

extent analogous with that of self-impotent plants which cannot be fertilised by their own pollen, but are perfectly fertile with pollen of any other individual of the same species. The fact of infertility of this peculiar nature being one of the results of long-continued interbreeding, shows that interbreeding does not act merely by combining and augmenting various morbid tendencies common to both parents; for animals with such tendencies, if not at the time actually ill, can generally propagate their kind. Although offspring descended from the nearest blood-relations are not necessarily deteriorated in structure, yet some authors believe that they are eminently liable to malformations; and this is not improbable, as everything which lessens the vital powers acts in this manner. Instances of this kind have been recorded in the case of pigs, bloodhounds, and some other animals.

Finally, when we consider the various facts now given which plainly show that good follows from crossing, and less plainly that evil follows from close interbreeding, and when we bear in mind that with very many organisms elaborate provisions have been made for the occasional union of distinct individuals, the existence of a great law of nature is almost proved; namely, that the crossing of animals and plants which are not closely related to each other is highly beneficial or even necessary, and that interbreeding prolonged during many generations is injurious.