

insects; probably others of them may also assist in restraining the incessant multiplication of these little creatures. The ostrich may be said almost to graze, though it is very eager after grain; but its history is too well known to require any further enlargement upon it.

Order 4.—The birds of this Order are called *Scratchers*, from an action common to many of them, and more particularly observable in our common poultry, that of *scratching* the ground to turn up food, especially when followed by their chicks. Of all the gifts of Providence, there is none that more promotes our comfort and pleasure than the majority of the animals that compose this Order, for it includes almost all our barn-door fowls, and the great majority of the game pursued so eagerly by the sportsman: birds, not only valuable for the variety and delicacy of the food, both flesh and eggs, with which they supply our tables, but delighting us by the beauty, the elegance, and stateliness of their forms; the diversity of their plumage, especially the elongated or expansile tail feathers of the males; and the rich variety and splendour of their colours. The gorgeous peacock and the graceful pheasant have scarcely a parallel in the other Orders, except perhaps, as to splendour, in those brilliant little gems, the humming birds.

I have mentioned, on a former occasion,* the numerous varieties of the common fowl, which have probably been produced by climate and cultivation. With regard to size, Sumatra appears to produce both the smallest and the largest kind of poultry, the common feather-legged *Bantam*, and the *Iago* fowl,† the cock of which, Marsden says, he has “seen peck off a common dining table; when fatigued, they sit down on the first joint of the leg, and are then taller than the common breed.”‡ Colonel Sykes imported them

* Vol. i. p. 102.

† *Gallus giganteus*.

‡ Sumatra, 2 Ed. 98.