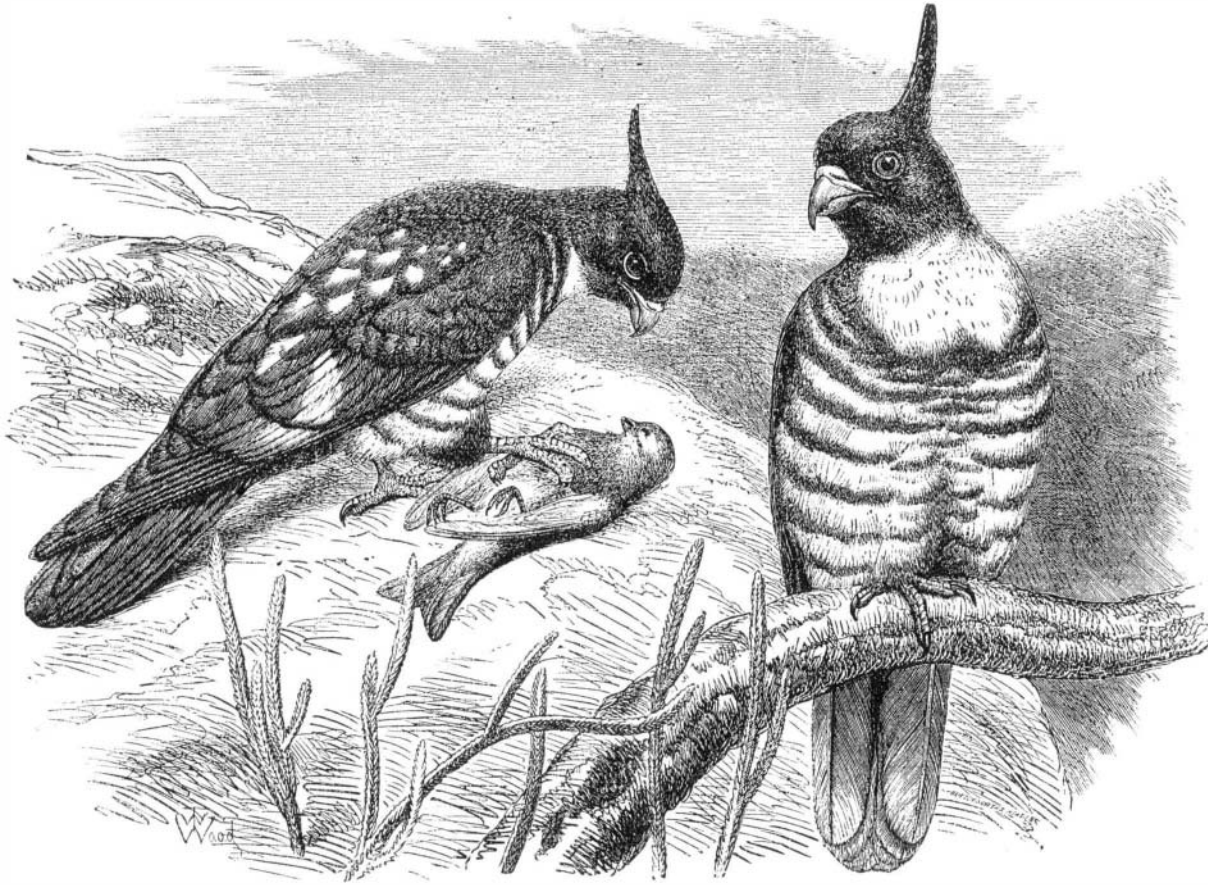


THE CRESTED BLACK KITE.

The gardens of the Zoological Society, London, recently received specimens of a very rare Indian kite (the *baza lo-photes* of Cuvier). This bird had never been seen alive in England, and even in India is so sparsely distributed that Mr. Allan Hume, in his "Rough Notes on Indian Ornithology," states that he has never procured a specimen. Though nowhere common, it appears to have an extended range, being known in Ceylon, on the east coast of India, as well as in Lower Bengal, Assam, and British Burmah. Jerdon, in his "Birds of India," states that it is certainly very rare towards the south, but that it is occasionally killed at Calcutta, and is more frequently found in the lower Eastern Himalayas. It appears to be very insectivorous in its habits, and keeps to the forests and well wooded districts, taking only short flights. In its conformation it appears more nearly allied to the honey buzzard (*pernis*), of which a crested species exists in India, than to any of the other accipitrine birds. The plumage of the bird is remarkably handsome. The upper portions, including the long slender crest, the thighs, and the under tail and wing coverts, are a glossy green black. The outer webs of the wing feathers—those that are alone visible when the wing is closed—are deep chestnut. The scapular feathers form a conspicuous but broken white wing band. The under parts of the bird are chiefly white, with five or six broad bars of deep chestnut. The crest is generally carried in a drooping position, but the bird has the power of erecting it perpendicularly. In length the crested kite varies from thirteen to fourteen inches, the extent of its wing being thirty. The weight is about eight ounces. We regret to have to announce the death of all the three specimens almost immediately after they had been sketched.



THE CRESTED BLACK KITE.

THE FLORAKIN.

The florakin or lesser bustard (*otis tetrix*) is found on the plains in many parts of India, and is common in France; in the former country it is esteemed a most delicious bird for the table. The male bird, when in full plumage, is very handsome, being most beautifully marked; but the hen is much plainer, as is the case with nearly all female birds. They are to be found in pairs, and are very shy and wary, and hardly ever take to the wing if they can avoid doing so. Wherever florakin are found, sand grouse (*pteroles bicinctus*), of which we gave an illustration and description on page 407, Vol. XXXII., may be seen. The florakin resembles the large bustard (*otis tarda*) in his form and color, but is only 17 inches long. The head is reddish brown, the neck of the male being black, with a narrow white border above and below. The upper parts are mottled with the same colors, but with finer and more delicate lines. In the barren districts of Brittany (France), known as *testandes*, these birds may be seen in considerable numbers; and as the flesh is good eating, and may probably be improved by culture, it is somewhat remarkable that no attempts have been made to domesticate them.

American Refined Sugar.

The exportation of American refined sugar to this side is maintained with unrelaxed energy, and consequently displaces a given quantity of stoved sugar which would be ordinarily supplied from the warehouses of the British refiners. The total imports since this new and unexpected quarter for

supplies was opened have embraced 7,000 tons. It reflects no credit upon America, either as regards the act itself or the get-up of the article which she produces. All but the inexperienced, or not over-particular judges of quality and condition, pronounce the cut sugar as shockingly indifferent; and if it is to be viewed as a specimen of the best lump which the Yankee refiner can turn out, and their country-

men are pleased to use, we must frankly assert that we pity their taste. No first class family grocer in London—no, nor any folk in decent society—would look at the American loaf sugar as it now comes to hand; and in case our statement should be read by those who, from the nature of their retail trade, find it an article more suitable to sell than that chopped from bright English titlers, we simply ask them, as they do their friends and customers, to compare and judge for themselves. We need not be in suspense as to the verdict, for we are sure it will be in favor of the British manufacturer, who, in defiance of envious detractors, is still the refiner *par excellence*, albeit his functions in that respect have now almost entirely ceased. Unless checkmated by some



THE FLORAKIN OR LESSER BUSTARD.

deliberate or accidental means, the English market will in time be so inundated with sugar of inferior quality, from France and America, that finest loaf and other sugar will eventually become things of the past.—*London Grocer*. [If the above statement is correct, if American refined sugars are really inferior to the English article, it behoves our refiners to call upon inventors to study out new methods of refining, by which the best products can be realized at the lowest cost.—Eds.]

THE fluidity of the Berlin iron, from which the finest and sharpest, although not strongest, castings are made, is attributed to the presence of arsenic in the iron.

The Oldest Fair in the World.

In this season of industrial fairs, when Chicago, Cincinnati, Newark, New York, and other cities, are all vying with each other in the production of the finest exhibit of the practical results of the labors of American mechanics and inventors, it is interesting to note that, in a far distant quarter of the globe, another great fair has been in progress, which, in point of magnitude, probably equals all of the yearly expositions in the United States combined. The great fair of Nijni-Novgorod, in Russia, has quite recently closed its annual display—an exhibition which has been repeated every year for the past four centuries; and the merchants and producers of Siberia, of Persia, of China, and of Tartary have met the manufacturers of Western Russia, exchanged their raw produce for the manufactured goods of St. Petersburg, Moscow, and the west, and separated for another twelve months. The Fair, in fact, is a vast market, a temporary city, which began with the interchange of commodities between barbarians four hundred years ago at a location some eighty miles distant from Nijni Novgorod. After an existence of two centuries, during which period it absorbed into itself minor markets until it became the principal exchange of the empire, the fair was removed to its present site. Under the rule of Peter the Great, the government assumed its direc-

tion, which authority is still retained. Unlike the colossal and magnificent structures of iron and stone which we erect as the receptacles for our exhibited productions, the buildings of Nijni Novgorod bear a close resemblance to the labyrinth of streets and houses which, together, make up a Turkish bazaar. There is a broad open market place, rectangular in form, on which are constructed twelve rows of buildings, each some two stories in height, having broad verandahs to shelter the passers from sun and rain. These form parallel streets, some of which are nearly 120 feet in width. At the ends of the principal street, which is the broadest, are the government house and the cathedral, on the sides are shops and a chapel, near which are two high towers, the raising or lowering of flags on which denote the opening or closing of the fair. One side of the rectangle containing the buildings rests on the river Volga; the other three are surrounded by a horseshoe-shaped moat, kept filled with water at an elevation of some eighteen feet above the river, as a precaution against fire. The edifices are built on iron stanchions in the majority of cases, and all that can be removed are taken away at the close of the fair. A large number of buildings, however, remain, and with remarkable strength withstand the great yearly inundation of the river, which submerges the whole locality, leaving only the tallest structures projecting above the waters, like a miniature Venice. It is a strange contrast; a busy town of 150,000 inhabitants, replete with goods of every description, from American wagons to Persian rugs, existing for about six weeks; and then, a few months later, nothing but a dreary waste of water fills its place. Although the number of visitors at any one time may not exceed 150,000, it is estimated that fully a million people come and go while the fair is in progress, and the value of goods which have actually changed hands during the fair just closed is computed at \$120,000,000.

The governor of the province supervises the management, aided by a committee chosen by the participants in the fair. The committee controls all government property, renting the same at a low rate. There are some curious regulations