

newly-hatched ducklings almost entails such a result to a certainty." The wild ducklings were from the first quite tame towards those who took care of them as long as they wore the same clothes, and likewise to the dogs and cats of the house. They would even snap with their beaks at the dogs, and drive them away from any spot which they coveted. But they were much alarmed at strange men and dogs. Differently from what occurred in Sweden, Mr. Hewitt found that his young birds always changed and deteriorated in character in the course of two or three generations; notwithstanding that great care was taken to prevent their crossing with tame ducks. After the third generation his birds lost the elegant carriage of the wild species, and began to acquire the gait of the common duck. They increased in size in each generation, and their legs became less fine. The white collar round the neck of the mallard became broader and less regular, and some of the longer primary wing-feathers became more or less white. When this occurred, Mr. Hewitt destroyed nearly the whole of his stock and procured fresh eggs from wild nests; so that he never bred the same family for more than five or six generations. His birds continued to pair together, and never became polygamous like the common domestic duck. I have given these details, because no other case, as far as I know, has been so carefully recorded by a competent observer of the progress of change in wild birds reared for several generations in a domestic condition.

From these considerations there can hardly be a doubt that the wild duck is the parent of the common domestic kind; nor need we look to other species for the parentage of the more distinct breeds, namely, Penguin, Call, Hook-billed, Tufted, and Labrador ducks. I will not repeat the arguments used in the previous chapters on the improbability of man having in ancient times domesticated several species since become unknown or extinct, though ducks are not readily exterminated in the wild state;—on some of the supposed parent-species having had abnormal characters in comparison with all the other species of the genus, as with Hook-billed and Penguin ducks;—on all the breeds, as far as is known