on our moors, and the *Ortyx virginianus*, or American Partridge, in our fields and coverts; but what good would be effected thereby? the Prairie-Hen would but displace a better bird, the common Grouse; and the little Partridge would be no improvement upon our familiar species. There is no fear, however, that this will ever be accomplished; and the sooner such fallacies are ended the better. It would be far wiser were the efforts of our well-meaning patrons of acclimatization directed rather to that interchange of blood among the same species which is essential to the maintenance of a healthy stock. I am sure it is all-important with regard to our birds, particularly those that are stationary. It is well known that species which have lived long on an island without a sufficient interchange will diminish both in size and brilliancy of tints: and hence, perhaps, may be explained the smaller size and more subdued colouring of many of our birds, compared with continental examples. The Blackcock of Norway and Switzerland will be found to have the tone of its plumage more intensified than those inhabiting Scotland, the black being unmistakably of a darker hue, and the gloss of the feathers more resplendent. The Norwegian Ptarmigan, too, is of a purer white compared with our own bird, while its full summer dress is much darker. So, again, the Long-tailed Tit (*Mecistura caudata*) of Norway and Denmark differs in having a white head, while that of Great Britain has the crown and face dark or obscurely striped; and the Cole Tit (*Parus ater*) of Belgium in having the back grey, instead of the slight olive tint seen in British examples. To make such differences, however, grounds for specific distinction, as has in some cases been done, is in my opinion playing with science. That the drier and more rarified air of the Continent, coupled with the more direct influence of the solar rays, contributes to cause these slight differences, seems to me highly probable; and I am strengthened in this view by noticing that, among such groups as the *Trochilidæ* or Humming-birds of America, some of the richest and finest colours are seen in species that frequent lofty situations.

Most of the Pheasants now spread over every county of the British islands are mongrels, brought about by the interbreeding of three kinds; and their progeny are but too often rickety and sickly creatures. Those of our sportsmen who have flushed a true *Phasianus torquatus* in England, or killed the same bird in China, its native country, must have been astonished at the quickness of its arrow-like flight, and the wildness of its actions.

The scientific naturalist, of course, repudiates all varieties such as the Pheasants alluded to, no two of which are alike in colour or markings, and whose promiscuous interbreeding can lead to no important result. We see this intercrossing carried to a still greater extent in our domesticated Pigeons and Fowls; but beyond the acquisition of certain variations in plumage, or of qualities rendering them more highly esteemed for the table, nothing of interest is attained.

Whilst on the subject of interbreeding, I should wish to draw the attention of sportsmen to the advan-