

4. MERIA RUFIVENTRIS, *Klug, loc. cit., tab. iv. fig. 7.*

5. MERIA LATREILLEI, *Fabr., (Bethyllus). Tiphia tripunctata, Panz. Tachus staphylinus, Jur.*

6. MERIA DIMIDIATA, *Spin. (Tachus).*

OBS. MERIA DICHROA, *Perty, Del. An. Art. Bras., t. 27. f. 13, haud congenerica.*

The following Notes, extracted by Sir Robert Heron, Bart., from his Journal, were read.

1814.—For a good many years I have attended to the habits of *Peafowl*, and for the last eleven have written down my observations. I find the individuals to differ as much in temper as human beings: some are willing to take care of the young ones of others, whilst some have pursued and killed them, and this whether they had a brood of their own or not. Some cocks have assisted in the care of young ones, whilst others have attacked them. An early hen frequently has a brood herself the next year. Age makes no difference in the number of the brood. I have had six from a hen a year old, and one from an old hen. The hens have frequently a great preference to a particular peacock. They were all so fond of an old pied cock, that one year, when he was confined in view, they were constantly assembled close to the trellice walls of his prison, and would not suffer a japanned peacock to touch them. On his being let out in the autumn, the oldest of the hens instantly courted him, and obtained proofs of his love in my presence. The next year he was shut up in a stable, and the hens then all courted his rival; for the advances in these birds are always made by the female.

The japanned breed are, I believe, a variety originating in England. In Lord Brownlow's numerous breed of common, white, and pied, the japanned suddenly, in my memory, appeared amongst them. The same thing happened in Sir J. Trevelyan's flock of entirely the common sort; also in a breed of common and pied given by Lady Chatham to Mr. Thoroton: and in both cases to the extinction of the previously existing breed.

1821-2.—A black Poland cock, belonging to my friend and neighbour Mr. Kendall of Barnsley, was seized last winter, near the house, by a fox, but his screams being heard by the servants, he was rescued, desperately wounded, with the loss of half his feathers. In time the remainder of his feathers came off, and he is now become perfectly white. This seems to have some relation to the human hair becoming white at once from fear.

1827.—Mr. Reid, near York, has two Water Tortoises, brought over from the siege of Belleisle, which commenced in 1761: one of them, having wandered, was missing for sixteen years, when it was found on cleaning out another pond. They are both alive, and very tame.

1833, *April 20.*—This morning I found a large white Gold-fish in great distress. A large male toad had fastened itself upon the



head and shoulders of the fish. On removing the toad, the fish swam away, apparently unhurt.

Colonel Sykes read a paper "On the *Quails* and *Hemipodii* of India," which he illustrated by the exhibition of a very extensive series of those *Birds*, belonging partly to his own collection, which was made in Dukhun, and partly to that of the Society, which has been enriched by specimens from various Indian localities.

The author prefaces his descriptions of the species by some general observations on generic distinctions and characters, and illustrates his remarks by commenting on some of the genera and species constituting the genus *Tetrao* of Linnæus and his followers. He shows that the form of beak alone is inadequate as a mark of generic distinction, and that the form, and number, and size of the toes and nails, are not always of themselves to be regarded as sufficient for generic characters. Passing to the characters deriveable from the combined consideration of the beak and feet, on which Brisson's system was founded, he remarks on some incongruous associations which were thereby occasioned. Size, the most convenient mode (in his estimation) of distinguishing the *Quails* from the *Partridges*, cannot, he remarks, be admissible as affording adequate grounds for generic distinction. Habits, also, present many difficulties in defining associations into genera; those assigned by authors to an entire group belonging frequently to only one or a few of the species included in it, while in some cases, such as that of the *common Quail*, the habits differ in different localities; that bird being in Europe migratory, while in India (and probably in China also) it is stationary: its solitary habits, except at a particular season, are preserved in India, but its evident congener, the *Cot. textilis*, is never flushed without a second being found within a few paces. Plumage, although in many genera there is an evident tendency to assume a particular livery, is evidently unsuitable for general adoption as affording adequate grounds for generic distinction, however useful it may be in the discrimination of species.

After passing in rapid review the genera adopted by M. Temminck in the family of *Tetraonidæ*, and offering brief remarks on the validity of the several groups, Colonel Sykes proceeds to state that having felt himself disappointed in his attempts to form a just and precise estimate of generic differences from external characters only, he sought in internal organization, in the form of the tongue, and in the colour of the *irides* for additional guides and evidences of affinities or dissimilarities. As regards the former of these, he turned his attention principally to the stomach, the *cæca*, the proportional length of the *cæca* to the intestine, and the proportional length of the intestine to the body. Notes of these several particulars, as observed by him in India in nearly two hundred species of animals, are now in his possession; from which he extracts and arranges in a tabular form such as relate to the *Quails* and *Hemipodii*, and, by way of further illustration, such also as relate to some species of *Perdix*, *Francolinus*, *Columba*, and *Pterocles*.