

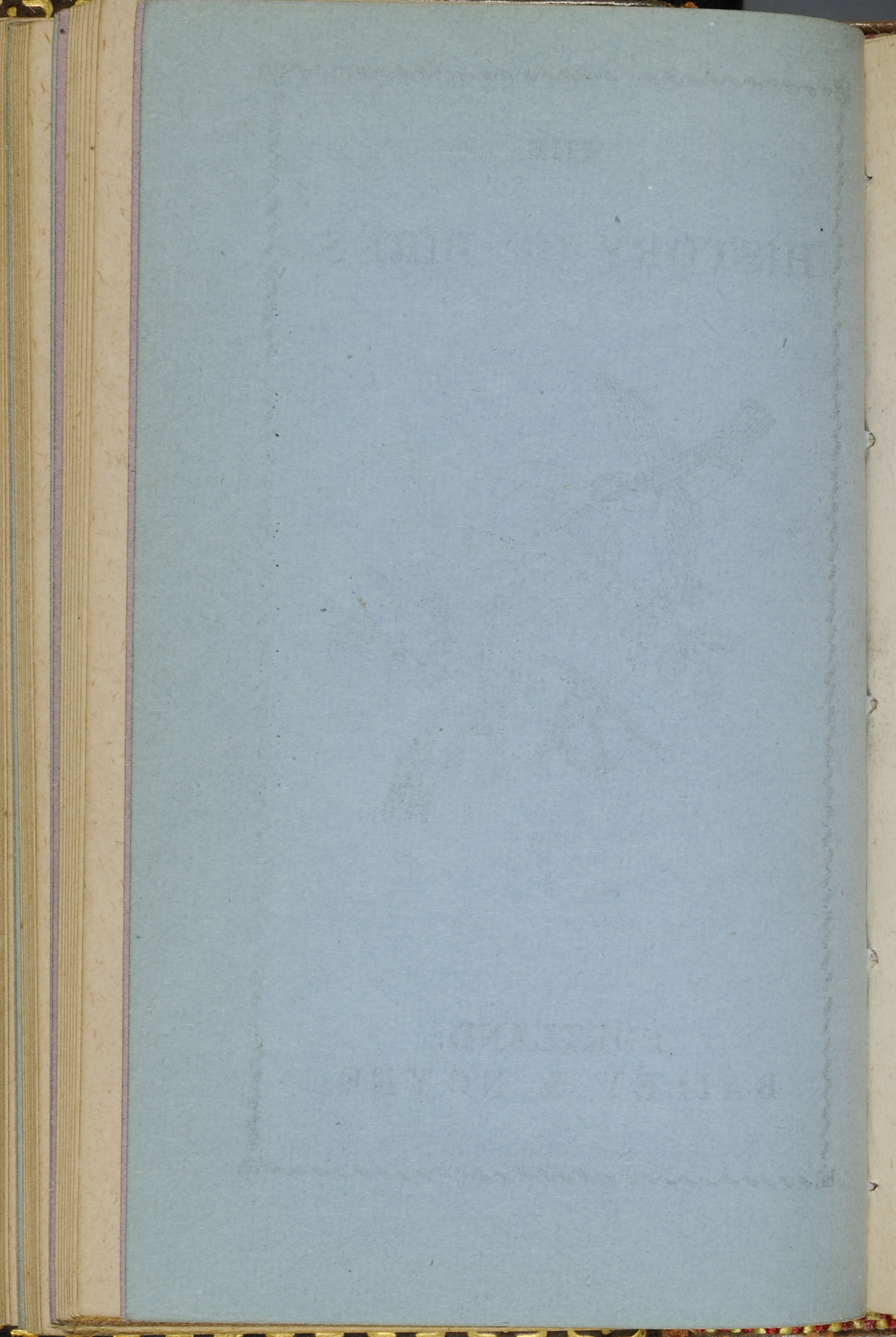
THE

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HISTORY OF BIRDS.



PORTLAND:
BAILEY & NOYES.



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HISTORY OF BIRDS

As I now present my little readers with a history of some of the feathered race, I shall take the liberty to observe, that I hope they may be induced, from motives of tenderness, to refrain from the cruel practice of robbing or destroying the nests of the harmless birds. How much more exquisite is the pleasure of viewing and leaving those beautiful eggs or innocent young in the nests, by and by to delight us with their songs, while they flit from spray to spray, than to shut them up in a prison of wire, or to have a long string of shells stretching through the room.

THE
HISTORY OF BIRDS.

OSTRICH.



THE Ostrich is the largest of all birds. It is usually about

seven feet high, from the top of the head to the ground: but from the back it is only four feet, so that the head and neck are about three feet long. From the top of the head to the rump, when the neck is stretched out in a right line, it is six feet long, and the tail is about a foot more. The wing, without the feathers, is a foot and a half, and with the feathers, three feet in length. At the end of each wing, is placed a kind of spur, almost like the quill of a porcupine, it is an inch long, hollow, and of a horny substance. The head and bill somewhat resemble a duck's: the feathers are generally a mixture of black and white, and almost as soft as down, being utterly unfit to serve the animal for flying, and

still less adapted to be a proper defence against external injury. The upper part of the head and neck is covered with a fine, clear, white hair, that shines like the bristles of a hog. There are no feathers on the sides of the thighs, nor under the wings; on the foot are two very large toes, which, like the leg, are covered with scales.

The sandy and burning deserts of Africa and Asia, are the only native residences of these animals. There they are seen in large flocks: so large as sometimes to have been taken for distant cavalry.

These birds are very prolific: they lay from thirty to forty or fifty eggs at a time, which are

very large: the shell of one will hold a quart, or more: they are deposited in the sand.

Ostriches are very swift of foot; they cannot fly; their wings only serve as paddles to help them in the air in running. They are hunted with horses, the fleetest of which cannot equal them in speed, and would not be able to take them, but for this, that instead of shooting forward in a direct line they run in circles: the hunters keep within these circles, in sight of the Ostrich, and relieve each other for two or three days: the Ostrich is at last spent with famine and fatigue. Is not this a noble employment for the rational creature man, thus to

spend his time in pursuing and
 destroying the innocent inhabi-
 tants of the desert? for what?
 why merely to obtain feathers
 to decorate the heads of beaux
 and belles.

NIGHTINGALE



This charming songster is the principal of the English singing birds: it is not remarkable for its beauty. The upper part of its body is of a rusty brown, tinged with olive: the under parts are of a pale ash color, almost white on the throat and belly. Its length is about six inches. Its nest,

which is made of the leaves of trees, straw, and moss, is built near the bottom of some hedge ; so artfully secreted that it generally eludes the inquisitive eye of the school-boy. And surely, robbing birds of their eggs and young is a pitiful gratification, compared with the pain that is inflicted on the innocent and uninjuring little bird. It lays five or six eggs, of a brown nutmeg color. It begins its song in the evening and generally continues it the whole night. For weeks together it will sit upon the same tree, if not disturbed, and seldom changes its place ; it mostly keeps in the middle of the bush, so that it is rarely seen. It is supposed that the notes of this little bird may be heard above half a mile, if the evening be calm.

KITE.



This bird is a native of Europe, Asia, and Africa. It breeds in large forests, or woody, mountainous countries. Its nest is composed of sticks, lined with several old materials; such as rags, bits of flannel, rope, and paper. It lays two or at most three eggs; white, spotted with dirty yellow. Its motions when

flying, distinguish it from all other birds; being so smooth and easy, that they are scarcely perceptible: sometimes it will remain quite motionless for a considerable time; at others, it will glide through the air without the least apparent motion of its wings. Contrary to the nature of other rapacious birds of prey, they breed twice in a year; once in the mild winters of Egypt, and a second time in the summers of the north. It makes its appearance in Greece in the spring. "In the early ages," says Aristophanes, "it governed that country, and men fell on their knees, when they were first blessed with a sight of it; because it pronounced the flight winter, and told them to be-
o shear their vernal fleece."

QUAIL.



The quail is a neat and pretty little bird, very wild: it is seldom seen, except when on the wing, which is but for a very short space of time, its flight being very rapid, and generally but a small distance: it skulks among the grass, grain, bushes, &c. and seldom rises to fly except disturbed by the very near

approach of a person, or some other creature, and quickly alights again, in some hedge or thicket: it builds its nest on the ground, in which it lays its eggs, sometimes twenty or more in number: it is particularly fond of wheat, and has a peculiar note, at the season of the year near harvest, that sounds to a country ear, somewhat similar to "wheat's most ripe." They go in flocks; and are in the winter caught in snares and traps, and shot with the gun. They are choice food. We are informed the children of Israel were fed in the wilderness with quails in abundance. See Exodus, xvi. 13, and Numbers, xi. 33.

FALCON.

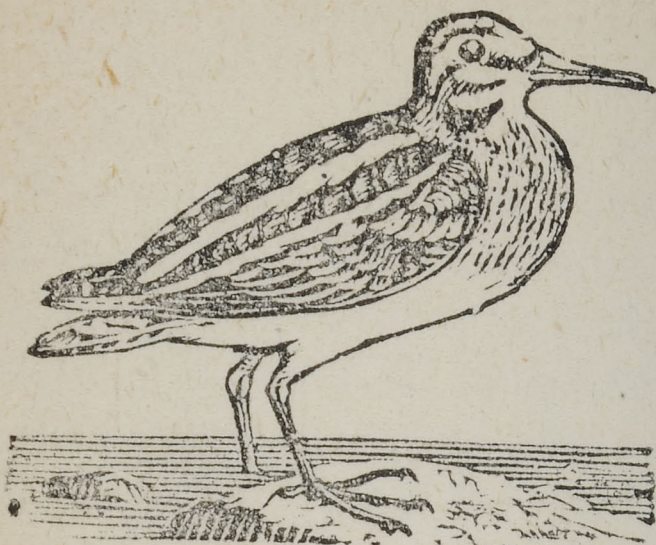


This is a bird of prey, of the hawk kind, superior to all others for courage, docility, gentleness, and nobleness of nature; there is one kind of falcon, called the secretary, on account of a bunch of quills behind its head as bearing some resemblance to a pen, stuck in the hair, behind the ear of a clerk. The falcon is not so large as the eagle: they

are found in various parts of the globe. The female lays four or five eggs every year, and both father and mother take charge of the young, till they are capable of providing for themselves. In ancient times, it was customary to train up these birds for the purpose of taking others, as the dog is used for hunting other beasts.

The Welch had a saying, that you might know a gentleman by his hawk, horse, and greyhound. In fact, a person of rank seldom went out without one on his hand. In the reign of Edward III. it was made felony to put a hawk to death, and to steal the eggs imprisonment for a year

JACKDAW.



This is a small bird of the crow kind. It nestles in walls, towers, steeples and high cliffs. It lives on carrion, insects, fruit, and grain: it utters the cry of do, do.

The gray Jackdaw is not so common: its cry is glass, glass.

These birds are capable of being tamed and taught to speak.

JANUARY



The first of the month
is a day of great
importance to the
city of London
as it is the day
when the new
year begins
and the
people
celebrate
the
occasion
with
great
joy
and
merriment
The
first
of
January
is
a
day
of
great
importance
to
the
city
of
London
as
it
is
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