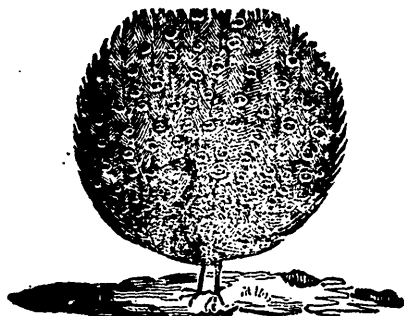


NATURAL HISTORY.



THE PEACOCK:

The Peacock (*Pavo cristatus*) is a well known bird, a native of the East Indies & other parts of Asia, as well of several parts of Africa. It is peculiarly distinguished by having on its head a crest of twenty four feathers, and a single hard spur at the back of each leg. The male has, over its tail, several feathers, sometimes four or five feet in length, and each marked, at the extremity, with an eye like spot; the real tail consists of a range of short brown, and stiff feathers, which are beneath these.

In some parts of the East Indies the shooting of wild peacocks is not an uncommon diversion, and their size and heavy flight are such that it does not require a good marksman to bring them down.

Peacocks are mentioned, in the Sacred Writings, as constituting part of the cargoes of the fleet which conveyed the various treasures of the East to the court of King Solomon. They were so much esteemed for the table, by the Romans, that one person, who had devised a mode of fattening them, obtained thereby alone an annual income equal to about 500*l.* of our money. In England these birds were formerly introduced at sumptuous dinners, and sometimes the skin and all the feathers, particularly those of the tail, were kept to serve them up in. The flesh of the

old birds is coarse and unfit for food; but the young peafowls are at this day much esteemed by epicures.

The train feathers of the peacock are used among the Chinese for ornamental work of different kinds, and particularly for decorating the caps of the mandarins; and they are an article of traffic from the East Indies to that country. Peacocks' crests, in ancient times, were among the ornaments of the kings of England: and it appears from records that in lines to the crown, these crests were sometimes among the articles to be paid.

TRAVELS.

RUINS OF ANCIENT BABYLON.

(Continued from page 140)

After four hours digging perpendicularly from the summit, they discovered six beams of date tree wood running apparently into the centre of the mound. In half an hour after I pulled out a large earthen sarcophagus, nearly perfect, lined with bitumen, and filled with human bones; but on attempting to remove it, the vessel broke in pieces. This sarcophagus was larger and broader than any I had ever seen; being upwards of five feet in length, by three and a half diameter. On the slightest possible touch the bones became