

ARGUS PEACOCKS IN THE BERLIN ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN.

The Argus peacock (*Argus giganteus*), also called Argus pheasant, was first known in 1780, the first skin of a bird of this species having been carried from Sumatra to Europe about that time. In the first report given of this bird it is stated that "it is a bird of uncommon beauty, perhaps the most beautiful of all." The Argus peacock is of about the same size as our peacock, and, as is the case with most birds, the plumage of the male is much more beautiful than that of the female. Its face is light blue and its bill white; its neck and back are of a golden brown, with light yellow spots shading into yellowish gray, with round brown spots, while underneath the bird is ornamented with lines of brown, yellow, and black. The wings are reddish brown, and the wing and tail feathers are very long. It is impossible to give any idea of the wonderful play of color on these birds; there are white spots on brown regular dark spots on a light ground, and many other variations of color.

The plumage of the female is very plain, and the young have a coat of grayish brown; at first, in fact, they bear a strong resemblance to their mother, to whom they keep very close, even remaining between her feet and moving with her as she moves from place to place.

Most works on natural history lament the fact that these birds soon perish in captivity, but the pair in the Berlin Zoological Garden have proved quite hardy. The Argus plays a conspicuous part in the Malay legends, but, nevertheless, it is highly prized in Sumatra and Borneo as an article of food.—*Illustrirte Zeitung*.

Dehorning Cattle.

The subject of removing the horns from cattle has received an unusual amount of attention among stock men within the past few months, on account of the prosecution by the Chicago Humane Society of an Illinois farmer, Mr. Haaff, who has for some years advocated and practiced dehorning cattle of mature age. His process is to confine the animals, and then quickly, with a sharp saw, to take the horns off close up to the head. He

claims that the operation is not excessively painful, that it makes the animals less dangerous to each other and their attendants; that considerably less food is required to keep them (the horns calling for much animal heat to keep them warm in a climate like ours); that the cattle, by huddling more closely together in their sheds, are better protected from cold; and lastly, that abortions are far less frequent.

Public opinion seemed at first to be against Mr. Haaff, but as the matter is investigated the farmers are taking a view similar to his. Sawing off the horns is probably less painful, and certainly far less dangerous, than castrating a mature animal, a process that public opinion has sanctioned for centuries. We are aware that there are many dangerous bulls kept by our farmers that would be far less dangerous if they were without horns; indeed, we look upon a horn upon a

domestic animal as a nuisance in every case, but we have never as yet either practiced or recommended others to practice the sawing off of horns upon full grown animals.

We once tried to cut out the incipient horns on the head of a calf, but had not the heart to do the work thoroughly, so made a failure of the experiment. We do believe, however, that the removal of the horns from young calves should be a common practice, and that any one with a little experience and courage can take them out effectually, and with very little pain or inconvenience to the animals. And we are glad to learn that so prominent a breeder of fine cattle as Mr. John

matrix. It can be done with one firm sweep of the knife, the calf being laid upon its side, and the head held firmly to the ground under the knee of the operator.—*N. E. Farmer*.

Glanders and Farcy.

The Tennessee State Board of Health in its bulletin for March commends the health officer of Nashville for his prompt destruction of three animals affected with glanders.

The board calls the attention of other local authorities to the importance of the immediate destruction of all animals affected with the disease. Glanders and

farcy are two names denoting really one disease, due to the same specific poison. It is called glanders when the air passages are affected, and farcy when the skin, areolar tissue, lymphatics, and glands are most prominently involved. Damp, ill-ventilated, narrow, and ill-built stables, insufficient or unwholesome food and excessive fatigue are the principal predisposing causes to the development and propagation of the disease. It invariably terminates in death, whether it appears in the acute or chronic form. Its communicability from one horse to another, from the horse to man, and from man to man, is now no longer questioned; hence health officers should act with great promptness in every case, rigidly enforcing isolation in regard to all "suspects" and extermination of all animals known to be affected.

The German law directs that any horse which has been even in contact with a glandered animal shall be immediately killed. This is wise. When the horse is killed, it should at once be buried deep in plenty of lime, and its former habitation thoroughly disinfected, first with sulphurous acid fumes, followed by prolonged free ventilation. All tainted food, bedding, etc., should be speedily burned.

The Largest Coal Breaker.

The Kingston Coal Company has erected the largest breaker in the anthracite coal regions at Edwardsville, Pa. The time occupied in its construction was a little over one year,

and about 2,000,000 feet of pine and hemlock lumber have been used to build it. The structure is about 380 feet long and 100 feet wide at the widest point. Five pairs of rollers, 15 screens, and two friction gears, a stationary engine 20 by 36, two pairs of hoisting engines, besides a large amount of other machinery, will be used in the breaker. The capacity of the breaker will be over 1,000 cars of coal per day. The culm will be drawn from the breaker on a trestling, by means of an engine, and no mules will be used there. All the most improved machinery has been put in, and the result is that less men can do the usual work than in other breakers.

Notes from Patent Decisions.

A mistake in an expression, proved to be so by other parts of the specification, will not vitiate a patent.—*Judge Nixon, Reed vs. Street*.



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Brooks, of Princeton, has decided to give the dehorning method a thorough trial upon his calves the coming season.

The horn of a cow is an appendage, not of the skull, but of the skin. In the calf the horn is loose on the head, and may be removed with a section of the skin. The horn is fed by the skin, as is also the hair; and as the removal of the skin on any portion of the body leaves a scar which will not hair over, so the removal of the skin with the rudimentary horn leaves a scar that cannot produce a new horn. It is claimed that there is no better time to perform the operation than when the calf is two weeks old. The horn at this age is merely a section of soft, hairless skin called the matrix, or mother of the future horn. In removing it, it is only necessary to make clean work of it, taking a rim of the skin an eighth of an inch wide surrounding the