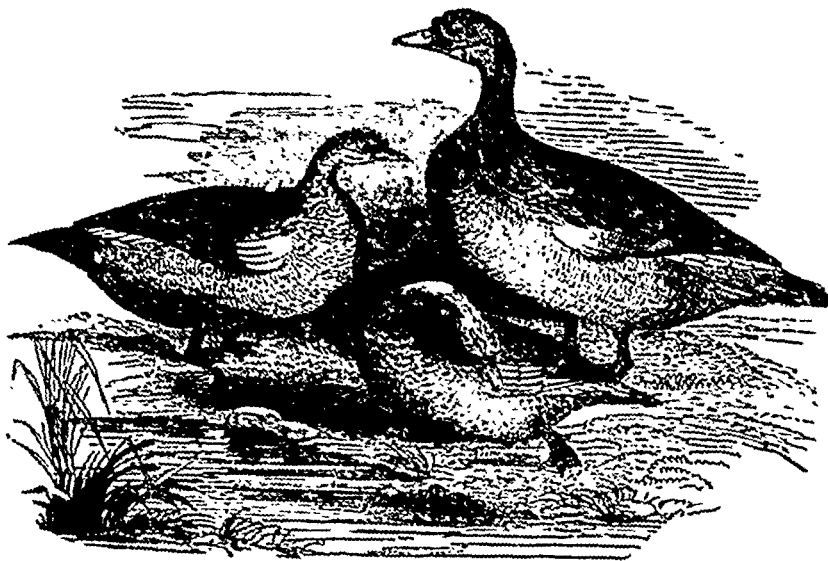


Ducks.

Ducks possess many excellent qualities, such as justly entitle them to a place of high distinction among the tenants of the poultry-yard. They are quiet and harmless in disposition, so hardy as to require but little of that care without which fowls droop and perish, while they will subsist upon almost any sort of food, and are excellent scavengers, disposing of all offal and waste in a most summary manner. A fence of ordinary height confines them by day, and an open shed is all the shelter they ask at night. Their flesh is deservedly esteemed for the table, and a given number of their eggs, is equal in culinary value, to twice the number of hen's eggs.



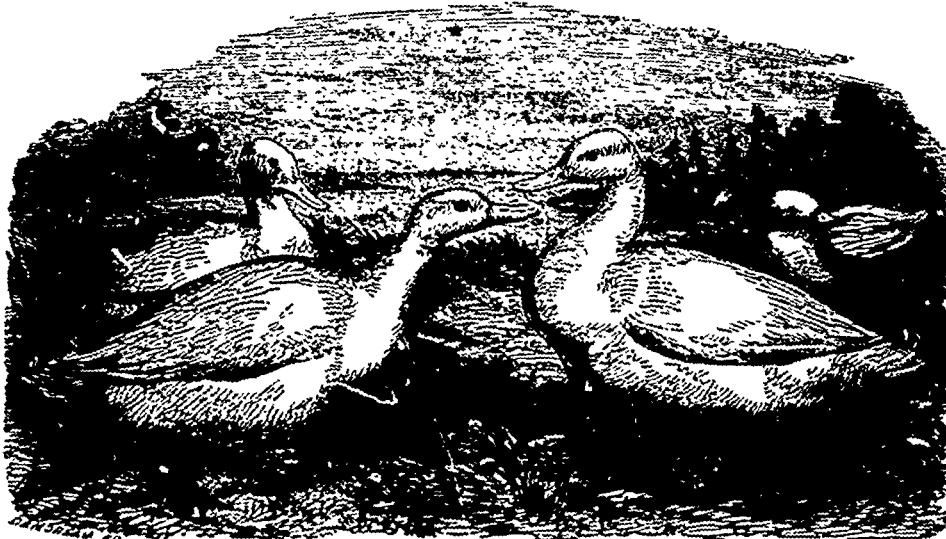
MUSCOVY DUCKS.

We begin with what is usually known as the Muscovy duck, though its more correct name is the Musk, or Brazilian duck. It has by some strange means come to be called after a country which certainly never witnessed its existence in a wild state, it being only found wild in South America. It is called the Musk duck from the supposition that its plumage emitted the odour of musk. This species is of various colours, commonly variegated with black predominant. The male attains a much larger size than the female. The drake has on the cheeks caruncles as red as those of the turkey. They have a strange aversion to the water, seldom going near it except to drink. If thrown into a stream, they will scramble out again as quickly as possible. They lay about the same number of eggs as common ducks, and are preferable to them only for

their larger size and handsomer appearance. The Muscovy duck has considerable powers of flight; but her mate's heavier bulk is unfavourable to his accompanying her upon arial excursions. Contrary to the usual habits of this genus, the top of a wall or the branches of a low tree are favourite

resting places. Their feet are somewhat more adapted to such uses than those of other ducks. If allowed to spend the night in the hen-house, the female will generally go to roost beside the fowls, but the drake is too heavy and clumsy to admit of his doing so with ease.

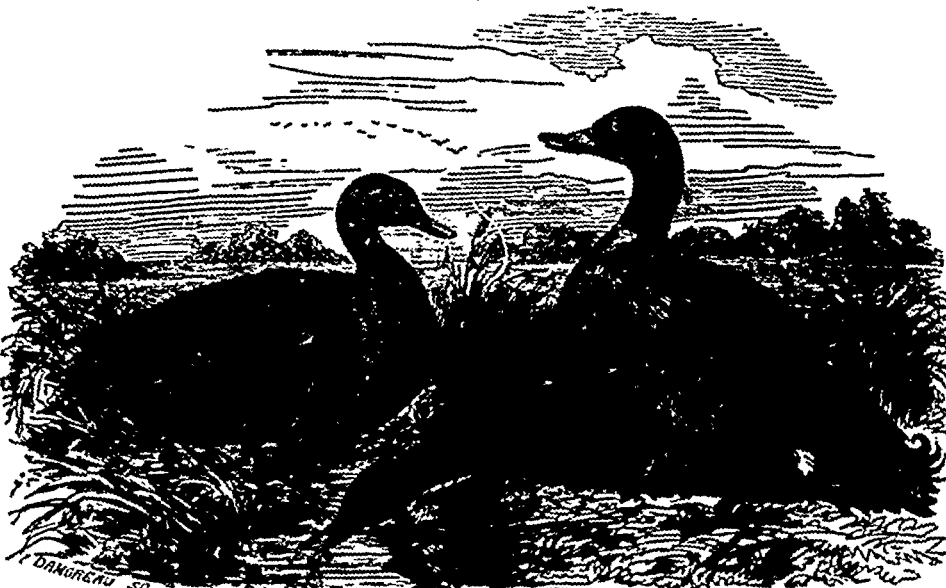
Travellers assert that these birds, in their wild state, perch on large trees that border rivers and marshes, that they build their nests there, and when the ducklings are hatched, the mother takes them one by one and drops them into the water.



AYLESBURY DUCKS.

Our second illustration is of the Aylesbury duck—a much-esteemed variety wherever it has been tested. Its plumage is snowy white, and it would be very valuable for the pure white down with which it is thickly covered, if it had no other good qualities. But it is a good layer, and a large and excellent table bird. It is thought by many breeders that the Aylesburies consume less food than the common duck. They are very quiet in their habits, and do not keep up the constant "quack, quack, quack" of the bird just mentioned. The ducks represented in our cut were drawn by our artist from life, and are portraits of birds in the possession of a gentleman who resides near this city. The specimens drawn averaged 25lbs. each, and were in the ordinary condition in which they have been kept all winter. Fed for exhibi-

tion, it would be easy to bring them up to 25lbs. the trio,—the weight of the first-prize Aylesburies at the late poultry show in Birmingham, England, said to have been "the greatest show ever seen."



ROUEN, OR RHONE DUCKS.

The great beauty of this breed consists in its snow-white plumage,—the delicate flesh-coloured bill is also much admired. There should be no stain or blemish,—no yellow tinge anywhere on the body of the bird, and the bill should be of pure rose-colour, without spots of black or yellow. The Aylesburies are early layers,—hence their ducklings are always first in the market. The eggs are white and of excellent flavour.

Buckinghamshire, in England, has long been celebrated for the great numbers of this breed, which are reared there, many of them by the peasantry.

We next give a cut of the Rouen, or Rhone duck. This is one of the most useful and hardy varieties, somewhat larger than the Aylesburies, not very good in carriage but excellent layers,—the best layers of all the duck

tribes—easily fattened and of good flavour. Their usually dark plumage is rich, and very nearly resembles that of the original wild duck. A well-bred Rouen drake is a very fine looking bird.