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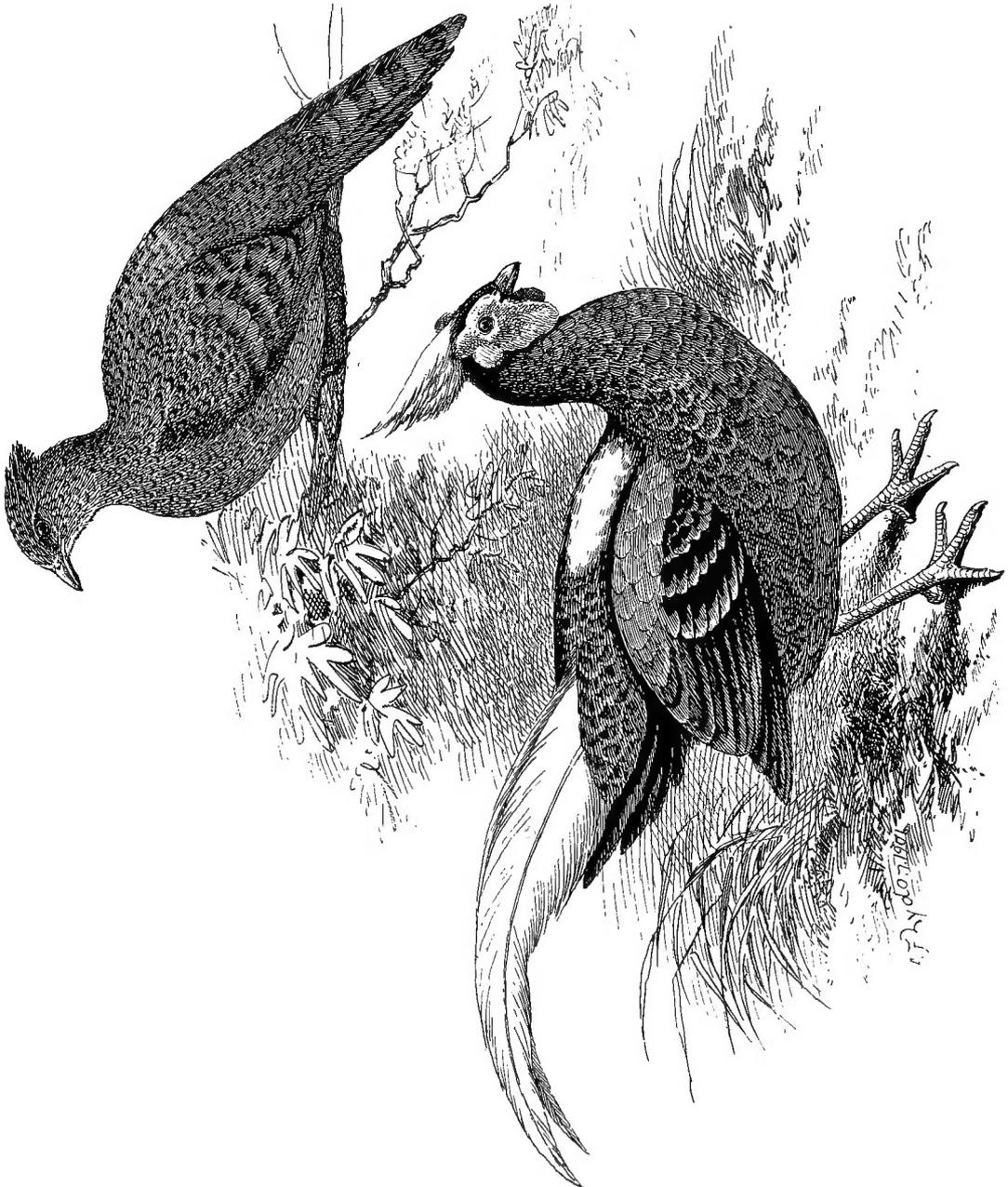
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W. L. G. 1871

SWINHOE'S PHEASANTS.

FANCY PHEASANTS

AND

THEIR ALLIES.

BY

FRANK FINN, F.Z.S.

AUTHOR OF "FANCY WATERFOWL," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED.

"THE FEATHERED WORLD,"

9, ARUNDEL STREET, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

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PREFACE.



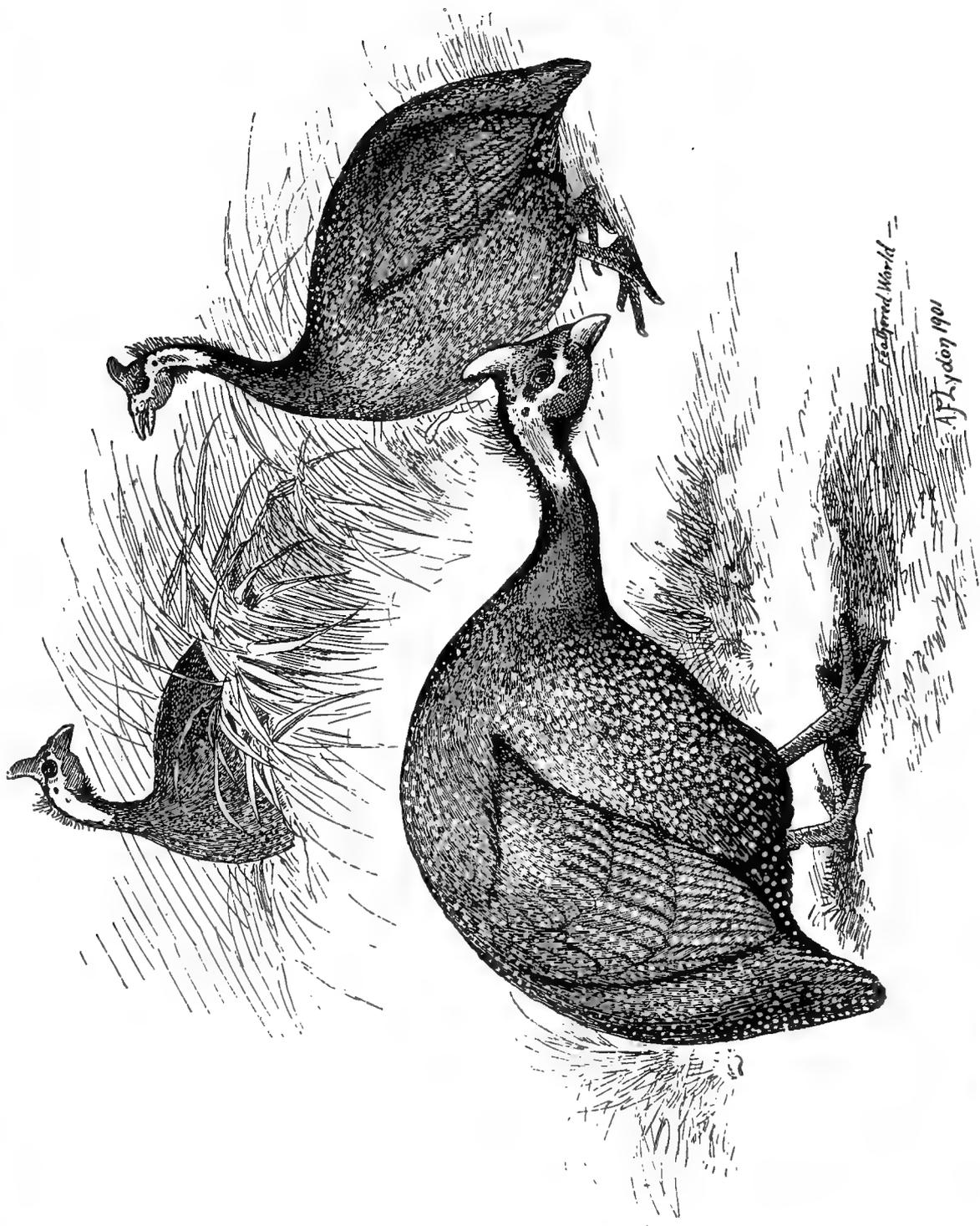
HAVING seen much of the Pheasant family in captivity, I have ventured to write the present work, which first appeared as a series of articles in *The Feathered World*, in order to point out to fanciers how easily kept and how numerous are these birds.

A great deal is talked about the beauty of Birds of Paradise and Humming-birds, but these are not to be compared to Pheasants, even if they were readily obtainable. It seems to me, therefore, that it is high time that these latter became better known to the public at large, though some have long been appreciated by a few.

As Partridges are rarely kept, and Quails have to be relegated to the company of small birds, I have not dealt with them ; but I have discussed all the best known Pheasants, together with the ancestors of our domestic poultry and their relatives.

FRANK FINN.

London, 1901.



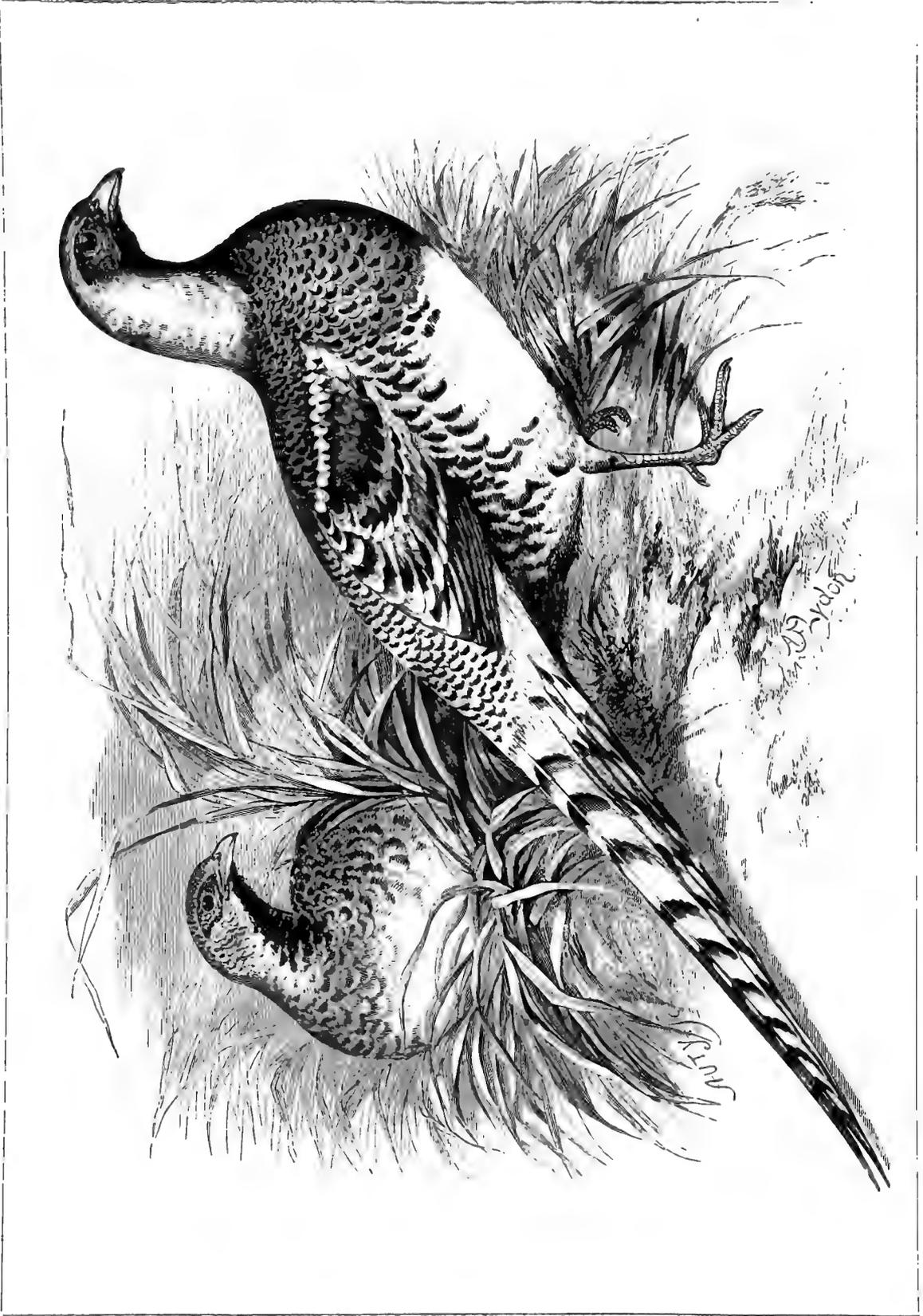
GUINEA FOWLS.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
BREEDING	10	PHEASANTS, COMMON	23
GUINEA FOWLS, COMMON	31	" COPPER OR SOEMMERRING'S	26
" PUCHERAN'S OR CRESTED	31	" EARED, MANCHURIAN	21
" VULTURINE	31	" " TIBETAN	21
HANDLING AND TRANSPORT	10	" ELLIOT'S	25
INTRODUCTION	9	" GOLDEN	22
JUNGLE FOWL	28-31	" GREEN OR VERSICOLOR	24
" CEYLON	28	" GREY PEACOCK	14
" GREEN OR JAVAN	30	" IMPEYAN	17
" GREY OR SONNERAT'S	30	" KOKLASS	26
" RED	28	" LINEATED KALEEGE	20
KALEEGES	19-21	" MONGOLIAN	26
MONAULS	17, 18	" REEVES'S	26
" BRONZE-BACKED	18	" SILVER KALEEGE	19, 20
" COMMON	17	" SWINHOE'S KALEEGE	20
" L'HUYS'	18	" WHITE-WINGED	26
" SCLATER'S	18	RUNS, COVERED AND UNCOVERED	10
PEAFOWL	11	TRAGOPANS AND MONAULS	15
" COMMON	11	" INDIAN CRIMSON	16
" GREEN OR JAVAN	12	" CHINESE "	16
" JAPAN OR BLACK-WINGED	11	" BLACK OR WESTERN	16
PHEASANTS	12-28	" GREY-BREASTED OR BLYTH'S	16
" AMHERST	23	" BUFF OR CABOT'S	16
" ARGUS	12	TREATMENT	9
" CHEER	26	TURKEY, HONDURAS	32
" CHINESE OR RING-NECKED	24	" WILD	32

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE		PAGE
CEYLON JUNGLE FOWL	29	PHEASANTS, IMPEYAN	17
GUINEA FOWLS	6	" MANCHURIAN EARED	22
PHEASANTS, AMHERST	15	" MONAUL, COMMON	27
" ARGUS	18	" REEVES'S	20
" COMMON	25	" RING-NECKED	13
" ELLIOT'S	8	" SILVER	19, 22
" GOLDEN	21	" SWINHOE'S	<i>frontispiece</i>
		" TRAGOPAN, INDIAN	16



ELLIOT'S PHEASANTS.

FANCY PHEASANTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

CONSIDERING that those very familiar birds, the Common Fowl, Guinea-fowl, and Turkey, belong to the Pheasant family, it is somewhat astonishing that so few other species are, as gardeners would say, in cultivation. True, we have the Peacock, the special fancy of great King Solomon, and the gold and silver Pheasants are not unfamiliar. But, taking them as a group, the Pheasants, among English people at least, cannot be said to have attained that popularity which is enjoyed by some other families of birds, such as Parrots and Ducks, or even Doves, for that matter.

This is a great pity, for the Pheasant family not only comprises the most gorgeous of all known birds, but most of them are very hardy, and will breed in captivity, and they are not more difficult to manage than ordinary poultry, if the fact that they are still wild birds be taken into account. At the same time some of them are undoubtedly more susceptible of domestication than others, and even as much so as the common fowl, which, as everybody knows, is more domesticated by a great deal than the Guinea-fowl, which has not been for long, comparatively speaking, under the dominion of man. There is no reason whatever why the shorter-tailed species of Pheasants, which also happen to be the steadiest, should not be taken up as show birds and trained to the pen. The exhibition of such would certainly draw the general public to a show more than any breed of fowls could nowadays; and though, as a rule, Pheasants would prove uninteresting to the breeder who likes striving to fix new points and altering a breed, this would not always be the case. For although the Pheasant family commonly breed as true as most wild or recently-tamed birds, yet they are peculiarly liable to "sports" of a very well-marked kind, as I shall have occasion to point out later on; and, moreover, they hybridise very freely, the hybrids being sometimes fertile, and occasionally possessing great beauty. It is more remunerative, however, at present, to breed pure-bred birds, which fetch very good prices, even the common golden and silver species being more expensive than many birds which have been much less bred in captivity.

Pheasants, however, are not so expensive as fancy poultry, and the fact that they truly propagate their kind, as a rule, renders their breeding a matter of more certain profit, while if sports are obtained, or Pheasant hybridising ever becomes popular, there will be enough speculation for anybody.

The birds of this noble family will, however, specially appeal to the fancier who loves beauty for its own sake, and desires a bird that he can keep and breed, and watch even in a small garden. For this purpose the Pheasant family are eminently suited; though shy with strangers, they are really among the most tamable of birds, as a visit to any zoological garden will testify; their beauty

is, as I remarked above, quite unsurpassed, and it does not change according to season, like that of so many lovely Ducks and Finches, and their diverse ways of showing it off during the breeding season form a detail in their habits of surpassing interest.

In all the birds of this family commonly to be met with the sexes can easily be distinguished when adult, which is, I need not say, a great advantage to the beginner; young birds are often hard to tell apart at first, but I should not advise anyone to start literally *ab ovo* with these birds, but to get a pair or pen of adults, and start breeding on their own account. In this series of articles I propose to treat not only of what are usually known as Pheasants, but of other members of the family which are procurable, such as the Peafowl, Junglefowl, etc. I shall use the scientific names employed in the British Museum Catalogue of Birds, Vol. XXII., and I shall frequently be indebted to Mr. W. B. Tegetmeier's standard work on Pheasants for information. Indeed, in the existence of such a book I should not have ventured to write on the subject myself were it not that Mr. Tegetmeier's book is intended as much or more for sportsmen than for fanciers, while my own present object is simply to encourage the cultivation of these beautiful birds as things of beauty and nothing beside, although I have pointed out above how their cultivation may at least be made to pay its way, owing to the present high value of the birds.

Should Pheasant-breeding ever become more general, a profitable article might be found in the gorgeous plumage of the males; were Pheasants largely reared to supply plumes, much of the persecution they and other brilliantly-clothed birds undergo in the cause of fashion would cease; and of course there is no more cruelty or waste of life in rearing a pheasant for its plumes than a fowl for its flesh, especially as the former is even better for food. Tame birds can be called into being in any number at our will, as is done with the Pheasants used for sport; but wild ones always exist under difficulties, and any serious extra persecution must in the long run be dangerous to the species. Of course killing tame birds in cold blood for their feathers is repugnant to most people's feelings; but then they should not wear feathers at all if they object to taking life for that purpose; not that life need necessarily be taken. Birds of bright plumage often cast much of their special adornment almost all at once, and if they were kept under close observation at this time, the dropped ornaments could be collected very little the worse for wear.

TREATMENT IN GENERAL.

As the habits of the common fowl are typical of those of the Pheasant family in general, so their treatment will not present any special difficulty to people acquainted with poultry, if the wilder and more vicious nature of most of the Pheasants be borne in

mind. A pair of Pheasants or a pet cock bird can be kept in any small covered shed, but in such close quarters the hen may often be in danger from the fitful temper of her savage mate, who is usually less chivalrous than Chanticleer, and the young from such birds, even should the hen lay, are less likely to be vigorous than those of birds better housed, and few people nowadays care to keep birds without some idea of breeding from them.

Should anyone be desirous, however, of keeping a few Pheasants merely to look at, several males of the same or different species may be put together in an ordinary fowl-run, where they will thrive and agree well, if no hens are introduced; but even then a sharp eye should be kept on them when first put together, or when any show signs of a bullying spirit. For Pheasants are game birds in more senses than one, and where pairs are kept it is quite out of the question to let even different species run together, as the jealous males would fight to the death in such a case.

For breeding Pheasants, then, each pair or pen should have a shelter shed and open run to themselves. The latter should be well turfed and planted with bushes; and the part nearest the front should be gravelled or sanded, as the birds are sure to run to and fro there, and thus ruin the grass at that point. Perches should be provided, natural branches serving and looking best, but the perches out-doors should be all lower than that within the shed, so that the birds may be encouraged to roost inside. In the shed also will be placed the food and the dust-bath. Pheasants may have corn of all the ordinary small kinds constantly before them, though too much maize should not be given, or they may be fed morning and evening, like fowls. In the latter case the morning feed should consist of meal or other soft food. Green food, especially lettuce and small fruit, should always be given, especially if the run is getting bare of grass and insects, or, in default of them, some chopped cooked meat or hard-boiled egg be supplied at frequent intervals.

COVERED AND UNCOVERED RUNS.

When I spoke above of an uncovered run, I meant, of course, one exposed to the weather; but it need not be open altogether, and, indeed, must not be unless the birds are pinioned or have their wings cut. If pheasants are to be pinioned, the whole of the first or knuckle-joint of the wing, carrying all the flights, must be cut off, and even then a spring and flutter will take them to a good height. Therefore, although the shortness of the flights in birds of this family prevents the result of the operation from being visible while the wings are closed, I do not advise anyone to pinion Pheasants unless they have a large, safe, and well-enclosed run, whence it would be a pity to exclude them, while it is too big to be netted over. The worst of cutting the wings of Pheasants is that, as the quills come away and are reproduced more or less gradually, the bird may be regaining the power of flight without your knowledge, and to your subsequent disappointment. For, though Pheasants do not fly far, they cannot be trusted with complete liberty except in extensive grounds or woods, and even there they are liable to stray, fight, or interbreed.

So that most people will find it necessary to keep their birds under wire; and in this case there should always be a string netting stretched under the wire one to prevent injury to their heads should they fly up on any fright, as they spring with great force and are liable to scalp themselves, by which they will be disfigured or killed outright. The shelter shed should be open to the front on the south side, and should be netted so that the birds can be confined in it if necessary. It is easy to make some arrangement by which the door can be closed on them by means of a string if they are inclined to dart out when an attempt is made to shut them in.

BREEDING.

Pheasants are commonly sold in pairs, as being scarce and dear, but two to four hens may be put with one

cock, if they themselves fall in with the arrangements; for, though cock Pheasants are naturally addicted to polygamy, the hens, in some cases, strongly disapprove of it, and refuse to agree together. A less creditable trait in the Pheasant character is the cruel disposition of the males in some species, which will often kill the hen outright for no reason, apparently, but the possession of a naturally savage disposition. In the case of such ruffians, it is said to be a good plan to connect the legs of the male bird by a piece of soft string long enough for him to walk easily but not to run, and thus allow the hens a chance of escape, until he has got used to their presence and treats them better. Moreover, a run for breeding should, as above remarked, contain plenty of bushes, which will give shelter to the hen if unduly persecuted.

Another vice cock Pheasants are liable to is that of egg-eating, which is best cured by giving the offender hard artificial eggs to amuse himself with till he is convinced that eggs are too uninteresting to meddle with. Pheasant eggs are apt to be left lying about the pen, for the hens will seldom lay, sit, and hatch in the regular way, though this occasionally happens.

As a rule, however, all that can be done is to induce the hen to lay regularly in one place by screening it with living bushes, or a lean-to of brushwood faggots. The eggs must then be set under a steady light hen—half-bred Silkies are stated to be the very best for the purpose. The Silky, however, is exceedingly good, and as it is itself a pretty and ornamental bird, is doubly deserving of employment.

The young should be fed more often than chickens, and get more animal food. Ants' cocoons (commonly called "eggs") are good, but tend to make the birds dainty; well-scoured gentles may be given in moderation. Custard, crushed hemp, and millet and canary seed should, however, form the staple diet at first, with minced boiled meat, the various game meals advertised, and larger grain as they grow older and get feathered. Green food should always be given, even if they are being reared on turf, as they ought to be. Pheasants' eggs take several days longer in hatching than those of fowls, a fact which should be borne in mind, or disappointment may be unnecessarily felt at the non appearance of chicks at the end of the regulation three weeks. But the family is such an extensive one, and comprises birds of such different sizes and styles, from the Turkey to the Quail, that it is not surprising that the incubation period varies a great deal.

As Pheasants are liable to the ordinary diseases of poultry, great care should be taken in selecting healthy hens to rear them, lest the young become infected by their foster-mothers. They are particularly liable to the attacks of the gape-worm, for which reason many pheasant-rearers do not allow them water when young, but there is no good ground for such unnatural treatment, and general cleanliness is the best preventive.

HANDLING AND TRANSPORT.

The most likely cause of trouble with full-grown birds, apart from fighting, lies in their nervous disposition and violent movements when alarmed, the strength of these birds, compared with poultry, being something remarkable. You should always "take two hands" to a Pheasant, and never seize it by one limb only; and it is better to use a shallow, strong net, like a landing-net, to secure them. Beware, also, of the sharp spurs of the cocks. Cages or coops for Pheasants should always have a padded roof, or a canvas ceiling below the top, and should not be higher than the birds require to stand upright in: the front should also be made of wooden bars, much too close for them to get their heads out. The floor should also be of wooden bars, with a space beneath to facilitate cleaning.

For short journeys the ordinary poultry hamper can be used, these being now so well constructed for the saving of birds' persons and plumage. But it should be

mentioned that in a long journey, such as a sea voyage, it is quite hopeless to expect the long-tailed species to remain in good trim and be comfortable; and therefore their exuberance of caudal appendage should be reduced to a more reasonable length in the event of such an ordeal.

All the finest members of the present family, with the exception of the Turkeys, inhabit Eastern Asia, India being particularly rich in species. But many are bred so successfully in Europe nowadays that the importation of some species has long ceased, and there are indications that this will soon be the case with others also. My friend Mr. W. Rutledge, of Entally, Calcutta, has long been in the habit of getting many of these splendid birds down from the interior of India, and I shall be indebted to him for a good deal of information about them. The hardiness of the Pheasant constitution is well shown by the way in which they endure the long journey from the hills, carried in small baskets on men's heads. But, unlike most other birds, they are very intolerant of heat, and few hill species can live through an Indian summer. This will need to be remembered at times by amateurs in England.

CHAPTER II. PEAFOWL.

The aristocracy of the feathered tribe are undoubtedly the Peacocks; in no other birds do feathers reach such an extraordinary development, and none have been so long or so universally admired. So I shall take them first, and proceed to discuss the other more striking members of the family before addressing myself to its less exalted representatives.

Peafowl are, it is scarcely necessary to say, large birds of a rather reachy build, with very small, crested heads and large, powerful feet. As a matter of fact, both in his Indian home and in Europe the Peacock's feet are supposed to be a wholesome check upon his otherwise overweening pride; but, after all, they are not worse than the Turkeys, and he must have long, strong legs to carry his chief glory, the train, well off the ground. It is hardly necessary nowadays to explain that the train is not the real tail, but only the greatly-developed upper tail-coverts. The true tail in Peafowl is only moderately long, and rounded. The sides of the face are bare of feathers in both sexes, and the crest appears very early in the young. Only two true species of Peafowl are known, but one produces a "sport" of surpassing interest, which may almost rank as a third.

THE COMMON PEAFAWL.

(*Pavo cristatus*.)

In the common Peafowl the crest is fan-shaped, each feather being a bare shaft with a small fan-shaped portion of web at the tip; the bare part of the face is white, and the neck-feathers are loose-edged and blended into one uniform surface, as in most birds. It is unnecessary to go into full details as to the plumage of such a well-known bird, but it should be noted that in the male the neck and breast are rich blue, the back coppery-green, with the feathers edged with black and scale-like; the wings mostly pale buff, coarsely pencilled with black, except the flights, which are cinnamon. The flanks are deep green, and the belly blackish-brown, contrasting with the pale drab thighs. The real tail is brown, and the train, as everyone knows, metallic copper-and-green with blue-and-purple "eyes" at the tips of the feathers.

The hen is drab above, with a dark brown head and neck touched with green; her tail is dark blackish brown, and her flanks and underparts below the breast pale dirty buff. The bill and feet in both sexes are dark horn colour. Young Peacocks at first resemble the hens, but can be distinguished by their cinnamon flights, and the neck soon becomes blue; they spread their tails

and try to show off long before the train grows; the plumage is not perfect till the third year. This Peafowl's native home is India and Ceylon; but it was introduced into Europe many centuries ago, and is now known in all civilised countries. It is so far domesticated that it can be allowed full liberty, and is perfectly hardy in England, roosting out-of-doors in all weathers; at the same time it bears confinement well, but is too noisy a bird to be kept near a house. Although Peacocks are not much given to fighting with each other, they are bold, somewhat vicious birds, and may at times be dangerous to weaker creatures, and even to children, and they also have the reputation of being very destructive in gardens. But a vicious Peacock can easily be got rid of, and, as to his horticultural misdeeds, it must be remembered that he is a whole flower garden in himself! In his own country he is sacred, and it is stated that when Alexander the Great invaded it, he forbade his soldiers to kill the wild Peafowl, so much was he struck with the beauty of the birds; and we know also that the bird fanciers in Greece thought a great deal of them when they became obtainable there—some are said to have travelled from Sparta to Athens to get even a sight of the splendid novelty.

Nowadays the Peacock is rather a bye-word than otherwise, but I hope there will always be sufficient good taste among us to ensure the cultivation of the first and finest of fancy birds. The Peahen should be allowed to manage her own chicks; she is a good mother, and the young need more "mothering" than ordinary poultry, as they remain with her much longer. They are very good eating, and are often shot for the table in India, though old birds are only fit for soup—a Peacock is supposed to be the proper foundation for "Mulligatawny." It takes a good high fence to keep Peafowl in, even if their wings are cut; but though their flight is more regular and leisurely, when fairly launched, than that of most Game birds, they cannot keep it up long, and may be ridden or even run down in the open.

It may be mentioned as a great point in the Peacock's favour that he kills and eats young snakes, even poisonous ones, so that people residing in adder-stricken localities should keep these birds as an aid to the extermination of these undesirable reptiles.

Although the form of the Peacock does not seem liable to variation, this is not the case with the colouration of the species. Most people have seen the white variety, which, if clean, has certainly a delicate beauty peculiarly its own. It is much appreciated in India, and Mr. Rutledge constantly imports it. He tells me that he knows of a Rajah who has stocked his jungle with the breed. Pied birds are also seen, but I can't say I think much of them from an æsthetic point of view. A buff variety could also probably be raised, for buff hens have occurred in the wild state, and Mr. Rutledge once obtained and sold to the ex-King of Oude—a very keen bird-fancier—a male of the colour of a new copper coin. This was evidently the buff form of the cock; it must have been a most splendid bird. But the most interesting variety is that which has even been given rank by some authors as a species, under the name of the Japan or Black-winged Peacock.

THE JAPAN OR BLACK-WINGED PEAFAWL.

(*Pavo nigripennis*.)

The male of the breed differs from the common Peacock in having the wings black, with a green and blue gloss in places, with the exception of the flights, which are cinnamon, but slightly streaked with black; the thighs are also black instead of drab. The hen is white with a black tail, and the upper plumage grizzled and splashed with black; she has the flights cinnamon, like the male. The legs in both sexes are white. Young birds are white at first, but the young males soon get dark. This form, which is positively known to appear

in either sex as a sport from the ordinary Peafowl, nevertheless breeds true, even with no trouble; it is said, indeed, that if it appears among the common birds, and all are allowed to breed together, the black-winged bird will swamp the other, although smaller and not a match for it, if they come to blows. It would be interesting to know how this comes about. Peahens are known to have strong preference for individual Peacocks, but in the case quoted by Darwin, where this was observed, a bird of this variety was slighted for a pied cock. So that it is possible that the Japan form is prepotent, and that the colour is transmitted in such cases through the hens of the variety. The Peahen certainly *ought* to admire the Japan male bird most, if she uses her eyes at all, for he is certainly a great improvement on the ordinary bird, whose freckled wings always make him look as if he had not moulted out all his immature plumage, or, as an admirer of Peacocks put it to me, they look like a piece of tweed let into a rich costume of silk or satin!

Nevertheless, the Japan Peafowl must be seriously handicapped in the struggle for existence by the pale hue of the hens and chicks, for it is known to occur wild, one hen having been killed in India. But few can live to reach maturity in that country so full of birds and beasts of prey. My friend Mr. B. B. Osmaston, who is both sportsman and naturalist, tells me that the common Peahen is very hard to see when sitting in the jungle, as might be expected from her drab colour, but it is obvious that pale birds would stand no chance, and the Rajah who goes in for white Peafowl must "preserve" very carefully. The black-winged Peafowl is also wild in Japan, though naturalists do not admit that country as a habitat of the species. Probably it was introduced very long ago, and has been able to maintain itself in a country less dangerous than India. I got my information as to its occurrence there from Mr. Rutledge, and there is a Japanese specimen in the Paris Museum. Of course, if Japanese Peafowl were known to occur wild nowhere else, and never to be produced from tame common Peafowl, they would be a true species. As it is, we know their origin, and so they are called only a breed or variety. So it is that, apart from the superior beauty of both sexes to the common birds, this form of Peacock is one of the most interesting of all birds, as it shows us that new species *can* arise suddenly from others.

THE GREEN OR JAVAN PEAFOWL.

(*Pavo muticus*.)

This species, the "Spicifer Peacock" of dealers, is very distinct from the common Peafowl in several points. It is a bigger bird, and more reachy in build; the crest, which inclines forward, is much longer and narrower, and composed of narrow rounded feathers webbed nearly all the way down. The neck feathers have firm, clearly-defined edges, giving a scaly appearance to that part of the plumage, like that of the back; the bare skin of the face is blue to below the eyes, yellow below and behind; and the legs and bill are darker than in the other bird. Moreover, the hen in this species nearly resembles the cock; she is merely smaller, has no train, and no metallic green on the back.

Except for the scaly bronze-green neck plumage, the cock's colouring resembles that of the black-winged breed of the common species, his wings and thighs being black; his train, however, has more of the copper and purple gloss about it.

The hen's upper tail coverts are glossy green coarsely pencilled with brown; and the cock, which does not carry his train long after the breeding season, is said to then assume similar ones.

I have never seen very young birds of this species, but two of about the size of Pheasants I saw lately were already miniatures of the old hen, and very pretty they looked.

This species extends from Chittagong, in the eastern

part of India, through Burma to Java. It seems to have been first known, however, from Japan, and, I am told, is wild there. I certainly have the same evidence for this as I mentioned in the case of the black-winged Peafowl, and the green occurs in Japanese art; but as naturalists are silent about it, it may be only an introduction.

The green Peacock may fairly claim to be the most beautiful of all known birds, as it certainly much exceeds the ordinary species in beauty and elegance of form. Its neck feathering, if less rich in hue than the blue of its rival, has a particularly beautiful effect, as if formed of metal work, and the almost equal beauty of the hen places her far above the dowdy mate of the common bird, and even above the delicate-looking female of the Japan breed. Like the latter, she has cinnamon flights like the male bird.

The present bird is not so numerous, where it occurs wild, as the ordinary Peacock is in India; and it is not very common in captivity, though often obtainable from dealers.

It is more delicate, at any rate in the East, and the male in full plumage is apt to be extremely savage. At the same time, birds of this species are often charmingly tame. I know of one at present which will let itself be picked up like a cat, and have seen another which would gladly stand to have its head scratched. It is evidently a bird of character.

The Javan and Indian Peafowls have been crossed both in India and in Europe; but the hybrid, of which a specimen can be seen in the Natural History Museum at South Kensington, does not present any noteworthy point of beauty as compared with pure specimens of either kind. I have been told on good authority that attempts made in India to cross the green Peafowl with the *white* variety of the common bird were unsuccessful, which reminds one of the objection recorded of some green-coloured Finches to yellow Canary hens.

Before leaving the subject of Peafowl I may be permitted to allude to a belief current among the native fellow countrymen of both the Indian and the Burmese species, that these birds and tigers affect the same localities. The fact seems well established, but the reason is not so easy to discover. Possibly the same style of jungle, etc., suits both creatures; or the tiger watches the birds with a view to dinner; or, which is at least equally likely, the Peafowl keep an eye on "stripes" to see what he will be up to next—a custom which several animals are known to follow with regard to their dreaded enemy.

Peafowl have no very near allies, but a certain resemblance, which may quite possibly be due to relationship, is found in the Argus and Peacock-pheasants or Polyplectrons, with which I shall therefore deal in the next chapter. Darwin, indeed, gives a long and interesting sketch of the way in which a Peacock might have been evolved out of a bird of the latter kind, assuming that the hens always selected the handsomest mate among those available for many generations.

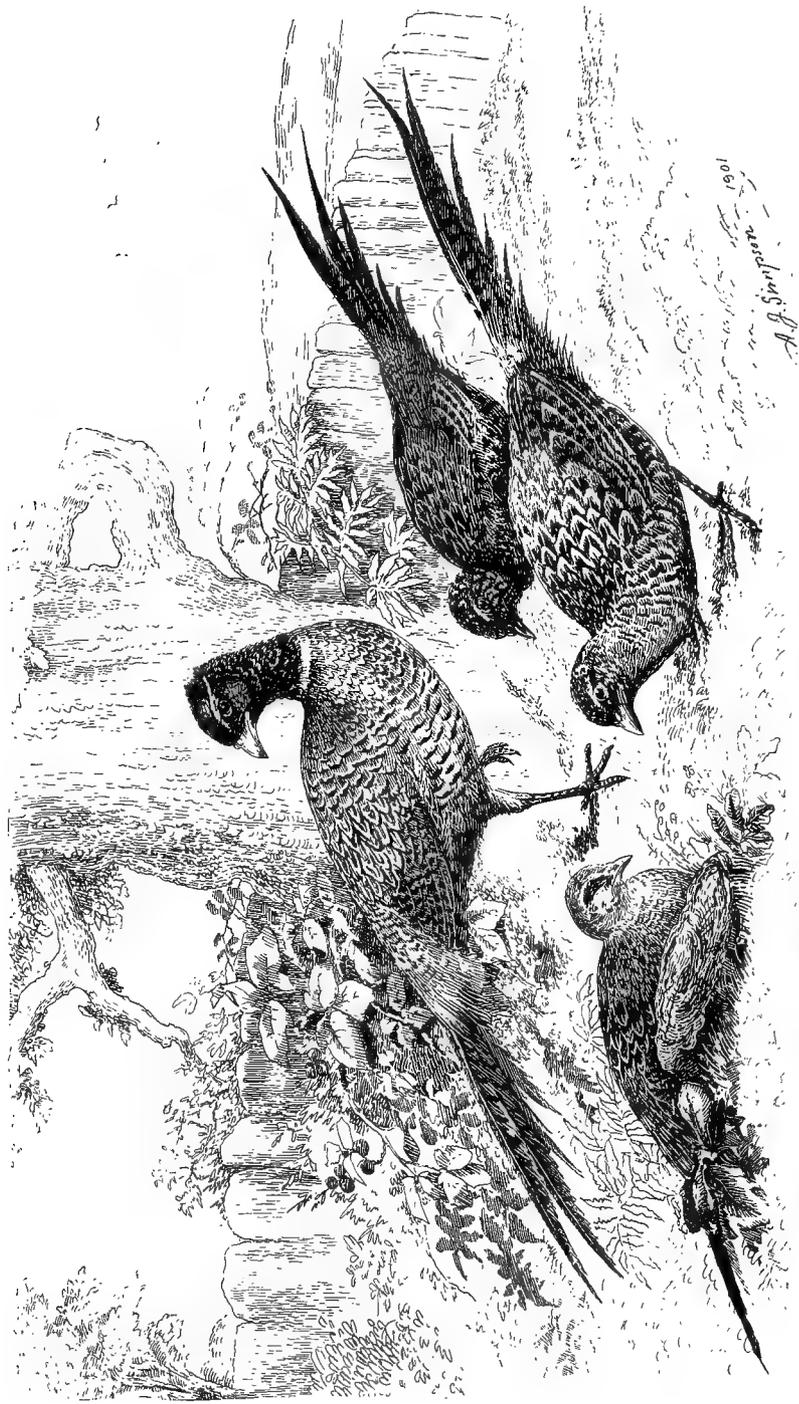
CHAPTER III.

ARGUS AND PEACOCK PHEASANTS.

THE ARGUS.

(*Argusianus argus*.)

The Argus Pheasant is a bird of large size, though inferior to the Peacock, which it somewhat resembles in its rather light and lengthy build. The head is bare except for a longitudinal ridge of small, fur-like feathers on the crown; and the tail is folded vertically like a common fowl's. The secondary quills are very long, reaching beyond the flights even in the hen, and in the cock being of enormous size, about three inches broad and projecting over a foot beyond the end of the body,



The cock's two centre tail-feathers are also remarkable, being over four feet long, very broad, and curiously twisted at the end. He is much larger altogether than the hen, but except for his huge wings and tail, and special colour-ornamentation to be presently described, does not differ much in general appearance, both sexes having the plumage brown, thickly speckled with buff, the bare head blue, the bill white, and the legs red, without spurs.

The extraordinary and quite unique beauty of the cock lies in his wings, which cannot be seen while they are closed, for along each of the great secondary quills, on the outer web close to the shaft, run a series of most beautiful eyes or *ocelli*; not brilliant like those on the Peacock's train, but most perfectly shaded with ochre, sienna, and white, and edged with black, so as to resemble balls lying in sockets, when the feather is in a vertical position. Large as these feathers are, they are very thin and delicate, so that, seen from behind, they look like stained glass, and the ornaments are plainly visible; yet the webs are firm and well knit, and they wear well. The flights, although not remarkable in size or texture, are scarcely less beautiful; their shafts are dark blue, and parallel therewith on the inner web runs a patch of rich cinnamon minutely dotted with white, the feather being likewise adorned with rows of black and cinnamon spots on its pale drab ground.

This is by no means a full description of the plumage of this wonderful bird, whose exquisite tinting and shading will repay any amount of study, and need it to be appreciated properly. The beauty of the Argus is, indeed, chiefly in its shading; it has no brilliant colour at all, and the form of the male, with the long straight line formed by his closed wings, is not altogether graceful. But he reserves everything for his display, which is indeed a wonderful sight. Before showing off, he gets much excited; I have seen his head literally swell, and heard him stamp loudly on the ground in a manner unlike any other bird. Then he raises and shakes his wings, and then throws them forward and spreads them till the front edges meet before his head, and they form a great vertical fan, most beautifully painted. Meanwhile the tail is raised to complete the picture. The hen seems supremely indifferent to all this fuss, but the cock is very much in earnest about it, and anxious that she should have a good front view; while it is stated that such is his anxiety to read her somewhat inexpressive countenance, that he will often thrust his head—which is, of course, right behind one wing—between two of his wing-feathers, to look, thus keeping a place frayed there!

When moulting, the male appears, from a specimen I have long observed at the Calcutta Zoo, to cast off the great ornamental secondaries almost at once, since they grow again evenly. This specimen keeps himself in fine condition, and the feathers when cast are quite worth keeping.

Young cocks resemble the hen in this species, but may be distinguished by showing traces of the "eyes" on the wings.

This bird is found wild from South Tenasserim through the Malay Peninsula and Siam, to Sumatra. It inhabits evergreen forests, and is shy and solitary. There appears to be no regular breeding season, and the hens have no fixed abode. The cocks, however, have very domesticated habits, each bird clearing for himself a space of a few yards square in the jungle, in which he lives, merely going out for his meals of fallen fruit, insects, etc., and roosting at night on a tree close by. Here he displays himself, presumably, to such hen birds as may visit him; not wandering about to fight with other males, although he will answer their calls. His note is a fine loud whoop of two notes, like "how-how," and is audible at a great distance; the female's call is trisyllabic, and repeated faster and faster till the notes run together.

The Argus is not a common bird in captivity, and I should hardly have included it were it not so well known

and so interesting a species. But it appears to thrive well when it can be procured, and has repeatedly bred in the London Zoo. It requires good protection from the weather, however, not being so hardy as most Pheasants. In disposition it is not shy or difficult to tame; a captured bird has been known to return to its aviary after escaping. No doubt its sedentary habits in the wild state account for this, and also for the fact that, as the bird at Calcutta shows, it can keep in good condition in a space only a few yards square. This specimen is very vicious, and cannot be trusted even with his hen constantly; but I never saw him interfere with other birds when kept with them. The hen Argus is said to lay seven or eight eggs in the wild state; eggs laid by tame birds are said to be of a rich coffee-colour. The young are able to fly and roost on a perch very quickly.

One other species of Argus (*Argusianus grayi*), closely allied to the common one, is found in Borneo. Another is suspected to exist, from a portion of a flight-feather, formerly possessed by Mr. E. Bartlett, who showed it to me when he was Curator of the Maidstone Museum. This feather was presented by Mr. Bartlett to the British Museum; it differs from that of an ordinary cock Argus in having the white-spotted cinnamon patch on both sides of the shaft. Hence it has been called *Argusianus bipunctatus*, the two-spotted Argus. No other specimen has turned up, and it is just possible that this one belonged to a bird which was merely a "sport"; but the fact that the shaft of this feather differs in being narrower and thinner than that of the ordinary species makes this explanation doubtful. It must be remembered, however, that birds may throw varieties in colour and structural points at the same time, though this is rare; thus, a light-brown variety of the Moorhen sometimes occurs, which has hairy-looking plumage and soft lax webs to the quills, so that it cannot fly.

THE GREY PEACOCK-PHEASANT.

(*Polyplectron chinquis*.)

The Peacock-Pheasants are rather small, lightly built birds, the male of the present species, which is the largest, being hardly as big as the hen of the common Pheasant. They have erect crests and long, broad, rounded tails; and the males have two or three spurs on each leg, whence their scientific name, *Polyplectron*, meaning "many-spurred." The grey Peacock-Pheasant is drab, finely speckled with cream colour, this producing a grey effect at a distance; the wings, back, and tail are ornamented with beautiful metallic "eyes" of green shot with violet, so exquisitely shaded that they seem to stand out from the surface of the feather. This applies to the male only; the hen, which is smaller and has a shorter tail and crest, though very similar in general colouring, has the "eyes" replaced by simple blackish spots only slightly glossed. Young cocks resemble her, but show more approach to the eye-spots of the old birds of their sex. In all, the throat is white. The bill and legs are dark, and a bare space round the eye pale, sickly yellow, a hue which is not enhanced by the white eyes of the cock; the hen's eyes are dark grey.

This bird is found in a wild state from the Assam hills through Burma to Siam. It frequents thick jungle, and is little known, being more often heard than seen. The cock has a most irritating barking cackle, which he is far too fond of repeating at times. These birds have bred in the London Zoo; in captivity they pair, and the hen lays only two eggs, of a buff colour. The first young hatched were reared by a Bantam hen, and it was noticed that they kept constantly behind her, so that they got a full share of kicks when she was scratching the ground. Their reason for this apparently foolish behaviour was not understood till a brood was reared by the Peacock-Pheasant herself, who was observed to spread her tail as a shelter for the chicks, which followed her beneath it, only running forward when she found

some food for them, and soon retreating under this curious natural umbrella.

Another interesting point in the habits of this pretty Pheasant is the display of the cock. Being anxious to show his mate that he has all his eyes about him, so to speak, he displays himself sideways, lifting one wing, and lowering the other, and spreading his tail, which he tilts up on a slant till it is level with the slanted wings, thus giving as good a view as possible.

This is the commonest and best known of the Peacock Pheasants, as might be expected from its Indian habitat, but the London Zoo has possessed two other species, both

surpassing the present in beauty, handsome though it is. These are: Germain's Peacock-Pheasant (*Polyplectron germaini*), which has a darker head and red skin round the eye, while in the hen the eye spots are much better developed than in that of the common bird; and the Malayan Peacock-Pheasant (*Polyplectron bicalcaratum*), which has the ground-colour of the plumage buff thickly speckled with black, a red face, and the crest of the male tipped with purplish green. This species, as its name implies, comes from the Malayan Peninsula; Germain's from Cochin China.

The Peacock-Pheasants certainly deserve to be better known. Their beauty, in the combination of bright spots with a soberly-coloured ground, is quite peculiar to them, and as they are the smallest of the Pheasants they are peculiarly suitable for aviaries. The other species are even more brilliant than those I have mentioned, and I hope that before long we shall have opportunities of seeing these alive, but they seem very scarce at present, even as museum specimens.

CHAPTER IV.

TRAGOPANS AND MONAULS.

The Tragopans, often miscalled Argus Pheasants by sportsmen in India, are not really related to the true Argus, but form a very distinct and easily recognisable group. They are as big as a good-sized fowl, and of rather heavy make, with drooping tails, shaped somewhat like a common hen's; the legs and feet are rather long and slender, and the bill very small. The males are larger than the females, and have a pair of short spurs, they also have the face and throat bare or only thinly feathered, and possess a pair of fleshy horns on the head and an expansible dewlap on the throat. Both these appendages are much better developed at the breeding season than at other times, and they are

not ordinarily noticeable, the horns, in particular, commonly lying hid in the full crest possessed by the male, which usually lies flat, and does not alter the outline of the head-feathering.

When he displays himself to the hen, however, the horns rise erect, and the dewlap expands longitudinally and transversely into a great bib or apron, decorated with the most brilliant colours, but the display does not last long.

The Tragopan cock, however, has two strings to his bow, and also displays his plumage alone by a method very common in this family. The plumage is raised on one side of the body and lowered on the other, in a heroic attempt to show the hen both sides at once! The said plumage is well worth displaying, as it is a wonderful combination of bright hues with delicate markings and shading, very difficult to describe fully. Fortunately, however, the general characteristics thereof are easily conveyed in a few words. The upper plumage is intricately speckled with black and brown, more or less intermixed with red, and



AMHERST PHEASANTS.

varied with pale spots of different colours; there is always more or less black on the head and red on the neck, and the lower plumage and flanks vary according to the species; so also does the expanded dewlap, but the horns seem always to be blue, the legs red or flesh-colour, and the bill black.

The hens are much alike, their plumage being closely grizzled light and dark, a style of plumage which, with their characteristic shape, distinguishes them easily from the hens of other Pheasants. They resemble each other, however, so closely that their differences are best appreciated by comparison.



INDIAN TRAGOPAN PHEASANTS.

Young males exhibit an admixture of male and female plumage. Tragopans are forest-haunting birds, keeping to temperate regions in the Indian and Chinese hills; they feed much on green food, and are not at all hard to tame. All the species have been kept in captivity, but only two are at all well known, these fortunately being the most striking of all.

THE INDIAN CRIMSON TRAGOPAN.

(*Tragopan satyra*.)

The male of this species differs from the rest in having the face thinly covered with small black feathers; the neck and lower plumage are rich red, and the body generally is sprinkled with round white spots edged with black, which, on the underparts especially, make a beautiful contrast. The loose skin of the throat is deep rich blue, but the bib when expanded is orange or salmon-coloured, with blue bars at the sides. The light portions of the hen's plumage are cinnamon and buff, making the general hue a rich mossed brown. This Tragopan inhabits the higher wooded ranges of the Central and Eastern Himalayas, breeding not far below the snows. Many, I regret to say, are killed for their skins; it is more satisfactory to note that many have also been sent to Europe, so that the bird is now no rarity. In its native haunts it is very seldom seen, as it keeps close to cover, and in captivity this habit should be studied as also their predilection for green shoots, fruit, bulbs, etc.

Although well known from being an Indian bird, this species is not so familiar in captivity as the other Crimson Tragopan, which has been successfully bred in the London Zoological Gardens.

THE CHINESE CRIMSON TRAGOPAN.

(*Tragopan temminckii*.)

This species bears a strong general resemblance to the Indian bird, but the cock is distinguished by having the blue skin of the face bare, and the bib, when expanded, rich blue with scarlet bars at the sides. The cock's plumage is less showy than that of his ally, the spots being larger, less well-defined, not black-edged as a rule, and pale grey instead of white. I can give no criterion for distinguishing the hens.

The home of this species is South-West and Central China, and it has done very well in captivity in Europe. The male is stated to be very free with his display in the spring, and I well remember my delight at witnessing it in the London Zoo—the sudden appearance of the brilliant bib is most striking, and the colours are extraordinarily rich.

The other Tragopans are, as above stated, not at all well known, but the group is so beautiful, and so well adapted for captivity or even for showing, that is worth while to mention them. The Black or Western Tragopan (*Tragopan melanocephalus*) inhabits the Western Himalayas. The male shows little red except on the neck, and the white spots with which his plumage is adorned are so broadly surrounded by black, that a general dark tone is given to the ground colour; his bib is purple in the middle, flesh-coloured at the sides, and spotted and edged with pale blue. The hen's plumage is much greyer in tone than that of the Crimson Tragopan hens. The Grey-breasted, or Blyth's Tragopan (*Tragopan blythi*), which I have seen at the London Zoo, comes from Assam. The cock is readily recognised by his grey under-parts below the red neck, without spots, and his orange face and throat passing into green below. The hen is blacker above and less buff below than the Red Tragopan females. Finally, Cabot's, or the Buff Tragopan (*Tragopan caboti*), from South-Eastern China, is entirely buff below, and very heavily spotted with that colour above. His bib is red in the centre, pink and blue at the sides. The hen is said to resemble those of the crimson species.

Although not quite so uniform in structure as the Tragopans, which practically only differ in colour and, to a much less extent, in size, the Monauls form a very uniform and easily recognisable type. Only four species are known, and only one of these is at all familiar in captivity.

THE COMMON MONAUL, OR IMPEYAN PHEASANT.

(*Lophophorus refulgens.*)

The Monaul is a heavily-formed bird, equal to a large Owl in size. The head and bill are large for a bird of this family, especially the latter; there is a bare space round the eye of a bright blue colour; the legs are short and powerful, of an olive-green or "willow" tint; and the tail is like that of a pigeon, only moderately long, flat, and slightly rounded at the end. The plumage is close and hard, and differs much in the two sexes, although they agree in most points of form, and do not differ much in size. The male possesses a pair of short spurs, while the hen is, as usual, spurless; he also has a gracefully arched crest of very narrow feathers broadening out at the tip, while the hen's crest is short and composed of ordinary feathers.

The resplendent beauty of the cock's plumage almost baffles description. His head and a streak down each side of the neck are bright, burnished green; the back of the neck fiery copper-red of a wonderful lustre, changing into pale greenish gold in some lights; the upper part of the back is golden green; the rest of the upper plumage metallic purple, the feathers tipped with metallic blue. On the lower part of the back, however, there is a patch of silver white, but this is usually hidden by the wings. The lower plumage from throat to tail is velvet black, and the tail bright cinnamon, contrasting strikingly with the metallic hues of the rest of the plumage.

The hen's plumage is a close mottling of brown, black, and buff, set off by a pure white throat; altogether, she looks like a very big Quail or Partridge. Her characteristic form and the blue skin round the eye at once mark her off distinctly from the hens of other Pheasants.

Young cock Monauls are very like hens at first, but the white throat is more or less mixed with black. They do not come into full colour till the second year; and even then, curiously enough, the seventh flight feather remains brown a year longer.

This bird inhabits the whole of the Himalayas, keeping to high elevations and a temperate or cold climate. In summer it ranges even above the forest level and near the snow line; but in winter it has, of course, to descend lower in search of food. This consists largely of roots and insects, for which it is continually digging with its powerful bill; for, unlike other Pheasants, it is not addicted to scratching. It is not very sociable, though the hens keep together more than the cocks. They lay in May or June, and the eggs are rather like a Turkey's. The species is sadly persecuted on account of the demand for the gorgeous plumage of the males, and its numbers have become greatly diminished in consequence. This is the more regrettable as it is quite unnecessary. As everyone

knows, the surplus males in this polygamous family can be killed down with no bad effects on the stock; but the greedy hunter snares all alike, using the hens for food.

Fortunately, the Monaul has been largely exported to Europe, and although at first some difficulty was experienced in rearing it in captivity, this has been got over, and it is now largely bred, at any rate on the Continent. The bird, indeed, possesses a peculiarly tameable disposition; even in a cage it is much steadier than most Pheasants, and Mr. Tegetmeier informs us that he has seen Monauls at the residence of his friend, Mr. J. J. Stone, in the Welsh hills, enjoying full liberty, and as tame as the other poultry. This is the more remarkable, as the Monaul in its wild state is particularly strong on the wing and given to taking long flights. The cock often sails on expanded wings, offering a magnificent spectacle.

In the treatment of the Monaul in captivity regard must be had to its habit of digging, which speedily renders its enclosure rough and unsightly; and particular care should be taken to have the pen well drained in consequence. The birds should, of course, be allowed to exercise their natural propensity; and hence, in consideration of their quiet habits, it will be found as well to clip their wings or pinion them, and give them as large a run as possible instead of confining them in an aviary. Turned loose in a garden after the crops were



IMPEYAN PHEASANTS.

lifted, their operations would probably be found of great use.

In the treatment of both old and young their taste for grubs and raw vegetable food should always be borne in mind, and plenty of maggots, chopped onions, potatoes, etc., provided, with a full allowance of custard for chicks.

I sincerely hope that the Monaul will be taken up as a real domestic bird, for few present so many good points. Although his form cannot be called graceful, his carriage is upright and dignified, and his glittering splendour puts even the Peacock to shame. Moreover, he is excellent eating, and carries a great deal of meat, being of an ideal build for a table bird. Add to this that he has a mellow plaintive call—a very rare attribute in this family—and an unusually good temper, and his list of virtues becomes one that any candidate for domestication might envy.

I had almost forgotten to mention the very striking courting attitude of this bird. This somewhat resembles that of the Turkey-cock, the head being bent down on the neck, the wings opened, and the tail raised and spread; but the feathers lie close, and do not bristle like the Turkey's. In this position, with gold, copper, silver, and steel all glittering on his plumage, the Monaul minces and even hops about for the edification of his hen, who appears to appreciate his efforts, as she has been seen to call him from his meal apparently only for the purpose of making him display.

Only three other species of Monaul are known, as I remarked above, and I think one of these is very doubtful. This is the Bronze-backed Monaul (*Lophophorus impeyanus*), which is only known by a few skins of cocks which have been procured in the little State of

Chamba, in South Cashmere. In form and size it resembles the common species, but has the lower back greenish bronze instead of white, and the under-surface of the body glossy green instead of black. It seems that the Chamba shikaris or native hunters say that this bird is merely a "sport" from the ordinary kind, and as the Monaul is known to vary in colour, like so many Pheasants, I think they are probably right.

The other two species, however, are very distinct; both have been exhibited at the London Zoo, but they are very rare in captivity. One is L'Huys's Monaul (*Lophophorus l'huysu*), from Western Szechuen and Eastern Koko-nor; this is a larger and finer bird than the ordinary species, having more of the red and gold tints in its plumage, and much of the tail glossy purple and green; the crest is of ordinary feathers. The hen has a white back, and is thus easily distinguishable from the common Monaul hen, though the cock shows little white in this part. I well remember seeing this bird in the Zoo years ago.

The last species, Sclater's Monaul (*Lophophorus sclateri*) is about the size of the common bird, but less handsome, having a rather coarse head, with no crest, but instead a covering of short curly metallic purple and green feathers; the white on the rump extends right down to the root of the tail, which is also tipped with white. This part in the hen is cream-colour finely pencilled with dark brown, making her readily distinguishable from the hens of the other species.

This bird comes from the hills east and south-east of Sadiya in North-East Assam; the first specimen came from the Mishmi Hills, and was presented to the London Zoo by the late Dr. Jerdon, so well known as a naturalist by his work on Indian birds and beasts. When the natives of these hills can be weaned of their objectionable custom of head-hunting, no doubt this Monaul, and probably other fine birds also, can be expected to become more accessible. Meanwhile I would invite the attention of fanciers who want to rear high class and beautiful birds, but are deterred by a cold and bleak situation, to his commoner and more beautiful rival, which is almost the most brilliant bird in the world.



ARGUS PHEASANTS,

CHAPTER V.

SILVER AND OTHER KALEEGE PHEASANTS.

The group of Pheasants known as Kaleeges are not so uniform in appearance as those that have been dealt with so far; but they are not hard to distinguish, nevertheless. In size they are about equal to the common Pheasant or larger; in form they somewhat recall the lighter breeds of poultry, especially in their vertically folded tails; both sexes are crested, and have a red skin round the eye, which can expand upward and downward in the cocks when excited. The cocks are spurred, and are very pugnacious; they have a curious habit of standing up and producing a whizzing noise by buzzing with their wings. The Kaleeges naturally fall into two types; those in which the cock has a full drooping crest and long curved tail, like the silver Pheasant, and those in which the cock's crest is narrow and projecting, and the tail little longer than the hen's, like the Lineated Pheasant. Few of the latter type are worth keeping, not being possessed of beauty either of form or colour. The Kaleeges are forest birds, inhabiting the lower slopes of the Himalayas, in India, and other warm climates, but they are quite hardy in England. They are, however, quite useless as game birds, being very pugnacious, unwilling to rise on the wing, and flying inconveniently low for shooting when they do so.

THE SILVER KALEEGE.

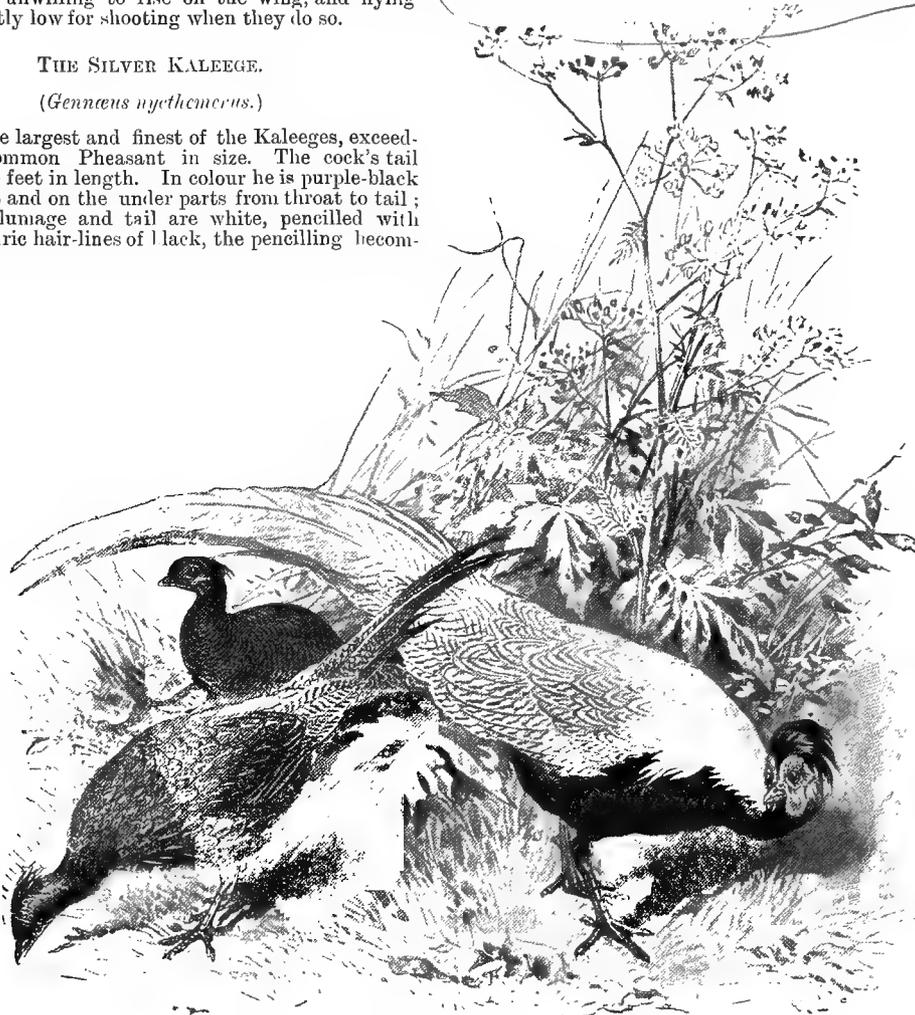
(*Gennæus nythemærus*.)

This is the largest and finest of the Kaleeges, exceeding the common Pheasant in size. The cock's tail reaches two feet in length. In colour he is purple-black on the crest and on the under parts from throat to tail; the upper plumage and tail are white, pencilled with fine concentric hair-lines of black, the pencilling becom-

ing strong and bold on the feathers of the wing and tail. The centre tail-feathers, however, are unmarked, and at a little distance the whole upper plumage looks white. Some specimens are more strongly pencilled than others. The bill is light green, the bare red skin of the face has a rich velvety surface, and the legs are bright red, the long spurs being white. The bill, legs, etc., in the hen are not so bright; her plumage is plain snuffy brown, without any pencilling, except on the belly, where there is a little black pencilling, and on the outer pairs of tail-feathers, which are black pencilled with white.

Young cocks somewhat resemble the hen, but have buff pencilling on the wings, and have black breasts and black-and-white pencilled underparts below this.

The Silver Pheasant is a native of Southern China, but is now rare in a wild state in its native country, those exposed for sale there having generally been bred in Japan. It has long been known in Europe, and is the easiest of all the Pheasants to keep and breed, while in beauty it is unsurpassed, its outlines being more graceful than those of any other member of the family, and its colouration equally chaste and striking. It is also so easily tameable that it may be allowed full liberty, and might no doubt be rendered a common poultry-yard bird in a few generations. But it has one drawback in its extremely vicious temper. Even the





REEVES'S PHEASANTS.

hens are savage with weaker birds; while the cocks will not only fight each other and occasionally kill their own hens, but, even in the breeding season, get so intolerably pugnacious as to attack human beings, especially ladies and children. And as they are big, powerful birds, and armed with very sharp and strong spurs, which they well know how to use, their assault is far from being a joke. Of course all are not so bad

as this, and no doubt a few years' selection for temper would result in the production of a sufficiently quiet breed. Although not so good for the table as most Pheasants, the domestic Silver Pheasant is found to be convenient, about February and March, for that purpose; and very few birds of any kind can equal it as an outdoor ornament, so that it is well worth a certain amount of care in cultivation. As it is, the Silver Pheasant is by far the best bird for a beginner, for, in addition to the good qualities I have alluded to above, it has those of bearing confinement remarkably well and maintaining the purity of its plumage, even after long incarceration in a cage or hutch. Moreover, it does not make any unpleasant noise, so that it is admirably suited for a town neighbourhood, where even Chanticleer may be voted a nuisance and the dismal yell of the Peacock or the merry whoop of the Argus would bring down the wrath of a whole parish on the luckless fancier who ventured on keeping them. In the spring the cock Silver Pheasant shows a great enlargement of the red velvet skin of the face, which rises above the eyes into two combs and hangs down below the cheeks like wattles, but his beauty can hardly be said to be improved thereby.

SWINHOE'S KALEEGE.

(*Gennaeus swinhoei*.)

This species much resembles the Silver Pheasant in form, but is smaller and has a rather shorter tail. In the colour of the face, feet, and bill it resembles that bird, but differs much in plumage, being generally of a very richly glossed purple-black, set off by a white crest and centre tail-feathers. The upper back is also white, flanked on each side by a large patch of rich metallic maroon-red, and the edges of the wing-feathers have a green gloss. The whole effect is extremely rich and striking, and the bird has very few rivals even in this splendid family.

The hen is closely mottled with buff and black, thus differing from the hens of other Kaleeges, which are more uniform; her short crest, red face, and hen-like tail will distinguish her from other mottled hen Pheasants.

Young cocks, as usual, exhibit a mixture of both plumages.

Swinhoe's Pheasant is only found in a wild state in the Chinese island of Formosa; it has bred well in captivity in Europe, but is not so common as many other Pheasants as yet. Its singular beauty, however, combining grace of form with a brilliant and striking colouration, renders it one of the most noticeable kinds, and hence it is well worth including here.

THE LINEATED KALEEGE.

(*Gennaeus lineatus*.)

This is the only species of the short-tailed, prick-crested type of Kaleege worthy of attention at the hands of the fancier. It is about the size of the common Pheasant, with a very hen-like tail, and the usual red skin round the eye. The cock is black on the crest and below, like the Silver Pheasant, and above of a delicate grey, the colour being produced by a fine and close zig-zag pencilling of black and white, very similar to that seen on the males of many of the Duck-kind. The pencilling gets coarser on the wings and tail, and the inner or upper webs of the two central feathers of the latter are pure white, affording a pleasing contrast to the rest of the plumage. There are always some white streaks on the sides of the breast, and sometimes the whole lower plumage may be thus marked. The species seems to be generally rather variable, the legs ranging from pinkish flesh-colour to bluish horn-colour, and the eyes from brown to white.

The hen is brown, streaked and spotted with white on the forepart of the body, and with the side-tail feathers pencilled coarsely and irregularly with black and white.

This Pheasant extends from Burma to Siam. It is not very common in confinement, although it has bred repeatedly in the London Zoo. It is well worth its keep, as its plumage, though quiet, has a delicate beauty of its own, and it crosses well with the Silver Pheasant, to which, in spite of the difference in form, it is evidently very nearly related. The hybrid is a most beautifully pencilled bird, and is—the male at all events—practically indistinguishable from a true species, Anderson's Silver Pheasant, which is found in Upper Burma and Annam, and has been described under several names. Some Annam specimens of this bird are, or were recently, on view at the Paris Jardin des Plantes. The stuffed bird shown

in the photograph* is the type of the species—*i e.*, the specimen first procured—from which it was described, and is in the Calcutta Museum. A specimen has also lived at the London Zoo. Considering the admiration which accurate marking always evokes among English fanciers, the wonderful regularity and beauty of the pencilling of this bird ought to make it one of the most popular of the Pheasants, if it be introduced. And there is great hope of this, inasmuch as the birds have bred in Paris, and when I saw them seemed to be doing very well. The hen of this species is brown, with white V-shaped pencilling on the breast, and all the tail feathers uniform brown alike.

CHAPTER VI.

EARED, GOLDEN, AND AMHERST PHEASANTS.

The Eared Pheasants, or *Crossoptilon*s, are a very natural and easily distinguishable group, closely allied to the *Kaleeges*. Like those birds, they have a folded hen-like tail, and bare red faces, but they also possess some very marked characteristics of their own.

They are big, heavy birds, equalling a large fowl in size, and are clothed in a peculiarly loose-textured, hairy-looking plumage, admirably adapted for defending them against the dry cold of their natural habitat, the higher mountains of Central and Eastern Asia. The first pair of tail feathers are particularly loose and filamentous, and overhang the others. The ends of all the tail feathers are glossy steel-blue, but with the exception of this, the plumage shows no bright colours; and the female is coloured exactly like the male, only differing from him in not possessing spurs. All the species have a black velvety cap and white throat, the white extending behind up the sides of the face and terminating in two ear-like tufts, which give the bird a very quaint appearance. There are only a few species, differing chiefly in body colour, and only one of these is well known in confinement.

THE MANCHURIAN EARED PHEASANT.

(*Crossoptilon manchuricum*.)

The native country of this bird is the hills of China. In colour it is the duller of its kind, being dark blackish brown; but this hue is set off by the red face and legs, and contrasts well with the white whiskers and white tail tipped with steel-blue.

It has been known in Europe for a considerable time, and does well there, being of a quiet disposition, and easily domesticated. Mr. Tegetmeier states that he has seen it in this condition in the Welsh hills, as tame as a common fowl. The male is said not to show himself off to the female, as if conscious that he has no superior beauty to display; though this does not prevent other male birds without special adornment, such as the common pigeon, from making conspicuous exhibitions of themselves! The *Crossoptilon*, from its steady disposition, would probably stand showing, and would doubtless thrive in situations too bleak for ordinary poultry.

The London Zoo has possessed another species—the Tibetan Eared Pheasant (*Crossoptilon tibetanum*), which I was fortunate enough to see there. This is a striking looking bird, all the plumage except the cap and the tip of the tail being white, well set off by the red face and feet. There is also a beautiful species whose body-colour is blue-grey (*Crossoptilon auratum*), but this has not yet been kept in captivity, so far as I am aware. This is a pity, as it is certainly the most remarkable of all; but I hope that in time the whole genus of these

fine birds will be better known. Birds that can be completely domesticated are not so common that we can afford to neglect any of them.

Very different from the soberly-clad and bulky Eared Pheasants are the beautiful gold and Amherst Pheasants, which have no very near relatives, and are almost unsurpassed among birds for gorgeousness of attire. They are not large birds, being inferior in bulk to the hen of the common Pheasant, although the tails of the cocks are very long. This sex also possesses a crest, and a cape or ruff of broad feathers on the neck, which can be expanded and twisted over from one side to the other when the ornament is being displayed to the hens, for these birds favour the one-sided method of showing off.

The hens of the two species are as big as the cocks,



GOLDEN PHEASANTS.

* I have to thank my chief, Major Alcock, I.M.S., Superintendent of the Indian Museum, for kind permission to use this photograph for reproduction in this work.

and are much alike, resembling that of the common Pheasant in general form and style. But they are easily distinguished from all other hen Pheasants by their brown plumage boldly barred across with black; and from each other by characters which I shall mention later on, although at first sight they might easily be confounded.

Both species come from China, and are frequently seen in captivity; they are easy to rear, but very bad tempered, the cocks not only fighting savagely with each other, but even being apt to kill the hens on occasion. They will interbreed in confinement, and the hybrids are fertile either with each other or with the parent stocks, although the two species are most undoubtedly distinct.

THE GOLD PHEASANT.

(*Chrysolophus pictus*.)

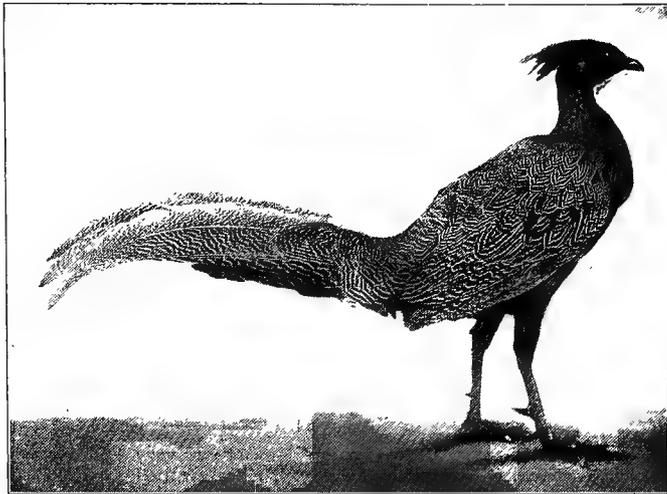
This species has—in the male—a full silky crest covering the whole head, a square-tipped ruff, and the plumage mostly possessing a peculiar glossy lustre, which wonderfully enhances its rich colours, and renders its owner about the most brilliant bird in existence. The crest is golden-yellow, and the ruff rich orange barred with glossy purple; the cheeks and throat buff; the upper part of the back is dark metallic green, and the saddle golden-yellow fringed with red at the sides. The shoulders, breast, and flanks are bright red, and the innermost quills of the wing dark glossy blue. The flights are dark brown edged externally with buff, and the tail is black mottled with buff, the centre tail feathers being spotted, and the rest barred obliquely. Along the base of the tail extend some "side hangers" of scarlet.

The bill and legs are yellow, and the eyes pale yellow also. The hen also has yellow legs and a slight wash of gold on the head; moreover, the brown of her plumage has a yellowish cast. She has dark brown eyes, and by this can be distinguished from a young cock not yet in colour, for the cocks do not attain to their full plumage till the second autumn, but the light-coloured eye appears early and distinguishes them long before this.

This splendid Pheasant is one of the oldest fancy



MANCHURIAN EARED PHEASANT.



ANDERSON'S SILVER PHEASANT.

birds, having been exported from China more than a century ago, both to India and to Europe; it is, of course, well established with us now, and freely bred in captivity. It can be turned out and will thrive in a state of freedom, having run wild in the United States. But, although smaller, it is more than a match for the common Pheasants, owing no doubt to its greater lightness and activity of movement, and hence is not a desirable inhabitant of the woods where these are preserved. It is well suited for town fanciers, not being noisy; and if a number of cocks are brought up together and kept away from hens, they may be safely associated, and form a most gorgeous ornament on a grass run. At the London Zoo some years ago they had half-a-dozen so confined, and very handsome they looked.

Cock Gold Pheasants are of some value as supplying feathers which are much esteemed for making "flies" for salmon-fishing, and I have even heard of the poor birds being plucked for this purpose. I should imagine, however, that the cruel practice would defeat its object in time, as too frequent plucking would certainly impair the quality of the feathers, both in texture and colour. If the birds are well looked after, their naturally moulted feathers ought to be in good condition, and as the most brilliant ones tend to come away almost all at once, they could be readily collected by penning up the moulting birds for a few days. Gold Pheasants stand confinement better than any other species I know. I have seen a cock in a dealer's possession in fine plumage, although confined in a hutch not larger than a show-pen for Turkeys. And, speaking generally, one could keep these birds almost anywhere where there is room for Bantams. Unfortunately, although in confinement they do not seem particularly nervous, they cannot be trusted with full liberty like Silver Pheasants, as they cannot be relied upon to stay. They are also not so long-lived as are those birds.

There exists a curious variety of the Golden Pheasant which has been described as a distinct species—the Black-throated Golden Pheasant (*Chrysolophus obscurus*). It is, however, only known in captivity, and is probably merely a "sport" or accidental variation. In this breed the male's cheeks and throat are nearly black, and the shoulders are deep blackish red; while the centre tail feathers are barred like the rest, instead of being spotted. The hens are darker on the head and neck than the common birds, and the chicks are likewise darker. In the peculiarities of the male there is visible an approach to the Amherst Pheasant, next to be described, and they may conceivably indicate the

presence of a strain of the blood of that species; but, considering that the common Peafowl, which has not been much crossed with the Javan bird, yet shows a resemblance to this in the male of the black-winged breed, this explanation is unlikely.

THE AMHERST PHEASANT.

(*Chrysolophus amherstiae*.)

Had not the beautiful Kaleege described in the last chapter already gained the name of the Silver Pheasant, that title would undoubtedly have been given to the present species; for at first sight they seem to correspond much as do the gold and silver varieties of so many breeds of poultry. The observant fancier will, however, notice several important points of difference between the two species, quite apart from the more striking one of colour. The Amherst Pheasant is a bigger bird than the Golden, with a proportionately longer neck and smaller head—differences observable in both sexes, which likewise agree in having a bare patch of a livid pale blue or green around the eye; whereas the Gold Pheasant's face is nearly completely feathered, and what little skin is visible is yellow in the cock and reddish in the hen. Moreover, the Amherst cock has a smaller crest than his rival, this being confined to the back of the head; his ruff is composed of rounded feathers; his tail, with its side hangers, is much larger and longer, and his plumage is closer in texture, and lacks the glossy appearance so noticeable in that of the other species. In colour he is nearly as striking; the head (except the crest), the neck, shoulders, breast, and upper back being dark metallic green laced with black, passing into metallic dark blue on the wings; the crest blood-red, the ruff white laced with black, the saddle pale yellow fringed with red; the underparts below the breast white, slightly washed with buff on the hinder part of the flanks; the centre tail-feathers white, barred and speckled with black; and the side tail-feathers barred black and buff, set off by the broad scarlet-tipped side hangers; the eye is white, and the legs bluish-grey.

The hen is more heavily barred with black than that of the other species, and shows no tinge of yellow in her brown plumage, but has the head shaded with dark cinnamon. But her most obvious point of difference from the Gold hen is her bare livid eye-patch, which, with her bluish feet, should serve to distinguish her at once. And, as many Amherst Pheasants have more or less Gold blood, these points should be looked out for in buying stock.

In the young male's change of plumage, and in general disposition and habits, the Amherst Pheasant closely agrees with the Gold; but it comes from a colder climate, inhabiting the mountains of West China and East Tibet.

The first living specimens brought to Europe, early in the last century, were the property of Lady Amherst, whence the name always used for the bird. For many years no more arrived, and when some did come there was a difficulty in getting hens, and Amherst cocks were therefore crossed with females of the Gold species, the hybrid progeny being bred back to the Amherst until the strain was pure again. Even now the species is much scarcer and dearer than the Gold.

The male hybrid of the first generation is a magnificent bird, exceeding either pure species in beauty and size. In structural points and colour he most resembles the Gold, having a red breast, a brown-and-black tail, and a full crest like that bird; but on his neck he bears a white ruff like the Amherst, and shows the dark green of that species on the throat and shoulders. In having the crest of a glowing orange-red, and a more or less developed yellow band at the upper part of the breast, he resembles neither parent species.

The three-quarter-bred Amherst hybrid nearly resembles the pure bird of that species, but shows the "bar sinister" in the extension of the red crest to the

forehead and in a strong buff wash on the under parts and flanks. I have never seen a bird with three-fourths of Gold blood, so I cannot give the characteristics of such a one. It is well known, however, as I stated above, that these hybrids will breed any way, even between themselves; but in spite of the great beauty of the first cross, breeders have chiefly confined themselves to obtaining the pure Amherst by breeding back to it. It may with very much reason be asked why birds which can be bred together like this when in captivity do not get hopelessly mixed up in the wild state, since their ranges are contiguous; but the fact appears to be that the Amherst keeps as a rule to its own ground at a higher elevation, and drives off the Golden species when this invades its territory. Thus the chance of intercrossing is not so great as it would be if the species were absolutely on an equality in the matter of size and habitat.

The Chinese state that when snares baited with grain are laid for the Amherst Pheasants, the birds are sufficiently intelligent to try to sweep the corn away with their long tails in order to eat it without risk. This sounds very improbable, and I have seen the story alluded to slightly by a very high authority on game birds. But native accounts of the habits of animals, absurd as they often are and appear to be, have a way of sometimes turning out to be correct, so that I suspend my judgment on the point, and should very much like to know if breeders of this Pheasant have observed it to be endowed with any peculiar amount of intelligence.

Before leaving the subject of these fine Pheasants, it is necessary to mention that both the Amherst and the Gold, and also their hybrid, have been crossed with the Common Pheasant. And the remarkable thing about the results of these crosses is that they all resemble each other so closely that they might be imagined to have had the same parents. There are male specimens of each in the South Kensington Museum, and all have a rich cinnamon colour, with purple neck and buff tail. Their size is large, and their form graceful. This similarity of the offspring of such very differently-coloured species as the Amherst and Gold Pheasants, when crossed with another, is paralleled by a fact too familiar to Mule breeders, that yellow as well as green Canaries, unless specially gifted with prepotency, are likely to throw dark Mules to Goldfinch cocks. And thus one might fairly argue, as the colour peculiarities of the Amherst tend to be swamped in its hybrids, that the Gold or something very like it was the original form whence both species were long ago derived.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COMMON PHEASANT AND ITS ALLIES.

The birds which are most familiar to everybody under the name of Pheasants as table delicacies and objects of sport are a very distinct group; but the species belonging thereto seem to be as closely related as the varieties of a well-marked breed of poultry such as the Ham-burgh, and as certain to get mongrelised and inter-mixed when they come in contact; for they interbreed very readily, and the hybrids are quite fertile every way. The various species differ only in colour, and sometimes slightly in size; in all the males have a bare extensible red skin round the eyes, a long tail of very pointed form, and loose copious feathering on the saddle. There are a pair of small tufts at the back of the head, which are erected when the bird is courting; and he assumes the one-sided attitude when showing off, also expanding the face-skin.

In all the males the neck is purple, glossed with green, and the tail usually olive, transversely barred with black and fringed with maroon. The hens have the face mostly feathered, possess no ear-tufts, and have

shorter tails than the cocks, though of a similar pointed form. Their plumage is mottled with light drab and black, and all are very much alike. Their sharp tails are the best characteristic for distinguishing them from other hen Pheasants. It is true, however, that the hens of the ruffed Pheasants described in the last chapter have a similar style of tail, but their different marking distinguishes them at once.

The Pheasants of the present type are found wild all across the temperate parts of the Old World from Ireland to China and Japan. They are stronger on the wing than most Pheasants, and are very hardy, bearing both cold and heat well; while one species at least (*Phasianus principalis*, the White-winged Pheasant) is tolerant of wet also. They are not a match for several of the other groups when it comes to a fight, and it is this, perhaps, that limits their natural extension into some countries; for they have been artificially introduced into many places where they do not naturally occur, and have thriven well there.

They have a rather wild disposition which, while fitting them well for the cover, renders them less desirable for the aviary than many other kinds. But very tame individuals may occur, and they are quite worth keeping for their beauty alone, although so well known.

THE COMMON PHEASANT.

(*Phasianus colchicus*.)

This form is the only one naturally existing in Europe and Western Asia, and it is suspected that it was introduced into the British Isles by the Romans, who are known to have kept and bred the bird in confinement. With us it has almost ceased to exist as a species, owing to much inter-breeding with the Ring-necked Pheasant of China, and to a less extent with the Green Pheasant of Japan, both of which I shall have occasion to describe, as they are the only other Pheasants of this type easily obtainable. Some people still like this old-fashioned "dark-necked" breed the best, as it is less liable to stray than some hybrids, and it is accordingly not unfrequently offered for sale. A pure-bred male of the Colchian Pheasant should have a somewhat uniform appearance, the dark bronze-green of the crown not contrasting strikingly with the purple neck; and the head and neck should show no white. The deep golden bay of the breast should extend to the flanks also, the former being laced and the latter spangled with deep metallic purple. The flat of the wing should be sandy brown, and the saddle maroon-red. Green in the saddle or white on the neck are indications of the blood of the Chinese species, and most birds display these more or less nowadays.

This Pheasant or its hybrids—it is now necessary to make this qualification—has crossed with other species to a most remarkable extent. I have in the last chapter alluded to its hybrids with the ruffed types, which hybrids are always, I believe, infertile. The same remark applies to its hybrids with the common fowl and the Blackcock, which are not very uncommon. Fowl-and-Pheasant hybrids favour the Pheasant most in form, and have no combs or wattles; but they show different colours in their plumage, much as fowls do, although with obvious traces of the Pheasant. They are generally the offspring of a male Pheasant with a hen. This fact was known many centuries ago to Chaucer, who speaks of "the Pheasant, scorner of the cock by night." He evidently thought the Pheasant's encroachments on Chanticleer's harem were made under the cover of darkness, though as a matter of fact the wild bird is, I believe, the better fighter, and can defeat his rival in open day. In the case of the Blackcock, however, that gallant Grouse has been seen to defeat the cock Pheasant in fair fight, although he is unarmed with spurs. Our more or less mongrel Pheasants vary in colouration, much as does the Peacock; thus both white and pied varieties are produced, which might be propagated by selective

breeding. But, curiously enough, crossing a white and a coloured bird will not result in a pied offspring, but some of the young will resemble one parent and some the other. Another curious variety is what is known as the Bohemian Pheasant, for no particular reason apparently. This is evidently analogous to the buff varieties of poultry, being of a cream colour, with the usual spangling and lacing, and with the dark neck much less glossy. It breeds true, but I have never seen either a specimen or a description of the hen of the variety. It may occur with or without the ring on the neck.

THE CHINESE OR RING-NECKED PHEASANT.

(*Phasianus torquatus*.)

Introduced into England more than a century ago, this native of China is not likely to be met with pure, unless imported. It varies even in its wild state, but in its most typical form is very distinct in colour from the Colchian breed, and much more striking in appearance. The male has a light bronze crown with pure white eyebrows, and a broad white ring all round the base of the neck, these markings finely showing up the rich purple colour. The breast and flanks, although marked as in the older breed, are quite different in ground colour, this being bay only on the breast, while the flanks are light golden buff; the flat of the wing and the saddle are French-grey, the latter glossed with green. The whole plumage thus presents a variegated appearance most characteristic of the species.

I cannot give any criterion for distinguishing the hens.

The Chinese Pheasant, like his human fellow-countrymen, is very hardy, and will thrive anywhere, bearing the cold of a United States winter and the heat of a Bengal summer quite well. It is also a good breeder and bears confinement well. Two hens in the Calcutta Zoological Gardens were confined without a cock, and one was actually found sitting on eggs close up to the front of the pen, thus showing how tame some Pheasants even of the wilder types will become. It is an interesting fact that when Gold Pheasants are sent over to Calcutta from China, they are almost always males, the wily Chinese assigning as their mates the hens of the present species. Once only, in the course of nearly half a century's experience, has Mr. Rutledge received a Golden hen, and this was quite recently. I saw the bird, which was exactly like European-bred specimens. I may mention that most of the Gold Pheasants sold in China are, like the Silver ones, really bred in Japan.

THE GREEN OR VERSICOLOR PHEASANT.

(*Phasianus versicolor*.)

Japan has two Pheasants of its own, of which the present species is one, and it is certainly the most distinct of its kind, no doubt owing to ages of isolation. The cock has the breast and flanks dark uniform metallic green with no markings, reaching right up to the purple neck; the crown is also dark with no light eyebrows. The flat of the wing and the saddle, however, are French grey as in the Ring-necked form. The only bay colour to be seen is on the shoulders, so that the whole effect is very different from that produced by the plumage of the other two species. The hens of this kind are distinguishable from the others by being much more heavily marked with black, though this is best appreciated on comparison.

This Pheasant was introduced many years ago, and, the hen of the first pair being lost, the cock was crossed with common Pheasant hens, and the progeny bred back till the true type was re-established. Although more have been obtained, and the birds bred and turned out in the open, so as to become to a certain extent intermixed with the ordinary mongrel Pheasants of the

coverts, the species is still not very abundant and rather dear.

This is a pity, as it is a very beautiful bird, and produces most handsome hybrids with the ordinary breed, the cross much enhancing the beauty of their lacing. In one case the Japanese birds were observed to keep true and remain in one locality, but how long this would last is doubtful. As a bird suited for both covert and aviary this species possesses double recommendations, and hence is one of the best to keep, as it would be easy to dispose of eggs and surplus birds, at any rate till the variety becomes much commoner than it is at present. The same remark applies with even greater force to the magnificent Reeves's Pheasant, which I shall have occasion to treat of in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

ELLIOT'S, COPPER, AND REEVES'S PHEASANTS.

These birds bear a close general resemblance in form and habits to the species last described, and are generally classed by naturalists in the same genus. They differ, however, in some minor points, and especially in

that the cocks have the saddle composed of ordinary firm rounded feathers.

The hens bear a general resemblance to those of the common Pheasant type, but are of a warmer brown, and have tails with the outer pairs of feathers more or less cinnamon tipped with white. They are also sufficiently distinct from each other to be recognised without any special difficulty.

The species are all hardy enough, but not so easy to manage as some of the others.

ELLIOT'S PHEASANT.

(*Phasianus ellioti*.)

The plumage of the male of this species is very peculiar and characteristic. The general hue is a very rich golden bay without lacing, but varied by a white belly and two white bars on the wing. The head and neck are whitish grey, with the throat black all the way down to the breast; the saddle is black laced with white, and the tail pale grey barred with cinnamon. Altogether the bird looks like some even-marked fancy breed; he is about the size of the common Pheasant.

The hen's mottled brown plumage is diversified by white in the centre of the belly and black on the throat, markings which will distinguish her from any other hen Pheasant.

This species comes from China, and John Chinaman



COMMON PHEASANTS.

condescends to send out true pairs of it. It does not seem to thrive in captivity so well as some other species, and the cock is addicted to the cruel habit of killing the female, in common with the next species. Such birds, of course, want careful watching, and besides the plan of tying the legs I recommended in the introduction, it might be well to try clipping the cock's wings and allowing the hen full power of flight, with a shelf to retire to on which some food and water could be placed. The paroxysm of unnatural fury appears to come on after pairing in this species and the next; but it is probably often caused by coldness or obstinacy on the part of the hen—in some cases, at all events. At any rate, the more liberty the birds have the less likely are such dispositions to manifest themselves or give rise to fatal results.

THE COPPER OR SOEMMERRING'S PHEASANT.

(*Phasianus soemmerringii*.)

Not only gold and silver, but also the baser metal, are represented in the feathers of the Pheasant family, for the present bird well deserves its name, the male being of a warm brown, with a rich copper head and neck, and bright copper pencilling on the back and saddle. There is a "sport" formerly named as a species—the Sparkling Pheasant (*Phasianus scintillans*), in which there is also some white pencilling on the saddle, but this is not now considered as distinct, as it occurs together with the type. The tail in both is buff barred with cinnamon, and is proportionately longer than that of the common Pheasant, though the bird itself is not larger.

The hen, however, has a shorter tail than the common Pheasant hen; she is of a mottled brown colour without any specially characteristic point except the white-tipped cinnamon outer tail-feathers, which will at once distinguish her from any hen Pheasant of similar type except Elliot's, which has special markings of her own, as detailed above.

The Copper Pheasant is a Japanese bird, but, unlike the Green, is not found in nearly all the islands, but only in Hondo and Kiu-siu. The male has a most unpleasant note, like the filing of a saw; in captivity, as above remarked, he has a very bad character for ruffianly behaviour to his wife. But he certainly is a splendid-looking bird in his rich, though comparatively sober plumage, which many people would admire more than the brighter and more strongly contrasted hues of other well-known Pheasants. I read a story some time back entitled, "The Copper Pheasant," in which the heroine had copied a dress, the wearing of which caused a great deal of complications, from the plumage of this bird, an example which might be followed with regard to other species—at any rate, for "fancy dress" purposes, if not for every-day wear.

REEVES'S PHEASANT.

(*Phasianus Reevesii*.)

First described by Marco Polo, the celebrated Venetian traveller in the middle ages, this splendid Pheasant was very long in getting introduced to the general body of European naturalists. Now, however, it bids fair to be particularly well known, having been turned out to breed in the open in several parts of the British Islands, for, as a native of North China, it is found very hardy even in Scotland.

It is a very big bird, as large as the lighter breeds of poultry, and the cock's tail is disproportionately long, reaching nearly two yards in the centre feathers. The colour is equally striking in this sex, being generally of a golden yellow laced with black; on the flat of the wing and the flanks, however, the ground colour is white and the lacing black and chocolate respectively. The crown is white and the face black, succeeded by a white collar and then by another black one. The tail

is pale grey barred with black. The hen is very beautifully mottled with two shades of brown, and has a dark head, with buff eyebrows and throat, and some white speckling on the upper back. Her tail is not much longer in proportion than that of the ordinary hen Pheasants, but her size and peculiar markings will distinguish her from the hen of any other species.

The length of this bird's tail makes a large space necessary if that appendage is to be kept in show condition, and so it is less suitable for amateurs than most other species, in spite of its great beauty and very unique appearance. The young also are not very easy to rear in confinement, although doing well in the open. As I said above, this species has been taken up as a sporting bird, and is now regularly shot in some places, and may even appear in the market. It is eminently suited for this purpose, being very showy, a very rapid flier, and excellent for the table.

On this account it is likely to become more popular, and eggs for placing under ordinary Pheasants to be in demand. But it should be mentioned that for shooting this species should only be turned out in hilly, broken ground with heavy undergrowth, so that the birds cannot run along as they would otherwise do, but have to rise at once, affording a magnificent spectacle and a chance for a shot. A curious fact is that, although so rapid on the wing, the cock Reeves's Pheasant can stop dead by turning short and spreading his long tail, which thus acts as a brake. Mr. J. G. Millais, so well known as an artist and sportsman, has given a most beautiful drawing of the bird in the act, which is reproduced in the last edition of Mr. Tegetmeier's work, and reminds one strikingly of Japanese pictures. Reeves's Pheasant is a very quiet species, the cock's note being a most remarkable one for a bird of the kind—a feeble pipe like that of some little song-bird. This noble Pheasant has been crossed with the ordinary mongrel birds and with the Ring-necked Pheasant, the progeny once at all events in the latter case proving fertile. But this is not usually the case in hybrids from this Pheasant with its relatives, and both from this cause and from the disposition of the species to drive away the ordinary Pheasants, it does not get intermixed with them.

Before leaving the long-tailed Pheasants, it is well to mention a few other species which are sometimes heard of, but seldom obtainable. The White-winged Pheasant (*Phasianus principalis*) comes from the western frontier of Afghanistan; it is much like the old *colchicus*, but with white wings. It frequents swampy reed-beds, and swims and wades like a Moorhen. Thus it would be a very good bird for localities too damp for ordinary poultry or game. It has been once exhibited in the London Zoological Gardens. Another fine species, the Mongolian Pheasant (*Phasianus mongolicus*), is now exhibited there. The cock is very like the *colchicus*, but has a narrow white collar and pearl eyes, and is a larger bird.

The Cheer Pheasant (*Catreus wallichii*) is a Himalayan species of dull plumage, the cock being little brighter than the hen. The tail is like that of the common Pheasant, but both cock and hen bear a projecting crest like some Kaleeges.

The Koklass (*Pucrasia*) is also Himalayan, and has a tail of pointed shape, but rather short. The cock has a dark green head with three crests, two long ones at the sides and a shorter one in the middle. His body plumage is chocolate, silver-grey, and black, the colours varying so much in extent that it is doubtful how many species there are; probably there is only one, which is now breaking up into different varieties which have not yet become fixed. The hen is mottled brown, and may be distinguished from all other hen Pheasants of similar style by having all her feathers pointed instead of rounded, as in most birds, the same peculiarity occurring in the cock.

It should be recollected that only long and sharp tailed Pheasants are of use for sporting purposes, except the Monaul, which splendid bird really deserves, as I said



THE COMMON MONAUL PHEASANTS.

when treating of him, complete domestication, although quite fit to figure as a game bird.

CHAPTER IX.

JUNGLE-FOWL.

Four species of Jungle-fowl are known, all bearing a general resemblance to domestic fowls rather over Bantam size. Their carriage is, however, more like that of a Pheasant than that of a tame fowl, the tail being kept low. The cocks have single combs of small size, and very long and sharp spurs; the hens are of course spurless, and are provided with very small combs and wattles when these are present at all.

These birds inhabit South-Eastern Asia, and resemble Pheasants in their general habits. Of the various groups of Pheasants the ruffed ones (gold and Amherst) seem to come nearest to the Jungle-fowls, a ruff and elongated tail-coverts or side-hangers being present in both groups, and in them only in the family; but in the form of the tail itself there is a great difference between them, and in this respect the Kaleeges resemble the Jungle-fowl very closely. The various species of Jungle-fowl are very distinct from each other, although they will interbreed and produce more or less fertile hybrids. Only two are easily obtainable, but all have been exhibited in the London Zoological Gardens; and it seems worth while to treat of them all in detail, on account of their exceptional interest as relatives of the ancestor of our poultry.

THE RED JUNGLE-FOWL.

(*Gallus gallus*.)

This bird is also called by various authors *Gallus ferrugineus* and *Gallus bankiva*, and popularly the Bankiva Jungle-fowl, but I have preferred using the name commonly given it by Europeans in India, of which country it is a native, ranging east to the Philippine Islands.

The cock is coloured like a black-red domestic fowl, as may be well seen in the specimens exhibited in the South Kensington Museum. His bill is dark brown and his legs dark slate-colour. The face is of a paler red than the comb and wattles, and the ear-lobes, which are only found in this species of Jungle-fowl, are generally white in Indian specimens, and red in Burmese birds. In June the Red Jungle-cock casts his neck hackles and sickles, and bears short black feathering on the neck till September, when his hackle and sickles reappear.

The hen has a very small comb and wattles; indeed, the latter are often absent altogether. Her colour is the partridge colour of the hens of black-red breeds, with the same gold and black hackle. The hens of the other Jungle-fowl show no distinct hackle. Her legs are dark, like the cock's. The best characters to distinguish the true Jungle-fowl from any domestic breed are therefore the Pheasant-like carriage, dark slaty legs very fine in bone, and small comb. Otherwise they might very well be mistaken for small black-red Game of the old-fashioned fighting type. The resemblance is so very close that there can be no doubt that naturalists are right in regarding this particular species as the direct ancestor of all our domestic breeds of fowls, allowing for the variations in colour and form which spring up unchecked when the rigorous discipline of Nature is removed, and can be so readily propagated by selection. I shall show later on that all the other Jungle-fowl differ from the present species in certain points which are never found in any domestic breed, which argues that if they have had any share in forming our tame poultry, the strain they contributed has been swamped ages ago. They also have different voices, whereas the crow of the

Red Jungle-cock is exactly like that of an ordinary Bantam, as I can personally testify.

This bird must have been domesticated very early, probably in Burmah, as the Burmese race is found easier to tame than the Indian. From Eastern Asia it appears to have passed to Europe through Persia, the Greeks calling it the Persian bird; but they were not acquainted with it in the time of Homer, although that poet gives *Alector* (cock) as the name of a man. But this word merely means "the sleepless one," or "the Wake," as our English hero, Hereward, was called; so that it probably at that time had no connection with the wakeful bird, which afterwards told the watches of the night to the ancients, and it cannot therefore be taken as evidence that the fowl was known to the Greek poet. The ancients, both Greeks and Romans, had a high opinion of the fowl when they did get it, and we know that the latter at all events recognised several distinct breeds at the beginning of the Christian era, including one with five toes, possibly the ancestor of the Dorking.

The only distinct breeds I have seen in India are Bantams from Japan and Burmah, and the Langshan and the Silky, imported from China, as also a few European breeds from England, and the native Aseel and Chittagongs, together with a curious foreign breed of the latter type from Saigon, which, in its most typical form, has neither ear-lobes nor wattles, but a dewlap on the throat, and the neck largely or entirely naked and red in the cocks. The common mongrel fowls of India are mostly like European birds, of all colours, but very generally clean-legged, single-combed, and four-toed, although rosecombs and five toes do occur. The single-combed birds have bigger combs than the Jungle-fowl, with, in the cocks, the upper outline arched as in our English birds, not sloping as in the wild bird, whose comb is more like a rather large-combed hen's. The legs, too, are not usually dark; and the face is as red as the comb, while the cocks do not moult their hackles and assume the "undress collar" of their ancestor. Thus we see that the fowl has already varied in several points from its ancestor in its own country, to say nothing of the difference of voice, and this without any special selection being brought into play.

I have only once seen the Jungle-fowl wild, and then there was a covey, so to speak, of three hens and a cock, and I noticed that the latter bird ran away into the jungle, while the hens took to their wings. The crowing I heard on another occasion when the bird was not in sight. Mr. Rutledge had for some time a cock running about his yard at full liberty, but it ultimately strayed away or got killed. I was able, however, to note personally in this specimen the moult I referred to above. The London Zoo once had a number of these birds at liberty in the Gardens, but have not possessed any at all for some time. They bred well, and stood the winter in the open, which is curious, for this species is essentially a bird of warm climates, and does not ascend the hills into a really temperate climate. Its eggs are pale buff in colour. The red colour of the cocks varies much in intensity even in wild birds, and a black hen has been recorded among these; but in general the species cannot be called a very variable one, so that it is the more remarkable that its tame descendants "sport" in colour so much. When, however, they revert to a wild state, they either go back to the old black-red type or show a very marked approximation to it. And few of the Pheasants can, in my opinion, equal that type in beauty of form and colour.

THE CEYLON JUNGLE-FOWL.

(*Gallus lafayetti*.)

Ceylon has a Jungle-fowl of its own, which has the island all to itself, and is not found outside it. The cock much resembles the species last described, but



Feathered World
A. J. S. 1901

CEYLON JUNGLE FOWL

differs in some important points. Thus the breast and underparts are covered with pointed orange-red glossy feathers—short hackles, in fact; the secondaries are black, not cinnamon; the throat and the tips of the saddle hackles are glossy violet, and the tail is glossed with purple, not green. Moreover, the comb has a yellow patch in the middle, and the legs are yellow. In this last point the Ceylonese bird, of course, resembles many tame ones; but none of these ever display his peculiar breast-feathering, and the red Indian bird, when domesticated, develops yellow legs before altering in any other point of colour.

The hen is more different from that of the continental bird, having a feathered face and no wattles, very heavy black barring on the wings, and the underparts mottled black, buff, and white. The tail is also mottled with buff.

The most remarkable point about the Ceylonese Jungle-cock is, however, its voice; the cock's crow consists of two syllables only, commonly rendered as "George Jovce," though some prefer "John" to "George." The cocks often thrash domestic birds and pair with their hens, but there is no evidence as yet that the hybrids are fertile. I have never seen this bird alive, though the London Zoological Society have possessed it; but a fine pair are shown alongside the Indian Red Jungle-fowl at the Natural History Museum at South Kensington. It is a curious fact that some authors give the colouring of the Ceylonese cock as belonging to the Rumpless breed.

THE GREY OR SONNERAT'S JUNGLE-FOWL.

(*Gallus sonnerati*.)

Although very different from the Red Indian and Ceylonese Jungle-fowls, this bird lives between them, inhabiting southern and western India, where the red bird does not occur, though they meet in central India. The general colour of the cock is grey, the feathers, which are pointed, being black laced with grey, and having white shafts. The tail and quills are black, the former glossed with purplish green. The hackles of the neck, the feathers of the flat of the wing, and some of the saddle hackles, which are comparatively short, are tipped with a glossy wax-like substance, formed by the coalescence of the barbs at the end of the feather. These peculiar glossy tips are orange on the wing and saddle, and golden yellow on the hackle, giving this a very beautiful and unique appearance. As with the Red Jungle-fowl, the hackles and sickles are cast after the breeding season, and the former replaced by short dark feathers. The comb and wattles are red, as is the face; the legs are fleshy yellow. The hen is partridge-colour above, and white laced with black below, the lacing getting finer on the belly. She has a small comb and a bare face, but no wattles.

This bird is more shy in the wild state than the Red Jungle-fowl, and less hardy in captivity. The birds of this species which the Zoological Gardens had at liberty with the red species did not stand the winter so well there; but the species has been kept successfully in England, and crossed with domestic fowls, the hybrids sometimes, at all events, proving fertile. But the beautiful hackles are generally lost in the first cross, so that there is not much point in making it. A wild hybrid between the two species was shot in India by the late Dr. Jerdon, but normally they do not intermix—the Red Jungle-fowl even inhabiting an isolated wood of sal-trees right in the other's territory. Roughly speaking, the red bird is only found where this tree (*Shorea robusta*) grows, and he probably keeps his territory to himself, being a very hard fighter. He has been seen to beat a cock Kaleege in a fair fight in the open, and has regular fighting places in his native jungles; whereas the grey bird would seem to be of a less fierce disposition—at any rate, several cocks can be kept together, even in the presence of hens.

The crow of the Grey Jungle-fowl is said to be quite

different from that of the Red. I have never heard it, though I have seen a good many cocks alive. I have, however, often heard them utter a note like "*koorchy, koorchy*," when alarmed by a too near approach to their cage—a noise quite unlike that made by any tame fowl.

The hackles of this species are in much demand for the manufacture of salmon-flies, and I am sorry to say a good many birds are killed in consequence. Therefore, if anyone cultivates these birds he will find that, in addition to their beauty, they will produce a marketable article in their moulted finery; and if this can be put on the market in competition with the spoils of shot specimens, as has been done with the plumes of the Ostrich, the Grey Jungle-fowl will be relieved from a great deal of unnecessary persecution. So that from more than one point of view this bird is well worth taking into domestication, although less suited for it than its better-known relative. Owing to the striking appearance of this bird, it is more often captured and kept than the Red Jungle-fowl, and so more easily procured.

THE GREEN OR JAVAN JUNGLE-FOWL.

(*Gallus varius*.)

The islands of Java, Lombok, and Flores, in the East Indies, are the habitat of this beautiful species, which is the most distinct of all. The cock's comb is plain-edged, not serrated as in the other species; his face is very naked, and instead of wattles he has a dewlap, which is expansible, something like a Turkey's. Moreover, his ruff does not consist of hackles, but of broad rounded scale-like feathers, and a similar feathering occupies the upper part of the back. This plumage is metallic purple and golden green; the rest of the feathering is black glossed with green except on the under surface, and set off by a patch of orange on the flat of the wing, and a gold lacing to the saddle-hackles.

The comb is pale greenish blue at the base, shading into purplish pink along the edge; in the dewlap these colours are reversed, and there is a patch of yellow at its junction with the throat. This is scarcely visible when the dewlap is contracted, but is conspicuous when it is fully expanded, when also the face, which is flesh-coloured when the dewlap is drawn up, blushes to a bright red. The eyes are grey, and the legs flesh-coloured.

The hen has neither comb nor wattles; her plumage is barred buff and black above, the latter predominating, and plain buff below; altogether she is rather like the hens of the ruffed Pheasants, to which her mate also approximates in the form of his ruff-feathers.

This is not at all a common bird in captivity; in six years in India I have only seen three cocks, all of which were obtained by Mr. Rutledge, who tells me he has never succeeded in getting the hen. In Europe I have never seen it, but it has been exhibited in the London Zoological Gardens. A bird we have at the Calcutta Zoological Gardens at first kept his dewlap contracted, but could always be made to let it down and to blush by showing him a looking-glass. Latterly, as the bird got into better condition, his dewlap was constantly expanded, and the face permanently red. He courted a black Minorca hen, slanting himself over like some Pheasants, but she resented his approaches, whereupon he flew at her, and had they not been separated by netting a fight would doubtless have ensued. It looked as if he claimed a relationship which she was not disposed to admit, which is rather curious, for certainly, as far as colour and size went, she was more different from a Green Jungle-fowl hen than he from some varieties of the common fowl. I never heard this bird or any other of his species crow; but he often made a noise like that made by the common hen when looking for a place to lay in. The crow is said to be in two syllables—"co-crik"—rather like half an ordinary cock's crow.

This Jungle-fowl is not only a very beautiful and

unique bird in itself—I find at Calcutta visitors universally admire our bird—but it produces very beautiful hybrids with domestic hens. Some of these appear to be red with a violet hackle, while in the Paris Museum they have a splendid bronze bird, named as a species *Gallus aeneus* (the Bronze cock), which is evidently a cross from the green bird, probably with a black hen. The hybrids would seem to be partly or occasionally fertile. The Green Jungle-fowl is sometimes called the Fork-tailed, but this arises from a mistake, as the tail is no more forked in life than that of an ordinary rooster. But if the skins of Jungle-fowl, or of Pheasants with similar folded tails, such as the Kaleeges, are made up with the tail—unnaturally—flat, the top feathers will necessarily diverge and make the tail forked. And as this is often done the error is easily accounted for in this way.

Mr. Rutledge tells me these birds particularly need a little raw animal food every day. A few earthworms are best, but in default of these a little raw meat will do. The species certainly ought to be taken into cultivation, and if a demand for it arose, could no doubt be more easily procured. The beauty of the cock's delicately-tinted and wax-like comb is remarkable, reminding one of the petal of an orchid; and its size could doubtless soon be increased under domestication. The beautiful glossy ruff and gold laced saddle also are quite unique, and require to be seen to be fully appreciated. All the specimens I have seen have been very tame and steady, and altogether I should say we have in this bird a very desirable possible addition to the ranks of our fancy poultry. From what has been said above it is very probable that a fine bronze breed could be raised by crossing with black tame fowls, but single-combed varieties should, of course, be chosen for the purpose. In any case I fear the beautiful colours of the comb and dewlap would be lost, but the plumage would well repay the experiment; indeed, the hybrids are known to be raised in this bird's own country simply as fancy birds for their looks alone.

CHAPTER X.

GUINEA-FOWLS AND TURKEYS.

It may seem out of place to introduce such homely birds as the above into the company of the aristocratic Pheasants, but as I have already done this with the Jungle Fowl, I cannot very well keep them out now; and, besides, each of our farmyard acquaintances has a very magnificent relative under whose patronage he may claim notice from us.

The Guinea Fowls are essentially African birds, and replace the Pheasants and Jungle Fowl in the "Dark Continent"; they are nearly all marked with light spots on a dark ground, and they fall into three types, the helmeted, the crested, and the plain-headed. Of the helmeted species by far the best known is

THE COMMON GUINEA FOWL.

(*Numida meleagris*.)

This has been a scarce fancy bird in its time, for no longer ago than 1760 Edwards speaks of them as having been shown as curiosities when he was a boy, but adds that they had since become a common domestic fowl with us. This shows that our ancestors were more ready to take up new poultry than we are, for we certainly have not added anything to the poultry yard since the above date, though, as I have pointed out, there are several birds which are quite suitable for domestication still available. Thus I mention this now familiar bird to show what has been done in the matter. Indeed, the Guinea Fowl has been domesticated twice, for the Romans knew it, but it "went out of cultivation" in the

middle ages. In Roman poultry yards another species of Guinea Fowl, with blue wattles, appears to have been kept; this was no doubt the Abyssinian Guinea Fowl (*Numida Ptilorhyncha*), which has them of this colour. The latter seems to have been the true *Meleagris* of the ancients, the common bird being known as the *Gallina Numidica*, "the Numidian hen," whence the term Galliney or Gleany, often applied to Guinea Fowls.

The wild stock of our Guinea Fowl comes from West Africa; in this condition it resembles the ordinary speckled tame bird, but it is lighter in make and has no white about the neck and wattles, the neck being dull purple and the wattles red right up to the jaw; and the legs are black without any of the orange hue found in so many tame birds. The tame Guinea Fowl in India is coloured just as it is in England and varies in the same way in plumage; but it possesses a remarkable and handsome peculiarity in the greater development of the naked skin on the throat, which often forms a dewlap an inch deep and of the richest blue colour, contrasting well with the white and red of the head and wattles. This is a point which might well be looked to in judging Guinea Fowls, as it certainly much enhances the appearance of the birds, and could, no doubt, be secured by getting Indian stock to cross with home-bred ones.

Now that Africa is being opened up, both from the east and south, the crested Guinea Fowls may be expected to become better known. They all have crests of black feathers instead of a helmet, and the wattles are usually very small and not noticeable. The plumage is spotted with pale blue, not with white as in the helmeted birds. The naked skin of the neck forms a pleat or fold behind. The best known species is

PUCHERAN'S CRESTED GUINEA FOWL.

(*Guttera pucherani*.)

This bird, which comes from East Africa, has the blue spotting of the plumage continued right up to the naked part of the neck. The naked neck itself is blue, contrasting well with the skin round the eyes and on the throat, which is red. This is a very handsome bird, as may be seen by the specimens often in the London Zoological Gardens. Years ago I saw it kept tame in Zanzibar, where the natives called it *Karoro*, the local helmeted species being known as *Kanga*. If kept well sheltered in the winter this bird could doubtless be allowed liberty in the summer, like the common Guinea-fowl, though it might not be advisable to allow it the use of its wings.

The plain-headed Guinea-fowls only number three species, not very nearly related either to each other or to the more ordinary types. By far the best known and the finest is

THE VULTURINE GUINEA FOWL.

(*Aeryllium vulturinum*.)

This beautiful bird is rather larger than the common Guinea-fowl, longer in neck and leg, and more erect in carriage. Its tail is also much longer than that bird's, and tapers rapidly to a fine point, but is carried drooping in the ordinary Guinea-fowl style. The head has neither helmet nor wattle, and is simply bare and plain, with the exception of a fur-like band of brown feathers across the back. The neck and breast are covered with hackles, and the legs of the cock have several blunt knobs at the back, which serve to distinguish him from the hen.

The plumage is black spotted with white much like the common Guinea-fowl, but the sides of the belly are most beautiful azure blue, which colour also tinges the hackles at their edges, the rest of these feathers being black with white central stripes. The first few secondary quills are also bordered with lilac or mauve. The bare head is slate-coloured, and the legs are black.

This species seems to be widely spread over Central Africa, but is best known from the Eastern side. I have

often seen it in confinement, and it is certainly one of the most desirable birds of this family, its beautiful colouration being unique, not only among its own relatives, but among birds in general. But it does not seem to be so hardy as most Guinea-fowls, and I should not recommend it to anyone who has not a warm southern situation and facilities for keeping his birds warm and sheltered in winter. It has been bred in confinement, however.

As to the Turkeys, they have apparently always been poultry and nothing more in the estimation of most people. The common one was found to be a domestic bird, and of great use as food, when the Spaniards invaded America. But as wild Turkeys are occasionally kept at large like Pheasants, and as there is a species of Turkey most eminently suited for a fancy bird, they may, as I said above, claim a place here.

THE WILD TURKEY.

(*Meleagris gallopavo.*)

This bird in its pure state is lighter in build and less heavily wattled than the tame bird; the hen's head also is not quite so bare. Its colour is bronze, with the feathers of the flanks, rump, and tail tipped with white. This is the precise race from which our tame Turkeys were in the first instance derived; it inhabits North Mexico and West Texas. But the Eastern United States are inhabited by another race or species, which is the wild Turkey most often heard of and kept (*Meleagris americana*). This bird has these feathers, which are white-tipped in the Mexican species, tipped with deep chestnut maroon, and so not contrasting with the general plumage. It is this variety which has been used to cross with the tame Turkey and produce the American Mammoth Bronze breed. Both species have pale red legs in the wild state, unlike most tame Turkeys.

Other wild varieties exist, somewhat intermediate between the light and dark rumped forms, and it is rather doubtful if these can fairly be called species; but the fidelity of the tame birds to the type they were originally derived from is an argument in favour of their

distinctness. The white barring is seen both in English and Indian bred birds, so climate does not affect it. In India, however, the Turkeys, though smaller, are much more heavily wattled than at home, and all I have seen are blacks (often white barred) or black-barred whites; pure whites, fawns, or bronzes being apparently unknown.

THE HONDURAS OR OCELLATED TURKEY.

(*Meleagris ocellata.*)

This species differs from the other Turkeys in several important points. It appears to have no brush of hair on the breast and no dewlap; there is a thick comb on the head of the cock, and the skin of the head, which is smoother than in the common birds, is studded with pea-like warts, some of which tip the comb and the long appendage over the beak. The hen differs from the cock much as in ordinary Turkeys.

The plumage is wonderfully brilliant, being only rivalled in metallic splendour by that of the Monaul, and even excelling the Peacock's. The general colour is burnished green, the feathers tipped with a lighter shade of the same; there is a broad bar of burnished copper on the wing, but the flights are barred black and white as in common Turkeys. The rump and tail are mottled finely with white on black, tipped with a brilliant metallic blue spot, finished off with burnished copper, this splendid end-marking contrasting admirably with the grey ground. The bill and legs are red, the head is blue, with the skin round the eye scarlet, as also are the warts.

The Ocellated Turkey is found only in Central America, and is rare in captivity. I have never seen it alive, though it has been exhibited in the London Zoological Gardens. It has produced hybrids with the common Turkey, to which bird it is rather inferior in size. It appears, unfortunately, to be delicate, but would be well worth taking up by any fancier residing in a mild district and warm situation, as it seems to be tameable enough, and has a most striking appearance. There is a splendid stuffed specimen in the South Kensington Museum.



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