

at any time the progeny of any one yard could be identified and separated from those of other yards. This was done by punching a hole in the web of the foot—the position of the hole or holes serving to distinguish the various matings, one from the others. Goslings a few weeks old, and geese, are always handled by grasping the hand about the neck of the bird just below the head, and as it is raised from the ground it is turned around so that its back is toward the person holding it. In this position it cannot scratch or strike with the wings; and the right foot of the bird is, of course, on the right hand side, and the feet can be easily examined for the marks. If the holes close up by growth, the web will be thicker at the point where a hole was punched, and the skin will be smooth and usually lighter colored. A sharp leather punch, with a piece of thick leather to place under the web while cutting the holes, was used in marking.

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THE INDIAN RUNNER DUCK.

BY HENRY DIGBY, IN "FEATHERED WINGS," ENGLAND.

In an able and comprehensive treatise on "The Indian Runner," Mr. J. Donald, of Wigton, Cumberland, fixes the date of their introduction into this country as some fifty years back, and explains the circumstances surrounding it in the following sentence: "A drake and trio of ducks were originally brought from India by a sea captain to Whitehaven, and he presented them to some friends, who at that time followed the occupation of farming in West Cumberland." Mr. Donald also states that "another consignment was imported by the same gentleman some years later, and from these two importations it is probable that all the present day 'Runner' ducks are either directly or indirectly descended."

During recent years Miss Wilson-Wilson, of Kendal, Mr. Jonas Swales, myself, and others, have made special efforts to trace the origin of this variety, and, if possible to import fresh birds of the original stock. All efforts in this direction proved futile until the end of the year 1898, when I succeeded in procuring and importing a trio from a fancier friend in Calcutta, which, I am pleased to say, has made a marked improvement in the quality of my stock.

Until very recent times, the variety had, for an unbroken period of upwards of fifteen years, been lying in a comparatively dormant state—that is to say, as a "fancy" or exhibition bird. The "Runner" had up to then been obliged to compete in the "Any Other Variety" classes at all exhibitions where it entered the lists. No serious organized attempt was made to popularize the species until the end of the year 1895. Before that there had been attempts on the part of individuals to place the "Runner" as a definite species on a sounder and more popular basis, but all these endeavors had not served to give it that attractiveness and popularity which its more san-

guine supporters believed it deserved.

Towards the close of the year mentioned, Miss Wilson-Wilson, at the Dairy Show, sought my opinion as to the advisability or otherwise of making a joint endeavor to raise the "Runner" in the estimation of the "fancy." Needless to say, I advised my "Cosy Coop" friend to allow me to propose her as a member of the Waterfowl Club, in the belief that that influential and well-informed body might be able to assist in drawing up a "Standard of Perfection" for the "Runner" species, and also in procuring the much-desired classification for it at all exhibitions where water-fowl are shown.

The credit for the first class of any importance for "Indian Runner" ducks which has been provided at any leading shows for many years belongs entirely to the lady named, for it was mainly through her instrumentality and generosity that twenty-one pairs of "Runners" were drawn together in November, 1896, at Kendal. This latter circumstance has undoubtedly been the chief factor towards introducing several recruits to the Waterfowl Club, and also the means of having caused to be framed an official "Standard of perfection" for the guidance of fanciers and judges. In the interest of the fancy I have deemed it advisable to reproduce at the end of this article a copy of the "Standard of Perfection." The circumstance of my having adopted it as an appendix renders it unnecessary for me now to enter at any length into the characteristics, etc., of the "Runner." A few words on the chief properties of the birds may not, however, be out of place. Not only do the "Runners" surpass all other species of ducks as egg producers, but they are highly esteemed as ornamental waterfowl. Perfect specimens are truly beautiful, but by no means plentiful or easy to breed. On this, if on no other account, they commend themselves to the fancier having a desire to make his hobby interesting as well as remunerative. Ex-