

plumage as may occasionally be seen in our farm-yards, is a fact worth notice. Nevertheless the climate of the Malayan archipelago apparently tends to cause the duck to vary much, for Zollinger,<sup>12</sup> speaking of the Penguin breed, says that in Lombok "there is an unusual and very wonderful variety of ducks." One Penguin drake which I kept alive differed from those of which the skins were sent me from Lombok, in having its breast and back partially coloured with chestnut-brown, thus more closely resembling the Mallard.

From these several facts, more especially from the drakes of all the breeds having curled tail-feathers, and from certain sub-varieties in each breed occasionally resembling in general plumage the wild duck, we may conclude with confidence that all the breeds are descended from *A. boschas*.

I will now notice some of the peculiarities characteristic of the several breeds. The eggs vary in colour; some common ducks laying pale-greenish and others quite white eggs. The eggs which are first laid during each season by the black Labrador duck, are tinted black, as if rubbed with ink. A good observer assured me that one year his ducks of this breed laid almost perfectly white eggs. Another curious case shows what singular variations sometimes occur and are inherited; Mr. Hansell<sup>13</sup> relates that he had a common duck which always laid eggs with the yolk of a dark-brown colour like melted glue; and the young ducks, hatched from these eggs, laid the same kind of eggs, so that the breed had to be destroyed.

The Hook-billed duck is highly remarkable (see fig. of skull, woodcut No. 39); and its peculiar beak has been inherited at least since the year 1676. This structure is evidently analogous with that described in the Bagadotten carrier pigeon. Mr. Brent<sup>14</sup> says that, when Hook-billed ducks are crossed with common ducks, "many young ones are produced with the upper mandible shorter than the lower, which not unfrequently causes the death of the bird." With ducks a tuft of feathers on the head is by no means a rare occurrence; namely, in the True-tufted breed, the Hook-billed, the common farm-yard kind, and in a duck having no other peculiarity which was sent to me from the Malayan archipelago. The tuft is only so far interesting as it affects the skull, which is thus rendered slightly more globular, and is perforated by numerous apertures. Call ducks are remarkable from their extraordinary

<sup>12</sup> 'Journal of the Indian Archipelago,' vol. v. p. 334.

<sup>13</sup> 'The Zoologist,' vols. vii., viii.

(1849-1850), p. 2353.

<sup>14</sup> 'Poultry Chronicle,' 1855, vol. iii. p. 512.