any one species does not become modified and improved in a corresponding degree with its competitors it will be exterminated. Unless favourable variations be inherited by some at least of the offspring, nothing can be effected by natural selection. The tendency to reversion may often check or prevent the work; but as this tendency has not prevented man from forming by selection numerous domestic races, why should it prevail against natural selection?

In the case of methodical selection, a breeder selects for some definite object, and if the individuals be allowed freely to intercross, his work will completely fail. But when many men, without intending to alter the breed, have a nearly common standard of perfection, and all try to procure and breed from the best animals, improvement surely but slowly follows from this unconscious process of selection, notwithstanding that there is no separation of selected individuals. Thus it will be under nature; for within a confined area, with some place in the natural polity not perfectly occupied, all the individuals varying in the right direction, though in different degrees, will tend to be preserved. But if the area be large, its several districts will almost certainly present different conditions of life; and then, if the same species

undergoes modification in different districts, the newly formed varieties will intercross on the confines of each. But we shall see in the sixth chapter that intermediate varieties, inhabiting intermediate districts, will in the long run generally be supplanted by one of the adjoining varieties. Intercrossing will chiefly affect those animals which unite for each birth and wander much, and which do not breed at a very quick rate. Hence with animals of this nature, for instance birds, varieties will generally be confined to separated countries; and this I find to be the case. With hermaphrodite organisms which cross only occasionally, and likewise with animals which unite for each birth, but which wander little and can increase at a rapid rate, a new and improved variety might be quickly formed on any one spot, and might there maintain itself in a body and afterward spread, so that the individuals of the new variety would chiefly cross together. On this principle nurserymen always prefer saving seed from a large body of plants, as the chance of intercrossing is thus lessened.

Even with animals which unite for each birth, and which do not propagate rapidly, we must not assume that free intercrossing would always eliminate the effects of natural selection; for I can bring forward a considerable body of facts showing that within the same area two varieties of the same animal may long remain distinct, from haunting different stations, from breeding at slightly different seasons, or from the individuals of each variety preferring to pair together.

Intercrossing plays a very important part in nature by keeping

the individuals of the same species, or of the same variety, true and uniform in character. It will obviously thus act far more efficiently with those animals which unite for each birth; but, as already stated, we have reason to believe that occasional intercrosses take place with all animals and plants. Even if these take place only at long intervals of time, the young thus produced will gain so much in vigour and fertility over the offspring from long-continued self-fertilisation, that they will have a better chance of surviving and propagating their kind; and thus in the long run the influence of crosses, even at rare intervals, will be great. With respect to organic beings extremely low in the scale, which do not propagate sexually, nor conjugate, and which cannot possibly intercross, uniformity of character can be retained by them under the same conditions of life, only through the principle of inheritance, and through natural selection which will destroy any individuals departing from the proper type. If the conditions of life change and the form undergoes modification, uniformity of character can be given to the modified offspring, solely by natural selection preserving similar favourable variations.

Isolation also is an important element in the modification of species through natural selection. In a confined or isolated area, if not very large, the organic and inorganic conditions of life will generally be almost uniform; so that natural selection will tend to modify all the varying individuals of the same species in the same manner. Intercrossing with the inhabitants of the

surrounding districts, will also be thus prevented. Moritz Wagner has lately published an interesting essay on this subject, and has shown that the service rendered by isolation in preventing crosses between newly-formed varieties is probably greater even than I supposed. But from reasons already assigned I can by no means agree with this naturalist, that migration and isolation are necessary elements for the formation of new species. The importance of isolation is likewise great in preventing, after any physical change in the conditions, such as of climate, elevation of the land, etc., the immigration of better adapted organisms; and thus new places in the natural economy of the district will be left open to be filled up by the modification of the old inhabitants. Lastly, isolation will give time for a new variety to be improved at a slow rate; and this may sometimes be of much importance. If, however, an isolated area be very small, either from being surrounded by barriers, or from having very peculiar physical conditions, the total number of the inhabitants will be small; and this will retard the production of new species through natural selection, by decreasing the chances of favourable variations arising.

The mere lapse of time by itself does nothing, either for or against natural selection. I state this because it has been erroneously asserted that the element of time has been assumed by me to play an all-important part in modifying species, as if all the forms of life were necessarily undergoing change through some innate law. Lapse of time is only so far important, and

its importance in this respect is great, that it gives a better chance of beneficial variations arising and of their being selected, accumulated, and fixed. It likewise tends to increase the direct action of the physical conditions of life, in relation to the constitution of each organism.

If we turn to nature to test the truth of these remarks, and look at any small isolated area, such as an oceanic island, although the number of the species inhabiting it is small, as we shall see in our chapter on Geographical Distribution; yet of these species a very large proportion are endemic, – that is, have been produced there and nowhere else in the world. Hence an oceanic island at first sight seems to have been highly favourable for the production of new species. But we may thus deceive ourselves, for to ascertain whether a small isolated area, or a large open area like a continent, has been most favourable for the production of new organic forms, we ought to make the comparison within equal times; and this we are incapable of doing.

Although isolation is of great importance in the production of new species, on the whole I am inclined to believe that largeness of area is still more important, especially for the production of species which shall prove capable of enduring for a long period, and of spreading widely. Throughout a great and open area, not only will there be a better chance of favourable variations, arising from the large number of individuals of the same species there supported, but the conditions of life are much more complex from the large number of already existing species; and if some of

these many species become modified and improved, others will have to be improved in a corresponding degree, or they will be exterminated. Each new form, also, as soon as it has been much improved, will be able to spread over the open and continuous area, and will thus come into competition with many other forms. Moreover, great areas, though now continuous, will often, owing to former oscillations of level, have existed in a broken condition, so that the good effects of isolation will generally, to a certain extent, have concurred. Finally, I conclude that, although small isolated areas have been in some respects highly favourable for the production of new species, yet that the course of modification will generally have been more rapid on large areas; and what is more important, that the new forms produced on large areas, which already have been victorious over many competitors, will be those that will spread most widely, and will give rise to the greatest number of new varieties and species. They will thus play a more important part in the changing history of the organic world.

In accordance with this view, we can, perhaps, understand some facts which will be again alluded to in our chapter on Geographical Distribution; for instance, the fact of the productions of the smaller continent of Australia now yielding before those of the larger Europaeo-Asiatic area. Thus, also, it is that continental productions have everywhere become so largely naturalised on islands. On a small island, the race for life will have been less severe, and there will have been less modification

and less extermination. Hence, we can understand how it is that the flora of Madeira, according to Oswald Heer, resembles to a certain extent the extinct tertiary flora of Europe. All fresh water basins, taken together, make a small area compared with that of the sea or of the land. Consequently, the competition between fresh water productions will have been less severe than elsewhere; new forms will have been more slowly produced, and old forms more slowly exterminated. And it is in fresh water basins that we find seven genera of Ganoid fishes, remnants of a once preponderant order: and in fresh water we find some of the most anomalous forms now known in the world, as the *Ornithorhynchus* and *Lepidosiren*, which, like fossils, connect to a certain extent orders at present widely separated in the natural scale. These anomalous forms may be called living fossils; they have endured to the present day, from having inhabited a confined area, and from having been exposed to less varied, and therefore less severe, competition.

To sum up, as far as the extreme intricacy of the subject permits, the circumstances favourable and unfavourable for the production of new species through natural selection. I conclude that for terrestrial productions a large continental area, which has undergone many oscillations of level, will have been the most favourable for the production of many new forms of life, fitted to endure for a long time and to spread widely. While the area existed as a continent the inhabitants will have been numerous in individuals and kinds, and will have been subjected to severe

competition. When converted by subsidence into large separate islands there will still have existed many individuals of the same species on each island: intercrossing on the confines of the range of each new species will have been checked: after physical changes of any kind immigration will have been prevented, so that new places in the polity of each island will have had to be filled up by the modification of the old inhabitants; and time will have been allowed for the varieties in each to become well modified and perfected. When, by renewed elevation, the islands were reconverted into a continental area, there will again have been very severe competition; the most favoured or improved varieties will have been enabled to spread; there will have been much extinction of the less improved forms, and the relative proportional numbers of the various inhabitants of the reunited continent will again have been changed; and again there will have been a fair field for natural selection to improve still further the inhabitants, and thus to produce new species.

That natural selection generally act with extreme slowness I fully admit. It can act only when there are places in the natural polity of a district which can be better occupied by the modification of some of its existing inhabitants. The occurrence of such places will often depend on physical changes, which generally take place very slowly, and on the immigration of better adapted forms being prevented. As some few of the old inhabitants become modified the mutual relations of others will often be disturbed; and this will create new places, ready to be

filled up by better adapted forms; but all this will take place very slowly. Although all the individuals of the same species differ in some slight degree from each other, it would often be long before differences of the right nature in various parts of the organisation might occur. The result would often be greatly retarded by free intercrossing. Many will exclaim that these several causes are amply sufficient to neutralise the power of natural selection. I do not believe so. But I do believe that natural selection will generally act very slowly, only at long intervals of time, and only on a few of the inhabitants of the same region. I further believe that these slow, intermittent results accord well with what geology tells us of the rate and manner at which the inhabitants of the world have changed.

Slow though the process of selection may be, if feeble man can do much by artificial selection, I can see no limit to the amount of change, to the beauty and complexity of the coadaptations between all organic beings, one with another and with their physical conditions of life, which may have been effected in the long course of time through nature's power of selection, that is by the survival of the fittest.

#### EXTINCTION CAUSED BY NATURAL SELECTION.

This subject will be more fully discussed in our chapter on Geology; but it must here be alluded to from being intimately connected with natural selection. Natural selection acts solely through the preservation of variations in some way advantageous, which consequently endure. Owing to the high geometrical rate

of increase of all organic beings, each area is already fully stocked with inhabitants, and it follows from this, that as the favoured forms increase in number, so, generally, will the less favoured decrease and become rare. Rarity, as geology tells us, is the precursor to extinction. We can see that any form which is represented by few individuals will run a good chance of utter extinction, during great fluctuations in the nature or the seasons, or from a temporary increase in the number of its enemies. But we may go further than this; for as new forms are produced, unless we admit that specific forms can go on indefinitely increasing in number, many old forms must become extinct. That the number of specific forms has not indefinitely increased, geology plainly tells us; and we shall presently attempt to show why it is that the number of species throughout the world has not become immeasurably great.

We have seen that the species which are most numerous in individuals have the best chance of producing favourable variations within any given period. We have evidence of this, in the facts stated in the second chapter, showing that it is the common and diffused or dominant species which offer the greatest number of recorded varieties. Hence, rare species will be less quickly modified or improved within any given period; they will consequently be beaten in the race for life by the modified and improved descendants of the commoner species.

From these several considerations I think it inevitably follows, that as new species in the course of time are formed through

natural selection, others will become rarer and rarer, and finally extinct. The forms which stand in closest competition with those undergoing modification and improvement, will naturally suffer most. And we have seen in the chapter on the Struggle for Existence that it is the most closely-allied forms, – varieties of the same species, and species of the same genus or related genera, – which, from having nearly the same structure, constitution and habits, generally come into the severest competition with each other. Consequently, each new variety or species, during the progress of its formation, will generally press hardest on its nearest kindred, and tend to exterminate them. We see the same process of extermination among our domesticated productions, through the selection of improved forms by man. Many curious instances could be given showing how quickly new breeds of cattle, sheep and other animals, and varieties of flowers, take the place of older and inferior kinds. In Yorkshire, it is historically known that the ancient black cattle were displaced by the long-horns, and that these "were swept away by the short-horns" (I quote the words of an agricultural writer) "as if by some murderous pestilence."

#### DIVERGENCE OF CHARACTER.

The principle, which I have designated by this term, is of high importance, and explains, as I believe, several important facts. In the first place, varieties, even strongly-marked ones, though having somewhat of the character of species – as is shown by the hopeless doubts in many cases how to rank them – yet certainly

differ far less from each other than do good and distinct species. Nevertheless according to my view, varieties are species in the process of formation, or are, as I have called them, incipient species. How, then, does the lesser difference between varieties become augmented into the greater difference between species? That this does habitually happen, we must infer from most of the innumerable species throughout nature presenting well-marked differences; whereas varieties, the supposed prototypes and parents of future well-marked species, present slight and ill-defined differences. Mere chance, as we may call it, might cause one variety to differ in some character from its parents, and the offspring of this variety again to differ from its parent in the very same character and in a greater degree; but this alone would never account for so habitual and large a degree of difference as that between the species of the same genus.

As has always been my practice, I have sought light on this head from our domestic productions. We shall here find something analogous. It will be admitted that the production of races so different as short-horn and Hereford cattle, race and cart horses, the several breeds of pigeons, etc., could never have been effected by the mere chance accumulation of similar variations during many successive generations. In practice, a fancier is, for instance, struck by a pigeon having a slightly shorter beak; another fancier is struck by a pigeon having a rather longer beak; and on the acknowledged principle that "fanciers do not and will not admire a medium standard, but like extremes," they

both go on (as has actually occurred with the sub-breeds of the tumbler-pigeon) choosing and breeding from birds with longer and longer beaks, or with shorter and shorter beaks. Again, we may suppose that at an early period of history, the men of one nation or district required swifter horses, while those of another required stronger and bulkier horses. The early differences would be very slight; but, in the course of time, from the continued selection of swifter horses in the one case, and of stronger ones in the other, the differences would become greater, and would be noted as forming two sub-breeds. Ultimately after the lapse of centuries, these sub-breeds would become converted into two well-established and distinct breeds. As the differences became greater, the inferior animals with intermediate characters, being neither very swift nor very strong, would not have been used for breeding, and will thus have tended to disappear. Here, then, we see in man's productions the action of what may be called the principle of divergence, causing differences, at first barely appreciable, steadily to increase, and the breeds to diverge in character, both from each other and from their common parent.

But how, it may be asked, can any analogous principle apply in nature? I believe it can and does apply most efficiently (though it was a long time before I saw how), from the simple circumstance that the more diversified the descendants from any one species become in structure, constitution, and habits, by so much will they be better enabled to seize on many and widely diversified places in the polity of nature, and so be enabled to increase in

numbers.

We can clearly discern this in the case of animals with simple habits. Take the case of a carnivorous quadruped, of which the number that can be supported in any country has long ago arrived at its full average. If its natural power of increase be allowed to act, it can succeed in increasing (the country not undergoing any change in conditions) only by its varying descendants seizing on places at present occupied by other animals: some of them, for instance, being enabled to feed on new kinds of prey, either dead or alive; some inhabiting new stations, climbing trees, frequenting water, and some perhaps becoming less carnivorous. The more diversified in habits and structure the descendants of our carnivorous animals become, the more places they will be enabled to occupy. What applies to one animal will apply throughout all time to all animals – that is, if they vary – for otherwise natural selection can effect nothing. So it will be with plants. It has been experimentally proved, that if a plot of ground be sown with one species of grass, and a similar plot be sown with several distinct genera of grasses, a greater number of plants and a greater weight of dry herbage can be raised in the latter than in the former case. The same has been found to hold good when one variety and several mixed varieties of wheat have been sown on equal spaces of ground. Hence, if any one species of grass were to go on varying, and the varieties were continually selected which differed from each other in the same manner, though in a very slight degree, as do the distinct species and genera of grasses,

a greater number of individual plants of this species, including its modified descendants, would succeed in living on the same piece of ground. And we know that each species and each variety of grass is annually sowing almost countless seeds; and is thus striving, as it may be said, to the utmost to increase in number. Consequently, in the course of many thousand generations, the most distinct varieties of any one species of grass would have the best chance of succeeding and of increasing in numbers, and thus of supplanting the less distinct varieties; and varieties, when rendered very distinct from each other, take the rank of species.

The truth of the principle that the greatest amount of life can be supported by great diversification of structure, is seen under many natural circumstances. In an extremely small area, especially if freely open to immigration, and where the contest between individual and individual must be very severe, we always find great diversity in its inhabitants. For instance, I found that a piece of turf, three feet by four in size, which had been exposed for many years to exactly the same conditions, supported twenty species of plants, and these belonged to eighteen genera and to eight orders, which shows how much these plants differed from each other. So it is with the plants and insects on small and uniform islets: also in small ponds of fresh water. Farmers find that they can raise more food by a rotation of plants belonging to the most different orders: nature follows what may be called a simultaneous rotation. Most of the animals and plants which live close round any small piece of ground, could live on it

(supposing its nature not to be in any way peculiar), and may be said to be striving to the utmost to live there; but, it is seen, that where they come into the closest competition, the advantages of diversification of structure, with the accompanying differences of habit and constitution, determine that the inhabitants, which thus jostle each other most closely, shall, as a general rule, belong to what we call different genera and orders.

The same principle is seen in the naturalisation of plants through man's agency in foreign lands. It might have been expected that the plants which would succeed in becoming naturalised in any land would generally have been closely allied to the indigenes; for these are commonly looked at as specially created and adapted for their own country. It might also, perhaps, have been expected that naturalised plants would have belonged to a few groups more especially adapted to certain stations in their new homes. But the case is very different; and Alph. de Candolle has well remarked, in his great and admirable work, that floras gain by naturalisation, proportionally with the number of the native genera and species, far more in new genera than in new species. To give a single instance: in the last edition of Dr. Asa Gray's "Manual of the Flora of the Northern United States," 260 naturalised plants are enumerated, and these belong to 162 genera. We thus see that these naturalised plants are of a highly diversified nature. They differ, moreover, to a large extent, from the indigenes, for out of the 162 naturalised genera, no less than 100 genera are not there indigenous, and thus a large proportional

addition is made to the genera now living in the United States.

By considering the nature of the plants or animals which have in any country struggled successfully with the indigenes, and have there become naturalised, we may gain some crude idea in what manner some of the natives would have had to be modified in order to gain an advantage over their compatriots; and we may at least infer that diversification of structure, amounting to new generic differences, would be profitable to them.

The advantage of diversification of structure in the inhabitants of the same region is, in fact, the same as that of the physiological division of labour in the organs of the same individual body – a subject so well elucidated by Milne Edwards. No physiologist doubts that a stomach by being adapted to digest vegetable matter alone, or flesh alone, draws most nutriment from these substances. So in the general economy of any land, the more widely and perfectly the animals and plants are diversified for different habits of life, so will a greater number of individuals be capable of there supporting themselves. A set of animals, with their organisation but little diversified, could hardly compete with a set more perfectly diversified in structure. It may be doubted, for instance, whether the Australian marsupials, which are divided into groups differing but little from each other, and feebly representing, as Mr. Waterhouse and others have remarked, our carnivorous, ruminant, and rodent mammals, could successfully compete with these well-developed orders. In the Australian mammals, we see the process of diversification in

an early and incomplete stage of development.

## THE PROBABLE EFFECTS OF THE ACTION OF NATURAL SELECTION THROUGH DIVERGENCE OF CHARACTER AND EXTINCTION, ON THE DESCENDANTS OF A COMMON ANCESTOR.

After the foregoing discussion, which has been much compressed, we may assume that the modified descendants of any one species will succeed so much the better as they become more diversified in structure, and are thus enabled to encroach on places occupied by other beings. Now let us see how this principle of benefit being derived from divergence of character, combined with the principles of natural selection and of extinction, tends to act.

The accompanying diagram will aid us in understanding this rather perplexing subject. Let A to L represent the species of a genus large in its own country; these species are supposed to resemble each other in unequal degrees, as is so generally the case in nature, and as is represented in the diagram by the letters standing at unequal distances. I have said a large genus, because as we saw in the second chapter, on an average more species vary in large genera than in small genera; and the varying species of the large genera present a greater number of varieties. We have, also, seen that the species, which are the commonest and most widely-diffused, vary more than do the rare and restricted species. Let (A) be a common, widely-diffused, and varying species, belonging to a genus large in

its own country. The branching and diverging dotted lines of unequal lengths proceeding from (A), may represent its varying offspring. The variations are supposed to be extremely slight, but of the most diversified nature; they are not supposed all to appear simultaneously, but often after long intervals of time; nor are they all supposed to endure for equal periods. Only those variations which are in some way profitable will be preserved or naturally selected. And here the importance of the principle of benefit derived from divergence of character comes in; for this will generally lead to the most different or divergent variations (represented by the outer dotted lines) being preserved and accumulated by natural selection. When a dotted line reaches one of the horizontal lines, and is there marked by a small numbered letter, a sufficient amount of variation is supposed to have been accumulated to form it into a fairly well-marked variety, such as would be thought worthy of record in a systematic work.

The intervals between the horizontal lines in the diagram, may represent each a thousand or more generations. After a thousand generations, species (A) is supposed to have produced two fairly well-marked varieties, namely a<sub>1</sub> and m<sub>1</sub>. These two varieties will generally still be exposed to the same conditions which made their parents variable, and the tendency to variability is in itself hereditary; consequently they will likewise tend to vary, and commonly in nearly the same manner as did their parents. Moreover, these two varieties, being only slightly modified forms, will tend to inherit those advantages which made their

parent (A) more numerous than most of the other inhabitants of the same country; they will also partake of those more general advantages which made the genus to which the parent-species belonged, a large genus in its own country. And all these circumstances are favourable to the production of new varieties.

If, then, these two varieties be variable, the most divergent of their variations will generally be preserved during the next thousand generations. And after this interval, variety a1 is supposed in the diagram to have produced variety a2, which will, owing to the principle of divergence, differ more from (A) than did variety a1. Variety m1 is supposed to have produced two varieties, namely m2 and s2, differing from each other, and more considerably from their common parent (A). We may continue the process by similar steps for any length of time; some of the varieties, after each thousand generations, producing only a single variety, but in a more and more modified condition, some producing two or three varieties, and some failing to produce any. Thus the varieties or modified descendants of the common parent (A), will generally go on increasing in number and diverging in character. In the diagram the process is represented up to the ten-thousandth generation, and under a condensed and simplified form up to the fourteen-thousandth generation.

But I must here remark that I do not suppose that the process ever goes on so regularly as is represented in the diagram, though in itself made somewhat irregular, nor that it goes on continuously; it is far more probable that each form

remains for long periods unaltered, and then again undergoes modification. Nor do I suppose that the most divergent varieties are invariably preserved: a medium form may often long endure, and may or may not produce more than one modified descendant; for natural selection will always act according to the nature of the places which are either unoccupied or not perfectly occupied by other beings; and this will depend on infinitely complex relations. But as a general rule, the more diversified in structure the descendants from any one species can be rendered, the more places they will be enabled to seize on, and the more their modified progeny will increase. In our diagram the line of succession is broken at regular intervals by small numbered letters marking the successive forms which have become sufficiently distinct to be recorded as varieties. But these breaks are imaginary, and might have been inserted anywhere, after intervals long enough to allow the accumulation of a considerable amount of divergent variation.

As all the modified descendants from a common and widely-diffused species, belonging to a large genus, will tend to partake of the same advantages which made their parent successful in life, they will generally go on multiplying in number as well as diverging in character: this is represented in the diagram by the several divergent branches proceeding from (A). The modified offspring from the later and more highly improved branches in the lines of descent, will, it is probable, often take the place of, and so destroy, the earlier and less improved branches: this is

represented in the diagram by some of the lower branches not reaching to the upper horizontal lines. In some cases no doubt the process of modification will be confined to a single line of descent, and the number of modified descendants will not be increased; although the amount of divergent modification may have been augmented. This case would be represented in the diagram, if all the lines proceeding from (A) were removed, excepting that from a1 to a10. In the same way the English racehorse and English pointer have apparently both gone on slowly diverging in character from their original stocks, without either having given off any fresh branches or races.

After ten thousand generations, species (A) is supposed to have produced three forms, a10, f10, and m10, which, from having diverged in character during the successive generations, will have come to differ largely, but perhaps unequally, from each other and from their common parent. If we suppose the amount of change between each horizontal line in our diagram to be excessively small, these three forms may still be only well-marked varieties; but we have only to suppose the steps in the process of modification to be more numerous or greater in amount, to convert these three forms into doubtful or at least into well-defined species: thus the diagram illustrates the steps by which the small differences distinguishing varieties are increased into the larger differences distinguishing species. By continuing the same process for a greater number of generations (as shown in the diagram in a condensed and simplified manner), we get

eight species, marked by the letters between a14 and m14, all descended from (A). Thus, as I believe, species are multiplied and genera are formed.

In a large genus it is probable that more than one species would vary. In the diagram I have assumed that a second species (I) has produced, by analogous steps, after ten thousand generations, either two well-marked varieties (w10 and z10) or two species, according to the amount of change supposed to be represented between the horizontal lines. After fourteen thousand generations, six new species, marked by the letters n14 to z14, are supposed to have been produced. In any genus, the species which are already very different in character from each other, will generally tend to produce the greatest number of modified descendants; for these will have the best chance of seizing on new and widely different places in the polity of nature: hence in the diagram I have chosen the extreme species (A), and the nearly extreme species (I), as those which have largely varied, and have given rise to new varieties and species. The other nine species (marked by capital letters) of our original genus, may for long but unequal periods continue to transmit unaltered descendants; and this is shown in the diagram by the dotted lines unequally prolonged upwards.

But during the process of modification, represented in the diagram, another of our principles, namely that of extinction, will have played an important part. As in each fully stocked country natural selection necessarily acts by the selected form

having some advantage in the struggle for life over other forms, there will be a constant tendency in the improved descendants of any one species to supplant and exterminate in each stage of descent their predecessors and their original progenitor. For it should be remembered that the competition will generally be most severe between those forms which are most nearly related to each other in habits, constitution and structure. Hence all the intermediate forms between the earlier and later states, that is between the less and more improved states of a the same species, as well as the original parent-species itself, will generally tend to become extinct. So it probably will be with many whole collateral lines of descent, which will be conquered by later and improved lines. If, however, the modified offspring of a species get into some distinct country, or become quickly adapted to some quite new station, in which offspring and progenitor do not come into competition, both may continue to exist.

If, then, our diagram be assumed to represent a considerable amount of modification, species (A) and all the earlier varieties will have become extinct, being replaced by eight new species (a<sub>14</sub> to m<sub>14</sub>); and species (I) will be replaced by six (n<sub>14</sub> to z<sub>14</sub>) new species.

But we may go further than this. The original species of our genus were supposed to resemble each other in unequal degrees, as is so generally the case in nature; species (A) being more nearly related to B, C, and D than to the other species; and species (I) more to G, H, K, L, than to the others. These two

species (A and I), were also supposed to be very common and widely diffused species, so that they must originally have had some advantage over most of the other species of the genus. Their modified descendants, fourteen in number at the fourteen-thousandth generation, will probably have inherited some of the same advantages: they have also been modified and improved in a diversified manner at each stage of descent, so as to have become adapted to many related places in the natural economy of their country. It seems, therefore, extremely probable that they will have taken the places of, and thus exterminated, not only their parents (A) and (I), but likewise some of the original species which were most nearly related to their parents. Hence very few of the original species will have transmitted offspring to the fourteen-thousandth generation. We may suppose that only one (F) of the two species (E and F) which were least closely related to the other nine original species, has transmitted descendants to this late stage of descent.

The new species in our diagram, descended from the original eleven species, will now be fifteen in number. Owing to the divergent tendency of natural selection, the extreme amount of difference in character between species a14 and z14 will be much greater than that between the most distinct of the original eleven species. The new species, moreover, will be allied to each other in a widely different manner. Of the eight descendants from (A) the three marked a14, q14, p14, will be nearly related from having recently branched off from a10; b14 and f14, from

having diverged at an earlier period from a5, will be in some degree distinct from the three first-named species; and lastly, o14, e14, and m14, will be nearly related one to the other, but, from having diverged at the first commencement of the process of modification, will be widely different from the other five species, and may constitute a sub-genus or a distinct genus.

The six descendants from (I) will form two sub-genera or genera. But as the original species (I) differed largely from (A), standing nearly at the extreme end of the original genus, the six descendants from (I) will, owing to inheritance alone, differ considerably from the eight descendants from (A); the two groups, moreover, are supposed to have gone on diverging in different directions. The intermediate species, also (and this is a very important consideration), which connected the original species (A) and (I), have all become, except (F), extinct, and have left no descendants. Hence the six new species descended from (I), and the eight descendants from (A), will have to be ranked as very distinct genera, or even as distinct sub-families.

Thus it is, as I believe, that two or more genera are produced by descent with modification, from two or more species of the same genus. And the two or more parent-species are supposed to be descended from some one species of an earlier genus. In our diagram this is indicated by the broken lines beneath the capital letters, converging in sub-branches downwards towards a single point; this point represents a species, the supposed progenitor of our several new sub-genera and genera.

It is worth while to reflect for a moment on the character of the new species F14, which is supposed not to have diverged much in character, but to have retained the form of (F), either unaltered or altered only in a slight degree. In this case its affinities to the other fourteen new species will be of a curious and circuitous nature. Being descended from a form that stood between the parent-species (A) and (I), now supposed to be extinct and unknown, it will be in some degree intermediate in character between the two groups descended from these two species. But as these two groups have gone on diverging in character from the type of their parents, the new species (F14) will not be directly intermediate between them, but rather between types of the two groups; and every naturalist will be able to call such cases before his mind.

In the diagram each horizontal line has hitherto been supposed to represent a thousand generations, but each may represent a million or more generations; it may also represent a section of the successive strata of the earth's crust including extinct remains. We shall, when we come to our chapter on geology, have to refer again to this subject, and I think we shall then see that the diagram throws light on the affinities of extinct beings, which, though generally belonging to the same orders, families, or genera, with those now living, yet are often, in some degree, intermediate in character between existing groups; and we can understand this fact, for the extinct species lived at various remote epochs when the branching lines of descent had diverged

less.

I see no reason to limit the process of modification, as now explained, to the formation of genera alone. If, in the diagram, we suppose the amount of change represented by each successive group of diverging dotted lines to be great, the forms marked a<sub>14</sub> to p<sub>14</sub>, those marked b<sub>14</sub> and f<sub>14</sub>, and those marked o<sub>14</sub> to m<sub>14</sub>, will form three very distinct genera. We shall also have two very distinct genera descended from (I), differing widely from the descendants of (A). These two groups of genera will thus form two distinct families, or orders, according to the amount of divergent modification supposed to be represented in the diagram. And the two new families, or orders, are descended from two species of the original genus; and these are supposed to be descended from some still more ancient and unknown form.

We have seen that in each country it is the species belonging to the larger genera which oftenest present varieties or incipient species. This, indeed, might have been expected; for as natural selection acts through one form having some advantage over other forms in the struggle for existence, it will chiefly act on those which already have some advantage; and the largeness of any group shows that its species have inherited from a common ancestor some advantage in common. Hence, the struggle for the production of new and modified descendants will mainly lie between the larger groups, which are all trying to increase in number. One large group will slowly conquer another large group, reduce its number, and thus lessen its chance of further

variation and improvement. Within the same large group, the later and more highly perfected sub-groups, from branching out and seizing on many new places in the polity of nature, will constantly tend to supplant and destroy the earlier and less improved sub-groups. Small and broken groups and sub-groups will finally disappear. Looking to the future, we can predict that the groups of organic beings which are now large and triumphant, and which are least broken up, that is, which have as yet suffered least extinction, will, for a long period, continue to increase. But which groups will ultimately prevail, no man can predict; for we know that many groups, formerly most extensively developed, have now become extinct. Looking still more remotely to the future, we may predict that, owing to the continued and steady increase of the larger groups, a multitude of smaller groups will become utterly extinct, and leave no modified descendants; and consequently that, of the species living at any one period, extremely few will transmit descendants to a remote futurity. I shall have to return to this subject in the chapter on classification, but I may add that as, according to this view, extremely few of the more ancient species have transmitted descendants to the present day, and, as all the descendants of the same species form a class, we can understand how it is that there exist so few classes in each main division of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. Although few of the most ancient species have left modified descendants, yet, at remote geological periods, the earth may have been almost as well peopled with species of many genera, families, orders and

classes, as at the present day.

## ON THE DEGREE TO WHICH ORGANISATION TENDS TO ADVANCE.

Natural selection acts exclusively by the preservation and accumulation of variations, which are beneficial under the organic and inorganic conditions to which each creature is exposed at all periods of life. The ultimate result is that each creature tends to become more and more improved in relation to its conditions. This improvement inevitably leads to the gradual advancement of the organisation of the greater number of living beings throughout the world. But here we enter on a very intricate subject, for naturalists have not defined to each other's satisfaction what is meant by an advance in organisation. Among the vertebrata the degree of intellect and an approach in structure to man clearly come into play. It might be thought that the amount of change which the various parts and organs pass through in their development from embryo to maturity would suffice as a standard of comparison; but there are cases, as with certain parasitic crustaceans, in which several parts of the structure become less perfect, so that the mature animal cannot be called higher than its larva. Von Baer's standard seems the most widely applicable and the best, namely, the amount of differentiation of the parts of the same organic being, in the adult state, as I should be inclined to add, and their specialisation for different functions; or, as Milne Edwards would express it, the completeness of the division of physiological labour. But we

shall see how obscure this subject is if we look, for instance, to fishes, among which some naturalists rank those as highest which, like the sharks, approach nearest to amphibians; while other naturalists rank the common bony or teleostean fishes as the highest, inasmuch as they are most strictly fish-like, and differ most from the other vertebrate classes. We see still more plainly the obscurity of the subject by turning to plants, among which the standard of intellect is of course quite excluded; and here some botanists rank those plants as highest which have every organ, as sepals, petals, stamens and pistils, fully developed in each flower; whereas other botanists, probably with more truth, look at the plants which have their several organs much modified and reduced in number as the highest.

If we take as the standard of high organisation, the amount of differentiation and specialisation of the several organs in each being when adult (and this will include the advancement of the brain for intellectual purposes), natural selection clearly leads towards this standard: for all physiologists admit that the specialisation of organs, inasmuch as in this state they perform their functions better, is an advantage to each being; and hence the accumulation of variations tending towards specialisation is within the scope of natural selection. On the other hand, we can see, bearing in mind that all organic beings are striving to increase at a high ratio and to seize on every unoccupied or less well occupied place in the economy of nature, that it is quite possible for natural selection gradually to fit a being to a situation

in which several organs would be superfluous or useless: in such cases there would be retrogression in the scale of organisation. Whether organisation on the whole has actually advanced from the remotest geological periods to the present day will be more conveniently discussed in our chapter on Geological Succession.

But it may be objected that if all organic beings thus tend to rise in the scale, how is it that throughout the world a multitude of the lowest forms still exist; and how is it that in each great class some forms are far more highly developed than others? Why have not the more highly developed forms every where supplanted and exterminated the lower? Lamarck, who believed in an innate and inevitable tendency towards perfection in all organic beings, seems to have felt this difficulty so strongly that he was led to suppose that new and simple forms are continually being produced by spontaneous generation. Science has not as yet proved the truth of this belief, whatever the future may reveal. On our theory the continued existence of lowly organisms offers no difficulty; for natural selection, or the survival of the fittest, does not necessarily include progressive development – it only takes advantage of such variations as arise and are beneficial to each creature under its complex relations of life. And it may be asked what advantage, as far as we can see, would it be to an infusorian animalcule – to an intestinal worm – or even to an earth-worm, to be highly organised. If it were no advantage, these forms would be left, by natural selection, unimproved or but little improved, and might remain for indefinite ages in their

present lowly condition. And geology tells us that some of the lowest forms, as the infusoria and rhizopods, have remained for an enormous period in nearly their present state. But to suppose that most of the many now existing low forms have not in the least advanced since the first dawn of life would be extremely rash; for every naturalist who has dissected some of the beings now ranked as very low in the scale, must have been struck with their really wondrous and beautiful organisation.

Nearly the same remarks are applicable, if we look to the different grades of organisation within the same great group; for instance, in the vertebrata, to the co-existence of mammals and fish – among mammalia, to the co-existence of man and the ornithorhynchus – among fishes, to the co-existence of the shark and the lancelet (*Amphioxus*), which latter fish in the extreme simplicity of its structure approaches the invertebrate classes. But mammals and fish hardly come into competition with each other; the advancement of the whole class of mammals, or of certain members in this class, to the highest grade would not lead to their taking the place of fishes. Physiologists believe that the brain must be bathed by warm blood to be highly active, and this requires aerial respiration; so that warm-blooded mammals when inhabiting the water lie under a disadvantage in having to come continually to the surface to breathe. With fishes, members of the shark family would not tend to supplant the lancelet; for the lancelet, as I hear from Fritz Muller, has as sole companion and competitor on the barren sandy shore

of South Brazil, an anomalous annelid. The three lowest orders of mammals, namely, marsupials, edentata, and rodents, co-exist in South America in the same region with numerous monkeys, and probably interfere little with each other. Although organisation, on the whole, may have advanced and be still advancing throughout the world, yet the scale will always present many degrees of perfection; for the high advancement of certain whole classes, or of certain members of each class, does not at all necessarily lead to the extinction of those groups with which they do not enter into close competition. In some cases, as we shall hereafter see, lowly organised forms appear to have been preserved to the present day, from inhabiting confined or peculiar stations, where they have been subjected to less severe competition, and where their scanty numbers have retarded the chance of favourable variations arising.

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