

young of which can easily be tamed.<sup>22</sup> This species, when crossed with the domestic goose, produced in the Zoological Gardens, as I was assured in 1849, perfectly fertile offspring.<sup>23</sup> Yarrell<sup>24</sup> has observed that the lower part of the trachea of the domestic goose is sometimes flattened, and that a ring of white feathers sometimes surrounds the base of the beak. These characters seem at first sight good indications of a cross at some former period with the white-fronted goose (*A. albifrons*); but the white ring is variable in this latter species, and we must not overlook the law of analogous variation; that is, of one species assuming some of the characters of allied species.

As the goose has proved so little flexible in its organization under long-continued domestication, the amount of variation which it has undergone may be worth giving. It has increased in size and in productiveness;<sup>25</sup> and varies from white to a dusky colour. Several observers<sup>26</sup> have stated that the gander is more frequently white than the goose, and that when old it almost invariably becomes white; but this is not the case with the parent-form, the *A. ferus*. Here, again, the law of analogous variation may have come into play, as the almost snow-white male of the Rock goose (*Bernicla antarctica*) standing on the sea-shore by his dusky partner is a sight well known to those who have traversed the sounds of Tierra del Fuego and the Falkland Islands. Some geese have top-knots; and the skull beneath, as before stated, is perforated. A sub-breed has lately been formed with the feathers reversed at the back of the head and neck.<sup>27</sup> The beak varies a little in size, and is of a yellower tint than in the wild species; but

<sup>22</sup> Mr. A. Strickland ('Annals and Mag. of Nat. Hist.,' 3rd series, vol. iii. 1859, p. 122) reared some young wild geese, and found them in habits and in all characters identical with the domestic goose.

<sup>23</sup> See also Hunter's 'Essays,' edited by Owen, vol. ii. p. 322.

<sup>24</sup> Yarrell's 'British Birds,' vol. iii. p. 142.

<sup>25</sup> L. Lloyd, 'Scandinavian Adventures,' 1854, vol. ii. p. 413, says that

the wild goose lays from five to eight eggs, which is a much fewer number than that laid by our domestic goose.

<sup>26</sup> The Rev. L. Jenyns seems first to have made this observation in his 'British Animals.' See also Yarrell, and Dixon in his 'Ornamental Poultry' (p. 139), and 'Gardener's Chronicle,' 1857, p. 45.

<sup>27</sup> Mr. Bartlet exhibited the head and neck of a bird thus characterised before the Zoological Soc., Feb. 1860.