

that collection, which is now before me, is so similar to *A. vulgaris* (although I believe a distinct species), that most botanists would, upon a cursory inspection, refer it to that plant. It has not the most distant resemblance to *A. conjuncta* or *A. alpina*. The figure of *A. fissa* in Sturm's 'Deutsch. Fl.' 56. 12. represents the plant of Tausch, to which also correspond specimens named *A. fissa* by Reichenbach ('Fl. exsic.' 876) and by Shuttleworth. It is perhaps unnecessary to go further to convince my friend Mr. Trevelyan and the readers of the 'Annals,' that *A. fissa* (Schumm.) is not *A. conjuncta* (Bab.), although plate 2101 of 'Fl. Dan.' is probably intended to represent it. Should however more proof be required, it can be at once produced.

I may take this opportunity of stating, that during the late summer I examined Gatesgarth Pass, Cumberland, for this plant with great care, but totally without success.—CHARLES C. BABINGTON.

St. John's College, Cambridge, Oct. 28, 1843.

ASSUMPTION OF THE MALE PLUMAGE BY A FEMALE PARTRIDGE.

Powerstock Vicarage, Bridport, Dorset, Oct. 30, 1843.

Mr. Yarrell in his 'History of British Birds' mentions two instances of thirty-one eggs having been found in a partridge's nest, and observes, "there is little doubt in these cases that more than one bird had laid eggs in the same nest." It may not perhaps be deemed unworthy of record that a partridge this year laid thirty-six eggs in my aviary, out of which thirty young birds were hatched by two domestic hens. As the history of my birds is rather curious, I will venture to relate it.

Late in the autumn before last (1841) a young partridge, about three weeks old, was caught by a boy and turned into my aviary, in which I had then a young ring-dove that could not rise from the floor, as the feathers of one of its wings had been clipped. The young bird immediately sought the protection of the Cushat and nestled under her wing.

After moulting our bird appeared in the distinctive plumage of a male, with the rich chestnut-coloured horseshoe-shaped patch on the breast. Early in the following spring we were much pleased by hearing the call of our bird answered repeatedly from a field adjoining our garden. In a short time we observed a wild bird to visit the aviary every evening. We soon succeeded in capturing this stranger, as we discovered that it generally roosted among the ivy with which the building is partly covered. To our surprise our prisoner proved to be a male, and we were now at a loss to account for the perseverance with which it sought the society of our bird.

In the following moulting season (the autumn of 1842) our tame bird however lost its chestnut-coloured crescent and the triangular patch of naked red skin above the ear-coverts, and assumed the plumage of a female; the doubts which we now entertained as to the sex of our favourite were cleared up early in the spring when she began to scratch together materials for her rude nest, in which she continued to lay an egg daily for more than five weeks. She however showed no disposition to sit.

It seems that the circumstance of this female bird having been

for one season cut off from the society of the other sex was sufficient to cause a temporary assumption of a plumage resembling that of a male, and that as long as that disguise continued, although she was no longer debarred from sexual intercourse, the natural result did not follow at the first moult after the admission of the male. She appears in her proper colours and proves extraordinarily prolific, producing double the ordinary complement of eggs.

I conclude from the above fact, that the assumption by female birds of the plumage resembling that of the male does not (as is the opinion of many physiologists) depend upon a derangement of the generative organs.

GEORGE COOKSON.

SPIDERS DISCHARGED FROM THE EYE.

The 'American Journal of the Medical Sciences' for July 1843, p. 302, contains the following extraordinary relation, by A. Lopez, M.D., Mobile, Ala.

I was requested, Feb. 5, 1840, to visit a young lady, from whose mother I received the following statement:—The patient had left the city of Charleston to visit a friend in the country. On the night of the 29th of January, while conversing in bed, she was sensible that some object had fallen from the ceiling upon her cheek, just below the inferior lid. In the course of the night she was awakened by a feeling of intense pain in her left eye, which continued at intervals until morning, when the eye was discovered to be inflamed. Ordinary means were applied, and during the morning, feeling intense irritation, she rubbed the lids together upon the ball, and removed two fragments, which were readily recognised as the parts of a spider. Her alarm became very great, and was much heightened when the same thing was repeated in the afternoon. She returned to Charleston on the 2nd of February. When I paid my first visit on the 5th, the following was her condition: the right eye unaffected; the left turgid, inflamed and weeping; and there had been removed from it that morning a spider, imbedded in a mucous covering. It was entire, with the exception of two legs. The two preceding days before I had seen her, three others had been removed, and were now exhibited to me. I immediately submitted the eye to a close examination, without being enabled to discover the minutest portion of any foreign substance. I visited her daily until the 19th, and at every visit I removed either an entire or dismembered spider from the same eye. Between the 5th and 19th I invited, to an examination of the case, Professors Geddings and Dickson, and Doctors Bellinger and Wurdeman. Dr. Dickson, on one or two occasions, also removed these objects from the patient's eye. I made, assisted by Professor Geddings, the most minute scrutiny, with a view of discovering—first, whether there could possibly exist a nidus within the orbit for these animals; secondly, whether a sac containing their ova was there concealed; and thirdly, if any communication between the eye and the nose could account for their appearance. For these purposes the superior and inferior palpebræ were everted with great care, traversed thoroughly with a blunt probe, and afterwards I threw injections around the internal lining, but all to no avail. The anterior