



A Brief History of
the
Swan Goose
(*Anser cygnoides*)
under
Domestication in
the West

By Jonathan M.
Thompson

PART 2

*"Here's a state of unity,
Swan Geese divisible
into three."
With apologies to
W. S. Gilbert*

World events have been many and various during the 'fledging' of the Asiatic geese in the West. France had gone to War with its neighbours, and itself, suffered a bloody revolution in which Buffon's son, having devoted himself to a purely hedonistic existence, perished at the guillotine; Buffon did not live to witness this, having died prior to the uprising.

From the early 18th century most European countries engaged in aggression toward each other, more on than off, until 1945. America had severed itself from British rule in 1783, becoming the United States of America and remained, internally, peaceful until the 1860's.

In England, while the revolution in France was taking its bloody toll, William Smellie published his translation of Buffon's voluminous collective natural histories. *The Natural History of Birds* appeared in 1793, Smellie giving a faithful translation of Buffon's text, in listing one form only, and presenting an illustration of the "**Guinea Goose**" almost identical to that after De Sere.¹⁹

It is this text which many later authors have ceased upon as giving, in their estimation, the first evidence of the Asiatic geese in Europe; although they may have had knowledge of, and discounted, the earlier writers.

The dawn of the 19th century saw a plethora of works on poultry, most of which reiterate the words of previous authors.

Thomas Bewick, the renowned wood-cut illustrator adds, to the 2nd edition of *Water Birds* (1805), a wood-cut illustration and description of a bird (Fig.1.) which could pass for a modern Chinese Goose. Bewick calls it "**The Swan Goose. Chinese, Spanish, or Cape Goose.**" and cites Linné's "*Anas Cygnoides* [sic]" and Buffon's "*L'Oie de Guinée,*" using Buffon's description, saying: ". . . a skin, almost bare of feathers, hanging down like a pouch, or wattle, under the throat §. . ."



Fig. 1.

The footnote to this page states: "§The bird from which the above figure was taken, was without this appendage." This author goes on to say: "Tame Geese of this species, like other kinds, vary much, both in the colour of the bill, legs, and plumage, as well as in size . . . and rarely want the pouch or wattle under the gullet."⁵ This statement indicates Bewick was acquainted with more than one form of the 'Swan Goose'.

The confusion really starts for poultry literature when, in 1806, William Turton M.D., presents three varieties of "**Chinese Goose**." The first describes a bird with a "*Bill* black, . . . gibbous [having a hump]," and bearing a "*wart* on the chin blackish." This, the writer suggests, refers to the tubercle on the bill, and describes the Chinese Goose as known today. In the second type the beak is non 'gibbous' and the legs are scarlet; and the third has a "*Bill* pale yellow; cere large, black; hind-head black; chin with a pouch;"²² The size of these birds is not given, but it is probable the two latter descriptions are of the abundant cross-bred geese of that time. These three forms re-occur in future writings of the mid 1800's.

James Smith Barr (1808), a printer by profession, gives a description, compiled from descriptions by Buffon and earlier authors, of one large form and creates a text that is variously repeated by later authors. Following on from the descriptions of the swans, Barr writes of:

The *Cygnoides*, as following a middle line between the swan and the goose, has been, not improperly, styled the swan-goose. This species is the swan-goose of Ray, from Guinea, and is also often called the Muscovy goose. They are frequent in Britain, and unite so readily with the common goose, that their offspring will produce as certainly as if no such intermixture had taken place. They walk very erect, with the head much elevated; make an extraordinary harsh screaming noise; which they continue almost the whole day through, and without the least provocation or disturbance.²

John Robinson (1924) presents an image (Fig.2.), which he quotes as circa 1810 (although it had been previously printed in 1805), which he takes to be of a Chinese Goose, although it shows a bulky bird sporting a dewlap. Robinson says: "The earliest description of the Chinese Goose in poultry literature is in the "Treatise on Poultry," 1910. . . His description is taken from the Natural History of Buffon," -which

is then given. Robinson goes on to say: "The description of the size as coming near to that of the swan will fit the goose now [1924] called the African Goose: "¹⁸

The *Treatise* could be, as Robinson suggests, the earliest reference to the "Chinese Goose" in poultry literature, although it describes a bird of the African type. The date is a misprint in giving "1910". It is a translation of a section by Charles Nicolas Sigisbert Sonnini de Manoncourt, who edited Buffon's manuscripts from 1798 - 1808, frequently inserting his own observations, and was published anonymously in 1810 and 1819.



Fig. 2.

Sonnini (1815):

The *Guinea* Goose, has been brought up in Sweden, Russia, and Germany: it is much larger than ours—it multiplies in the tamed state; and by crossing with the common goose, produces a mixed race of a very fine appearance .¹⁹

In America, De Witt Clinton (1815) states: "The *anas cygnoides orientalis*, or Muscovy gander, breeds with the common goose."⁸

These statements indicate forms of the Asiatic goose, either pure-bred or mongrel, were known in continental Europe and America. Two forms are reported to be found in Staffordshire in 1817: "The French Goose, kept about Amerton near Chartley, called, from the blackness of its bill, *Anser Guineensis*, and *Swan*, are met with near Rugeley, with legs flesh-coloured, like those of a goose, and may be termed *Anser Cygnoides*."¹⁵

Of the numerous English accounts of these birds, few, if any, appear to be of an original nature. Even Bonington Moubray – one of the many pseudonyms of John Lawrence, a writer on horses and agriculture, and one of the first advocates of legislative enactments for the suppression of cruelty to animals; his writings were of eminent assistance towards obtaining those acts of parliament which were passed for their protection – adopted earlier text into his *Treatise*, which first appeared in print in England in 1815, and was revised and enlarged in editions – with varying titles - dating to 1854. The 1816 to 1842 editions contain a paragraph on the '*Cygnoides*' almost identical to that in Barr (1808).¹⁴

J. C. Loudon (1826), basically quotes Moubray/Barr; giving the '**Muscovy**' goose as the larger of two forms and the smaller '**Chinese**' goose as being little known in England at that time. He also mentions "Spanish White and Embden Geese." Just how much of Loudon's information is first-hand, and how much taken from other authors, it is impossible to say.¹²

The London Encyclopaedia, (1829) chooses to confuse by stating: "It is the swan goose of Ray, from Guinea. There is likewise a variety of this species, of a less size, called the goose of Muscovy."

Leonard Jenyns (1835) describes his *Cygnus Guineensis* as: "A domesticated species, common in many parts of England on artificial pieces of water. Native country somewhat doubtful." The beak and feet black and possessing a dewlap.¹¹

By 1836 there are reports of the birds, varying in size and colouration "now well known in our own country [England] in the living state."²³ And three years later, Peter Boswell, writing on the varieties of geese, states briefly "the Chinese [goose], which does not appear to be an inhabitant of the Country whence it derives its name."⁶

The earliest mention of White Chinese Geese in England, the writer has found, is in the *Magazine of Natural History* (1840), presenting an article on the relevant number of vertebrae in the various geese. John Robinson (1924), hypothesising that George Washington's geese could have been the white variety, cites the article in *The Cultivator* of 1857, in which William Barns of Orange Co., reports White Chinese Geese were imported direct from China by Wm. H. Murfeldt of Newburgh in 1855; the geese breeding in 1856.

In 1843, Micajah R. Cock (generally attributed to be a pseudonym of C.N. Bement, *q.v.*) penned the first truly *American Poultry Book*. He says:

I know very little of the stately, swan-like China Goose, distinguished by the horny knob on its bill. It is said to be very prolific, and its meat to be well-flavoured. From the very few that I have seen about farmyards, I should think it was not held in much estimation.⁹

By 1844 Imperial China had been brought to her knees by the British, the Americas and the French, in quick succession.

As far back as 1729, the Chinese Emperor, Yung Cheng, banned the smoking of Opium, except under licence for medicinal use. Then, in 1799, the Emperor Kia King imposed a total ban on the importation of Opium into the Chinese Empire.

However, British merchants of the East India Company held the monopoly on the production of the drug in India and continued to blatantly smuggle it into China in order to balance their purchases of tea for export to Britain. By the 1830's, the British had become the major drug-trafficking criminal organization in the world; very few drug cartels of the twentieth century can ever touch the England of the early nineteenth century in sheer size of criminality. China's addiction to the drug became so vast as to threaten its continuance as a major league nation.

When the Emperor learned his son had died of an overdose, he determined to end the trade; in 1838 the Qing government decreed that anyone dealing in Opium would be put to death and Chinese officials began to destroy any Opium coming into their Empire. This led to the first 'Opium War' between Britain and China erupting in 1839. Great Britain, looking to end China's restrictions on foreign trade, responded by sending gun-boats to attack the coast of China, razing cities and villages to the ground, plundering peasants of cows, chickens, ducks, daughters and geese. Finally, in 1842, unable to withstand European military hardware, the Chinese were forced to agree an ignominious peace under the inequitable Treaty of Nanking, which reopened Canton, Shanghai, Foochow, Ningpo and Amoy under British control. ^{7 & 24}

The Chinese were forced into similar treaties with France and the U.S.A. The Americans sent a diplomatic mission for the signing of the Wanghia Treaty in 1844. Fletcher Webster*, son of Statesman Daniel Webster, was appointed Secretary to the Mission, and it is reported he sailed from China in the August of 1844, returning to the United States in possession of Chinese Geese which were later kept on his father's farm at Marshfield, Mass. ⁴

*Col. Fletcher Webster was killed at the 2nd battle of Bull Run in August 1862.

Fletcher Webster's geese, however, were not the first of their kind to be recorded in America. Apart from Washington's account, there are two differing accounts which, by sheer co-incidence, the writer believes, are related to the same event. Henry Mesier of Dutchess Co., New York, is twice reported in the October 1844 issue of *The Cultivator* to have exhibited "Four splendid Chinese Geese" at the '*State Fair and Cattle Show,*' held 17th – 20th September 1844, at Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and on the following page "four geese of the China breed . . . these Geese are remarkable for layers and fine quality for the table; the mother of the geese shown, has laid nearly all winter, and has now the second brood of goslings raised this summer."

The American Agriculturist, October 1844, reports on the '*4th Annual Show of the New York State Agricultural Society, held 17th, 18th & 19th September at Poughkeepsie:*

Poultry.—When we consider the value of poultry in the United States, we can not express our astonishment that so few birds of any kind were exhibited. Mr. Bement of Albany was about the only person who showed anything in this line, and he confined himself to a few curious hens, and some beautiful China geese of a peculiar small breed.¹

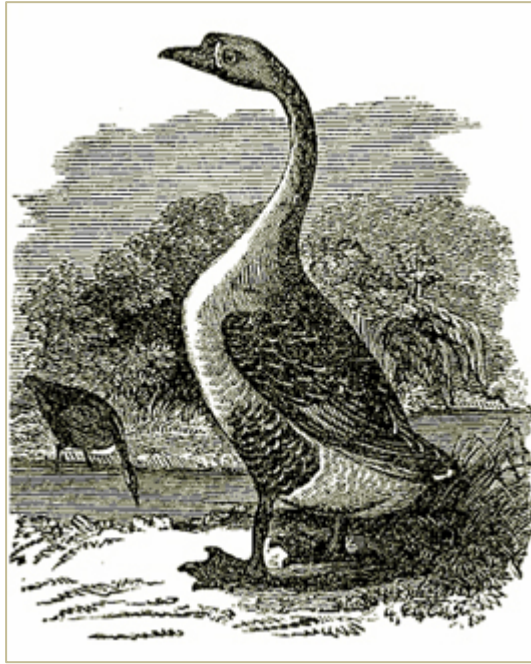


Fig. 3.

Which account is correct, it is now impossible to state; for although the exhibitor is named as 'Mesier' in one journal and 'Bement' in the other, the editors of the February 1845 issue of *The American Agriculturist*, publish the image of the "**Chinese Goose**" (Fig. 3.) from Bement's book, and make an intriguing request: "We saw a beautiful pair of these birds at the Agricultural show, at Poughkeepsie, last fall, and would be greatly obliged to the owner of them if he would sell us a few of their offspring the coming season." To which they receive an interesting reply, published in the April issue, from A. & H. Mesier of Wappings Creek (variously given as: Wappinger's Creek, Wappinger's Falls.), Dutchess County:

CHINA GEESE.—In your last No. of the *Agriculturist*, we noticed a spirited cut of Chinese Geese, accompanied with an inquiry where they could be procured, and also who was the owner of those exhibited at the late State show at Poughkeepsie. In answer to the inquiry, we would reply, that we imported them about ten years ago from China [1835?], and have some of the original stock still on hand. We have kept our flock (which has always been large) pure from any admixture. We know of no other flock of pure Chinas of this description. We ordered the first lot, and the Chinese sent us all males, and we had to wait another year before the second lot came, which, fortunately, proved to be all females— they probably not liking us "outside barbarians" to raise any progeny. Their superior qualities are, extremely delicate flavor, great hardiness of constitution, and unusual prolificness. They will lay, if well fed, all the year round; and generally hatch and raise two broods of goslings in a season, without any other feed but grass after they are hatched. We have now a brood which were hatched in September, at the time of the show, which are already full grown. Spring goslings frequently lay in the fall. They have extremely beautiful plumage, always alike; a wild, shrill cry, unlike that of any other geese; an erect, graceful carriage, and would be quite an ornament to any gentlemen's grounds. They are very correctly described in your article. You may insert this in your paper if you think proper. Although we have never sold any of these geese yet, still, if any of your friends would like to purchase them, we could part with two pairs in the

spring, at \$4 per pair, at our farm, or any quantity of goslings after they are full fledged in the summer, boxed up and delivered in New York at \$5 per pair. This we do, believing them to be a valuable acquisition to the poultry-yard, and for the benefit of the community.

These articles show that **Chinese/China** geese, similar to those seen today, were known and exhibited in the U.S.A. at this time. The Mesier brothers adopted the name '**China**' for their birds – signifying their place of origin, and Mr. Bement opted for the title '**Chinese.**'

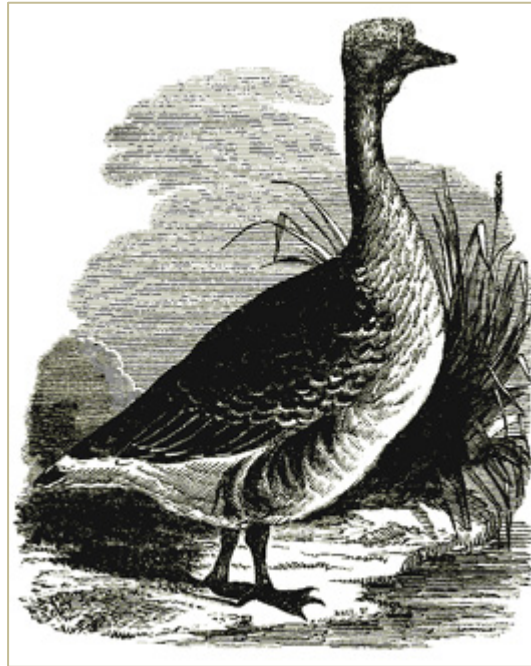


Fig. 4.

The name '**African Goose**' is brought to public attention in *The Cultivator*, May 1844, in an article (condensed from the *Boston Cultivator*, it informs us) reporting on the collection of livestock at Col. Thayer's establishment at Braintree, USA: "He liked a cross of the wild with the Mountain geese, and he had sold these mongrels at three dollars apiece. They weighed eighteen pounds each. [We presume the "Mountain" geese spoken of are what is sometimes called the India, or African, or Swan goose.— EDS. CULT.]"

The American Agriculturist, October 1844, presents the image (Fig. 4.) and description, given below, from Bement's book, the draft of which was with the printers at this time. Curiously, in the book, although the title "**Guinea, or African Goose**" heads the description, it is "**African**" alone which is given in the introduction to the chapter on 'Aquatic Fowls'; and "**African**" is given precedent when used for comparison in the chapter relating to the Chinese Goose. Should Cock and Bement be one and the same person, he certainly has a change of opinion about the breed by the time the work was published later in 1845. He says:

GUINEA GOOSE.

THIS is the largest of the goose tribe which has fallen under our notice; it is of the size of the swan, and it often weighs more than 25 pounds. We have now in our possession one pair which we purchased for a gentleman in South Carolina, which will weigh in common ordinary condition, over 20 pounds each. We once owned a gander that weighed 24 pounds. They are

a noble bird, quite ornamental about the premises, and add much to the scenery, particularly if a sheet of water be near. When floating on its surface they have a stately majestic appearance, and in their movements they much resemble the swan. They have a low, hollow, coarse voice, unlike that of any other variety.—[*Bement's Poulterer's' Corp.*³

A list of anticipated poultry prices is also given including:

Small China geese	per pair	3.00 – 4.00 \$
Guinea or African goose	per pair	10.00 – 15.00 \$.

The small China geese priced above, are very fine and bloodlike, are as hardy as ducks, and said to be as great layers.

Bement's description of the size and voice of these birds is indicative of the modern African Goose.

The above is the first instance, the writer has found in poultry writing, of a finite distinction between the two forms of Asiatic geese. Bement (1845) also describes the "**Poland Goose**" and the "**Chinese Goose**." The first is described as resembling the Guinea Goose, though smaller, and is regarded as a probable cross between the Guinea and the Chinese Goose; the "**Chinese Goose**" is described only in its grey/brown variety; with scant mention that "It is found sometimes entirely white. The variety from Guinea is known by its erect gait, and screaming, and is plentiful in this country. . . The specimen from which our portrait was taken, has been in our possession for several years. She was imported from China, and we obtained her direct from the ship." No precise detail of this import is given, and the writer suggests Bement may have obtained this bird via the Mesier Brothers, as elsewhere he advertises having birds of their origin for sale.

Caleb Nichols Bement [1791-1868] settled in Albany, Albany County, New York State before 1825; and was proprietor of Bement's Hotel, No.82 State Street, Albany in 1834. He purchased Three Hills Farm, some three miles from Albany, before 1836. On his arrival there he turned his attention to the breeding of blood-stock and the writing of articles and papers on all matters agricultural, while still retaining other business interests; in 1844 taking the lease on the American Hotel, No.100 State Street, Albany.

Bement was something of an entrepreneur – and 'a bit of a goer.' Following the death of his first wife, Harriet Holmes, in 1823, he did not "prick that annual blister – marriage with deceased wife's sister," and wed Caroline Holmes in 1824; she died at Three Hills in 1836. He married again in 1858, for the third and final time! Apart from the hotels, he had a small steam mill, milling grain for family use, and took advantage of every opportunity to promote the sale of his varied livestock through written articles, advertisements and exhibitions; and he was the person to permanently separate the forms of these geese. His son, George, appears to have had charge of the poultry and waterfowl, being regularly among the premium winners at shows and promoting the names of both '**African**' and '**Chinese**' geese as distinct breeds.

The year in which the first National Poultry Show was held at the London Zoological Society Gardens (This was not, as it has been claimed, the first Poultry Show in England, as there had been local Shows prior to this.), Bement exhibited a variety of fowls, ducks and geese at the annual New York State Fair. *The Ohio Cultivator*, October 1845 reports:

The display of Poultry was a novel and interesting part of this exhibition. Few persons were aware that so great a variety of domestic fowls could be found—and especially of such great size and beauty. There were six or seven exhibitors; Mr. Bement had eleven varieties of fowls, two of turkeys, three of ducks, and three of geese; Mr. Tucker had nine varieties of hens, two of turkeys, two of geese, two of ducks, and twelve of pigeons. The improvement of the breeds of poultry is beginning to receive much attention among some farmers at the east, and more especially in England.

This must have been a considerable improvement upon the exhibits of 1844.

The Cultivator, November 1845, differentiates between the **Chinese** and the **African** geese, presenting the previous image of the **Chinese Goose** (Fig. 3.):

CHINESE GOOSE.— There are probably several varieties of geese in the "Celestial Empire." We have seen two or three kinds which have been brought to this country. One kind were uniformly of a dusky white color, though in other respects resembling the grey variety, for one of which the above cut was taken. This grey kind are very prolific, hardy, and profitable. We know of none equal to them in these respects. They will rear two broods in a season, and though the last ones do not come out till autumn, and the nights are frosty, they get along and grow through the winter without any trouble—laying and rearing a brood for themselves the next season. At the Fair at Poughkeepsie in 1844, Messrs. A. & H. Mesier, of Fishkill, exhibited some of these geese, which attracted much attention. We had the pleasure of making a visit to Messrs. Mesiers' farm in August last, and there saw altogether the finest flock of these geese we ever met with. There were three or four broods of goslings which were hatched in May, grown up—apparently as large as the old ones—and the geese which hatched these were all then sitting for a second brood, which were expected out the first of September. The form of these geese is very handsome—their necks are long, with a graceful curve—their bodies round, and thickly covered with fine feathers. The upper part of the bill rises in a knob—a characteristic of all the Asiatic goose-tribe, so far as we know—and both the bill and legs are black. Their general color is almost as uniform as that of our American wild geese. Their flesh is considered superior. These geese should not be confounded with the large African variety, called by Cuvier *swan geese*, which are of enormous size, but rather unprolific. The above cut was taken for a Chinese geese belonging to Mr. C. N. Bement, to whom we are indebted for a loan of the cut.

In 1846 the Committee of the County Agricultural Societies and the American Institute decided: "After careful and serious deliberation we came to the conclusion to award the premium of \$3, to George Bement, for his pair of African geese — one of which weighs 24 pounds on the hoof."

The English continued to follow Turton's three varieties. H. D. Richardson, a prolific writer on matters agricultural, was furnished with material provided by the Dublin dealer and importer, J. J. Nolan, and gives three sub-varieties of "**The Chinese Goose**" in 1846. Stating that it "Is another recently introduced variety or breed, of which there are three sub-varieties, each presenting striking points of difference, and yet being sufficiently alike to justify me in classing them together." Richardson describes:

I. THE HONG KONG.

This bird has a large horny knob on the bill and forehead; its prevailing colour is grey, with a longitudinal stripe of a deep brown running above the back of the neck. The legs

are of a red colour, whence it is sometimes distinguished as the "Red Legged China Goose." This is the same long known amongst us under the erroneous name of the "Poland Goose."

II. BLACK LEGGED CHINESE GOOSE.

Also knobbed, and usually with a white edging round the knob, somewhat similar to that of the wild breed called the "White fronted Goose."

III. THE WHITE CHINESE GOOSE.

A very handsome bird, knobbed as the rest, of a snow-white colour, and with legs of a bright orange red. These geese are inferior in size to the TOULOUSE, but, never-the-less, very fine birds, and worthy the attention of the breeder. The white variety especially, with red legs, is very beautiful, and would form an appropriate ornament on a piece of water. The flesh of the Chinese goose is also good. They feed well, fatten easily, and are very prolific.¹⁶

From his Norfolk rectory the Rev. E. S. Dixon gleaned a great deal of information through his correspondence with many like-minded persons with an interest in poultry and natural history; the Earl of Derby among them, from whom he received an Hawaiian gander. Writing in 1848, Dixon describes the "**China**" and the "**White China Goose**." It appears the 'Large' form was unknown to him, although in concluding the chapter on the "**White China Goose**" Dixon says:

Some writers speak of a variety with a pouch, or, according to others, lappets under the chin. This I have never seen or heard of in any collection. One cause of the difficulty of recognising the China Goose from descriptions and synonyms seems to have arisen from the general similarity, yet fixed though slight distinctive marks, of the two dark varieties. It is possible that the pouched or lappetted sort may have been for some time lost to this country, and may now be recoverable only in China and its islands.¹⁰

Dr. J. C. Bennett, who instigated the formation of *The New England Society for the Improvement of Domestic Fowls* and their first Boston Show in the November of 1849, is the first to use the title "**The African Goose**" without including a synonym in the heading.



Fig. 5.

In 1850, Bennett presents an engraving (Fig. 5.), taken from life it is stated, of which he says:

This beautiful plate, by Durivage, is a very successful representation of a fine

specimen of this gigantic bird. By common consent, this goose is installed the head of his tribe, for size, and imposing appearance.

His description is taken from Buffon, to which is added:

Mr. Giles, an original importer of this breed, in a letter to the author, thus describes it:

"The Guinea goose shall stand forth first;-- brown-gray on the back, light gray on the fore-front, brown on the head and upper neck, prominent black tubercle on the root of the bill, with pouch or dewlap under the throat. Weight will vary from twenty to twenty-five pounds each. [It] is a very rare and ornamental bird."

Bennett describes "**The Indian Mountain Goose**" (Fig. 6.) which he declares, with Giles' corroboration, to be a pure breed, and "**The Poland Goose**" (Fig. 7.) which he states to be a "hybrid" between the African and the Chinese Goose.



Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.

The section on "**The Chinese Goose**" is headed with an image (Fig. 8.) very similar to that in Bement (1845), both images bear close resemblance to that of Bewick (1805); Bement's being an almost exact copy, but omitting the fence, and Bennett's is reversed and includes the fence.



Fig. 8.

He states: "Some beautiful specimens of this variety were brought out from China by Fletcher Webster, Esq., and are now on the farm of the Hon. Daniel Webster, at Marshfield. " and continues by listing descriptions of "three sub-varieties" which he attributes to Richardson, adding to the text on the "**White Chinese Goose**": "it has sometimes been called the 'Swan goose.' The flesh of the Chinese goose is also good; they feed well, fatten easily, and are very prolific." ⁴

J. J. Nolan was not entirely satisfied with the results of Richardson's (1846) labours and published his own work in 1850. Presenting an image (Fig. 9.) that was to be copied by future writers, he says:

THE LARGE CHINESE, OR HONG KONG GOOSE,

Is perhaps, the largest of the tribe, and has been but recently known here. They were first introduced by the Ornithological Society of London, from China, and are found unusually prolific, breeding at all seasons of the year, and cross with considerable advantage on our domestic geese. . . Their prevailing colour is gray, with a longitudinal stripe of brown, running above the neck, belly white, feet flesh colour. A bird somewhat resembling them has been long known to us as the Poland goose, but quite inferior in size and appearance.

Nolan then mentions the **White Chinese** as being next in size to the above mentioned; and the "**Black-Legged Chinese Goose**" being:

somewhat smaller than the preceding, the markings similar to the Hong Kong, the knob rather larger, in proportion to the size of the bird, its standing is more erect, and its legs and feet black.

A "**Pygmy Chinese Goose**", the size of a Rouen Duck, is also mentioned. This in all probability is a runt. ¹⁴



Fig. 9.

The Ornithological Society, mentioned by Nolan, was quite separate from Zoological Society of London, although both societies shared some of the same members. It was, in its way, the precursor to Sir Peter Scott's *Wildfowl Trust*.

This society was established in 1837, for the purpose of breeding and forming collections of water-fowl; first, to supply the royal parks; and, secondly, to distribute duplicates, gratuitously, among such members as may be desirous of acquiring a collection of aquatic birds. The society endeavours to maintain a complete collection of water-fowl— swimmers, divers, and waders. The birds are kept as nearly as possible in a natural state, in St. James's Park, where the lake forms as it were a great natural cage. The birds are very tame, and being placed under the protection of the public, are great favourites, a large portion of their food being supplied by visitors. The president of this society is the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry.²⁵

The secretary was William Blythe, who later took a position in Calcutta. The Society was ambitious and its set-up most impressive. In 1841 Prince Albert became its patron.

Upon the eastern island is the Swiss cottage* of the Ornithological Society, built in 1841 with a grant of £300 from the Lords of the Treasury: the design is by J. B. Watson, and contains a council-room, keepers apartments, steam-hatching apparatus; contiguous are feeding-places and decoys; and the aquatic fowl breed on the island, making their own nests among the shrubs and grasses.²⁰

*Now the headquarters of the London Historic Parks & Gardens Trust.

The breeds of the **Chinese** and the **African Goose** had, for the first time, been defined and promoted as two distinct forms, and although confusion continued on both sides of the Atlantic, the American poultry writers, in the main, follow Bement's text and present both types as separate breeds; Britain still had to overcome its uncertainty on the matter.

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PART 3
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