THE ALPHABET OF BIRDS

BY

HARRISON WEIR.

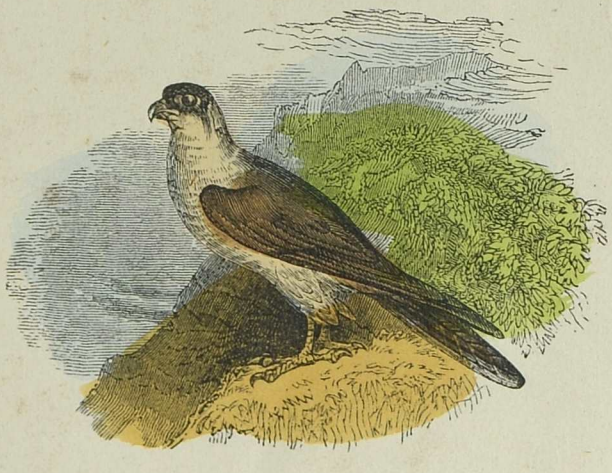
ONE SHILLING.

Emily Gilder
1866.
$190.
(EK 80)

DARTON'S

ALPHABET OF BIRDS,

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRISON WEIR.



LONDON: 58, HOLBORN HILL,
AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

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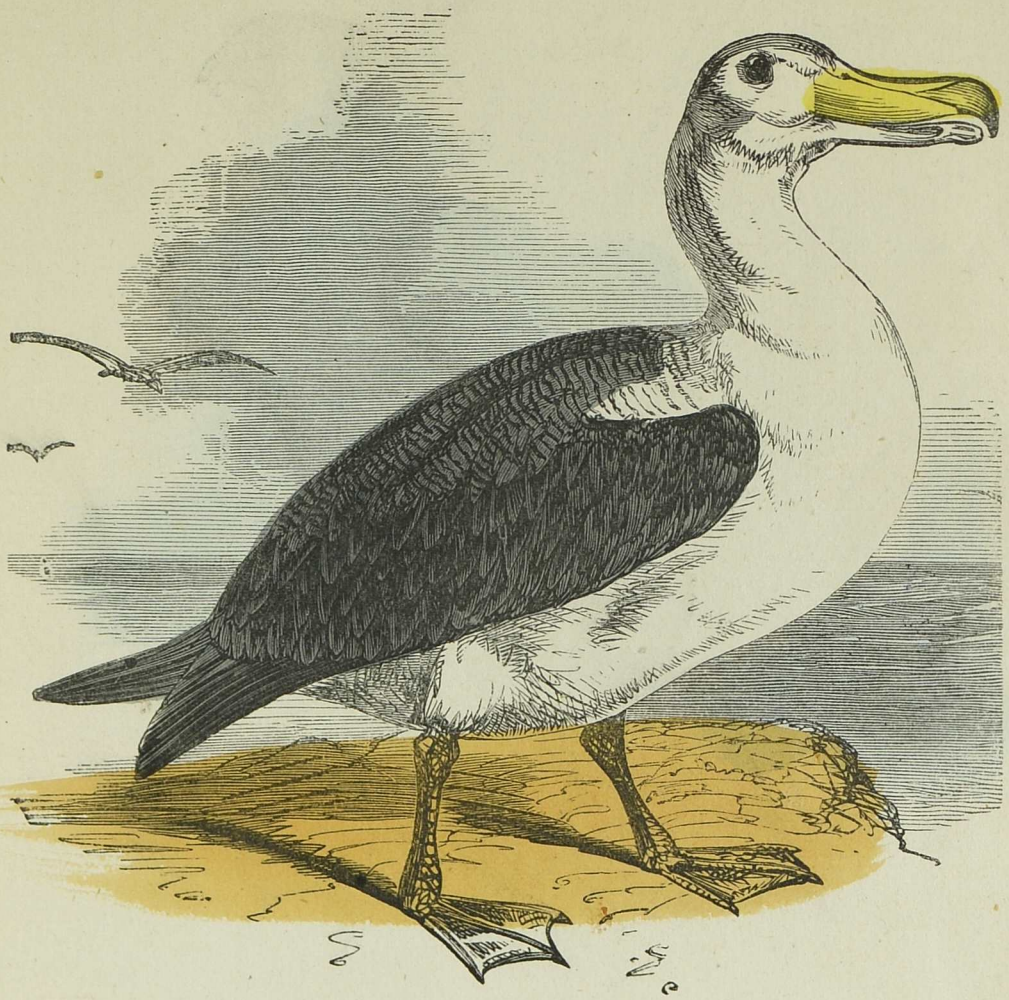
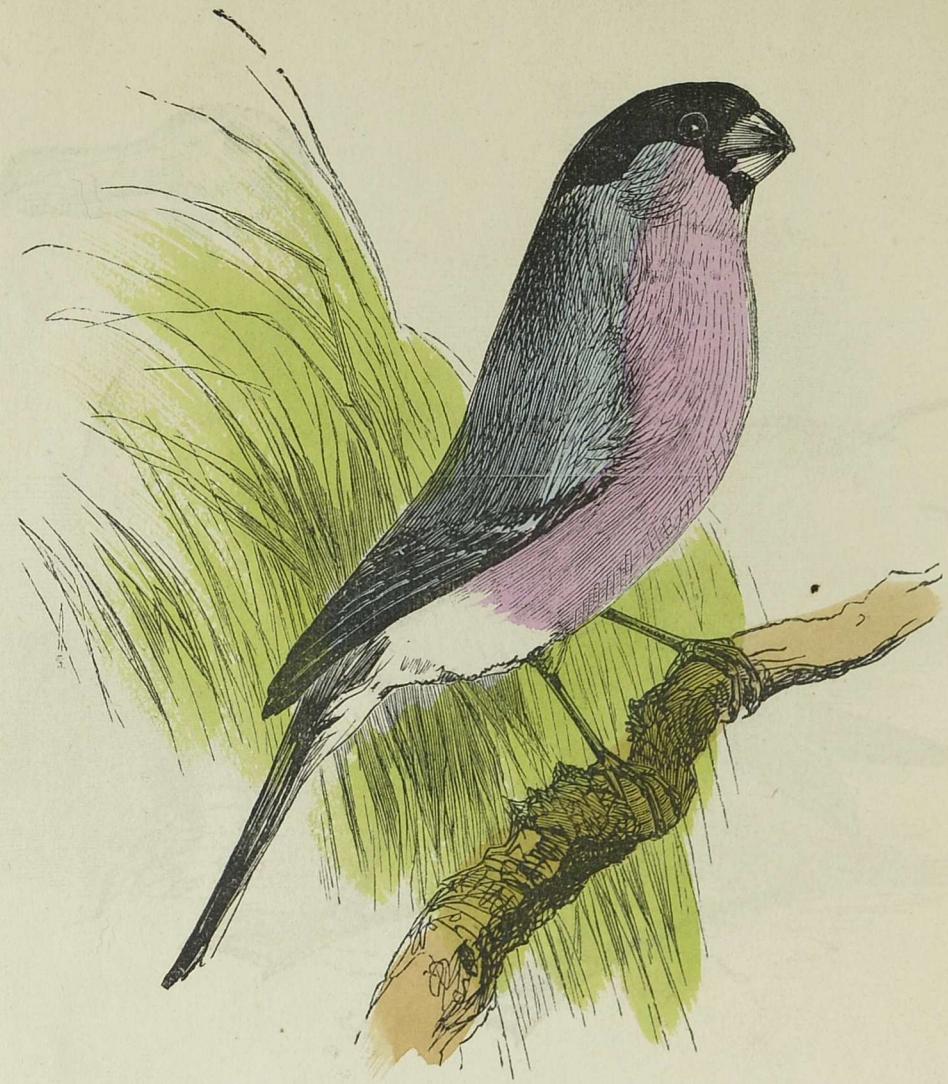


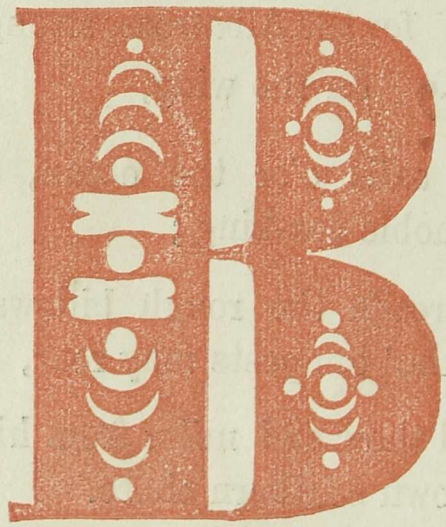
A, for the Albatross, strong
on the wing,

Who sails o'er the ocean, a
noble sea-king;

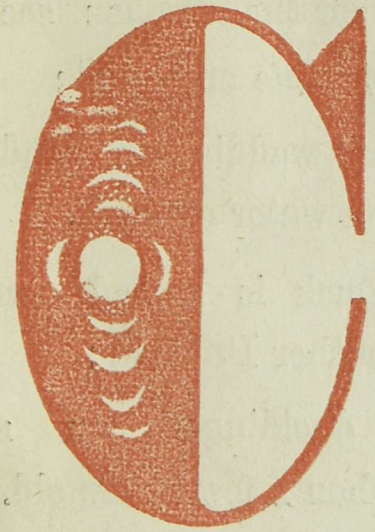
He treads the rough billows,
tho' tempests may roar,

A full thousand miles from his
own southern shore.





B, for the Bullfinch, whose
pretty red throat
Is gifted by God with a
sweet mellow note;
But men catch poor Bully,
and send him to school,
That he may learn music,
and whistle by rule.

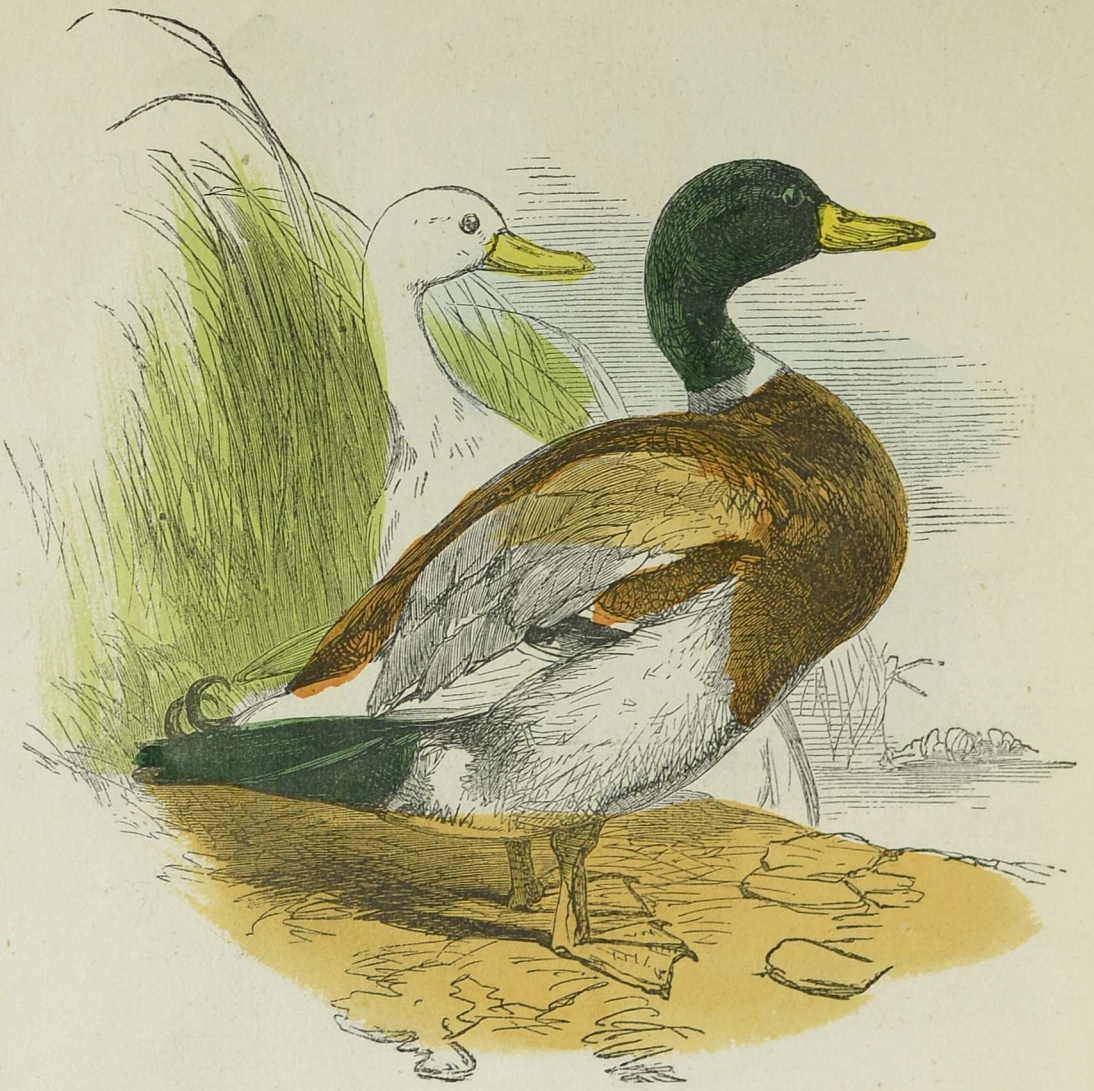


C, Cassowary; this bird is now rare,

His feathers resemble long bristles or hair;

With a porcupine's coat and a warrior's head,

He has lion-eyes, and a steed's swiftness 'tis said.

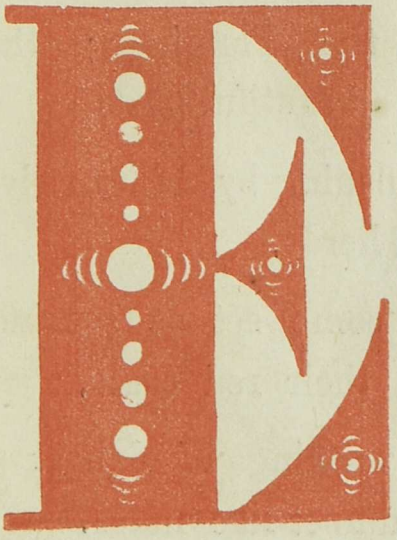


D, for the Drake: see his fine curly tail;

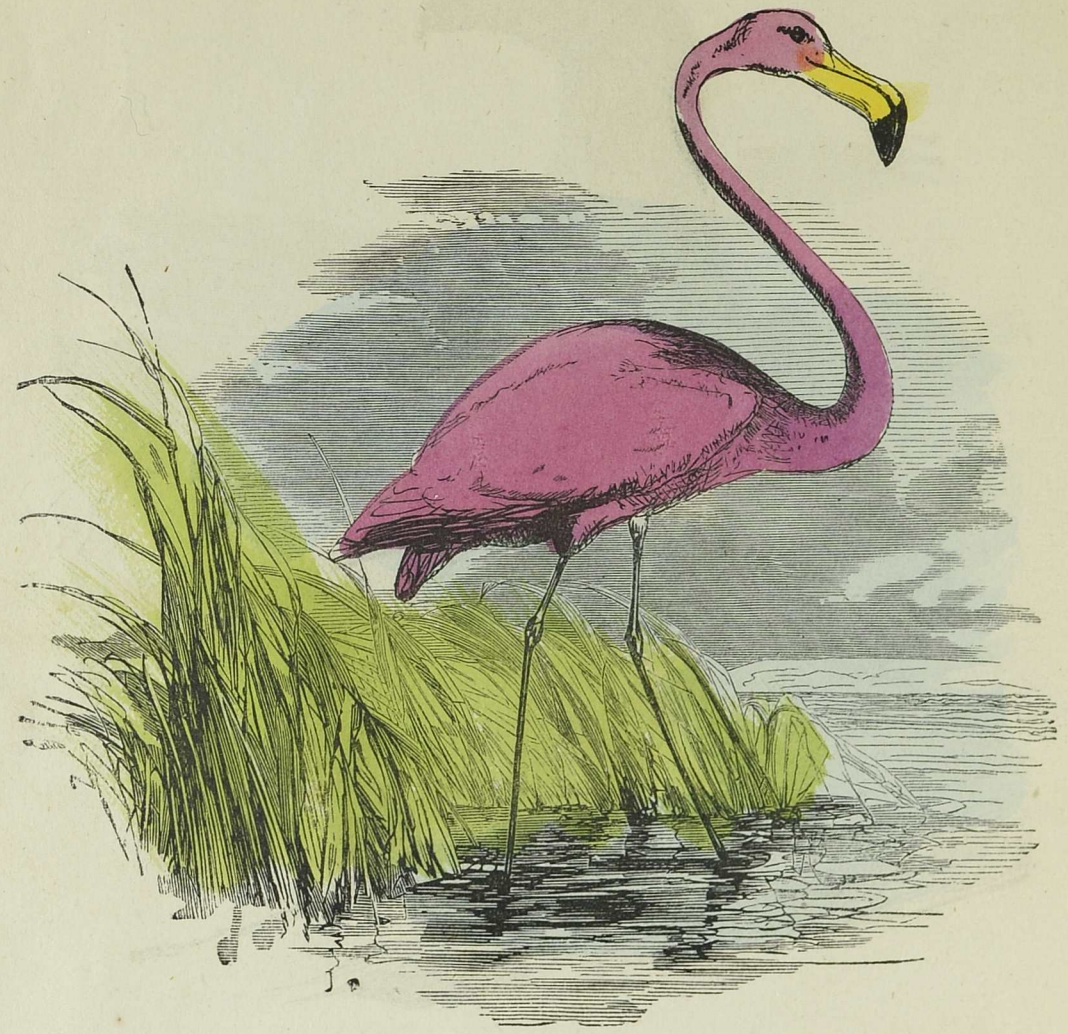
He can waddle on land, or on water can sail.

The Duck is a sad careless mother I'm told;

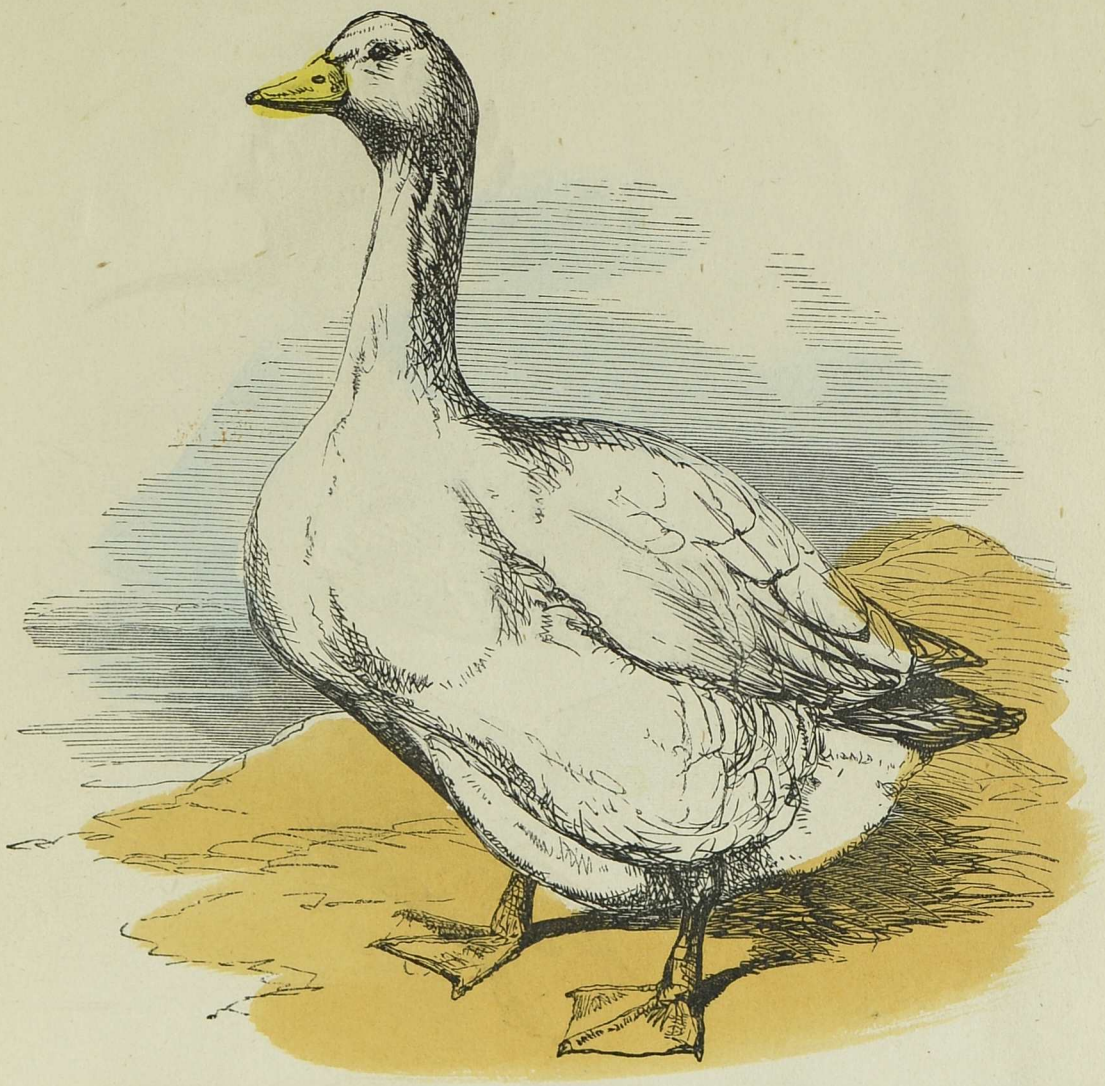
And ducklings can swim when a few hours old.

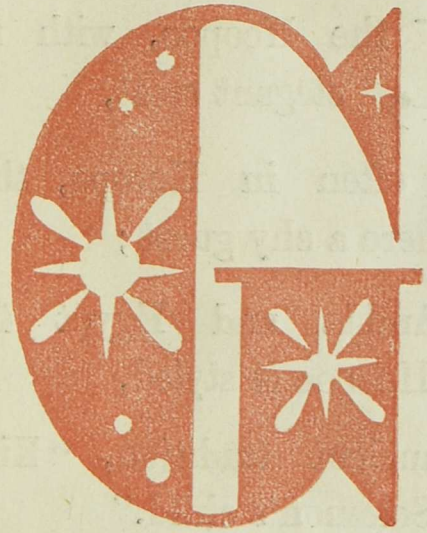


E, for the Eagle, who soars up the sky,
Untired in wing, and undazzled in eye;
The king of all birds, all alone he delights
To build his wild nest on the lone mountain heights.

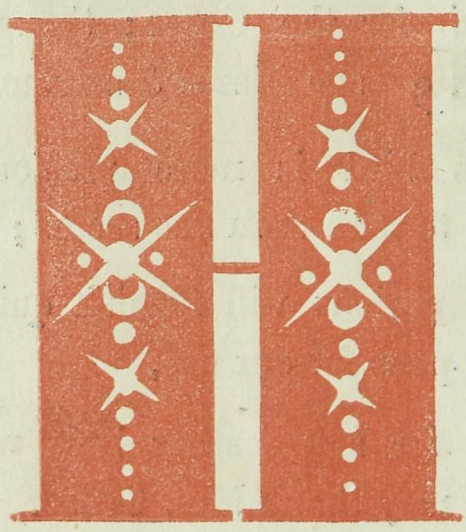


F, the Flamingo; these beautiful birds
Stand fishing by African rivers in herds,
While some set as sentinels, in their red coats,
Give warning of danger by trumpet-like notes.





G, for the Goose; though
she hisses & screams,
This bird is more precious
to man than she seems;
Her pinions will furnish quill
pens for our use,
And for soft feather beds we
may thank Mrs. Goose.



H, the Hoopoe, with its elegant crest,

Seen often in Europe, tho' here a shy guest;

In Arabia and Egypt the Hoopoe is styled,

By ancient tradition, "King Solomon's child."

I, for the Ibis, the Nile's sacred bird,

By ancient Egyptians once worshipped, I've heard;

Since living adored, dead, embalmed it must be:

In the British Museum its mummy you'll see

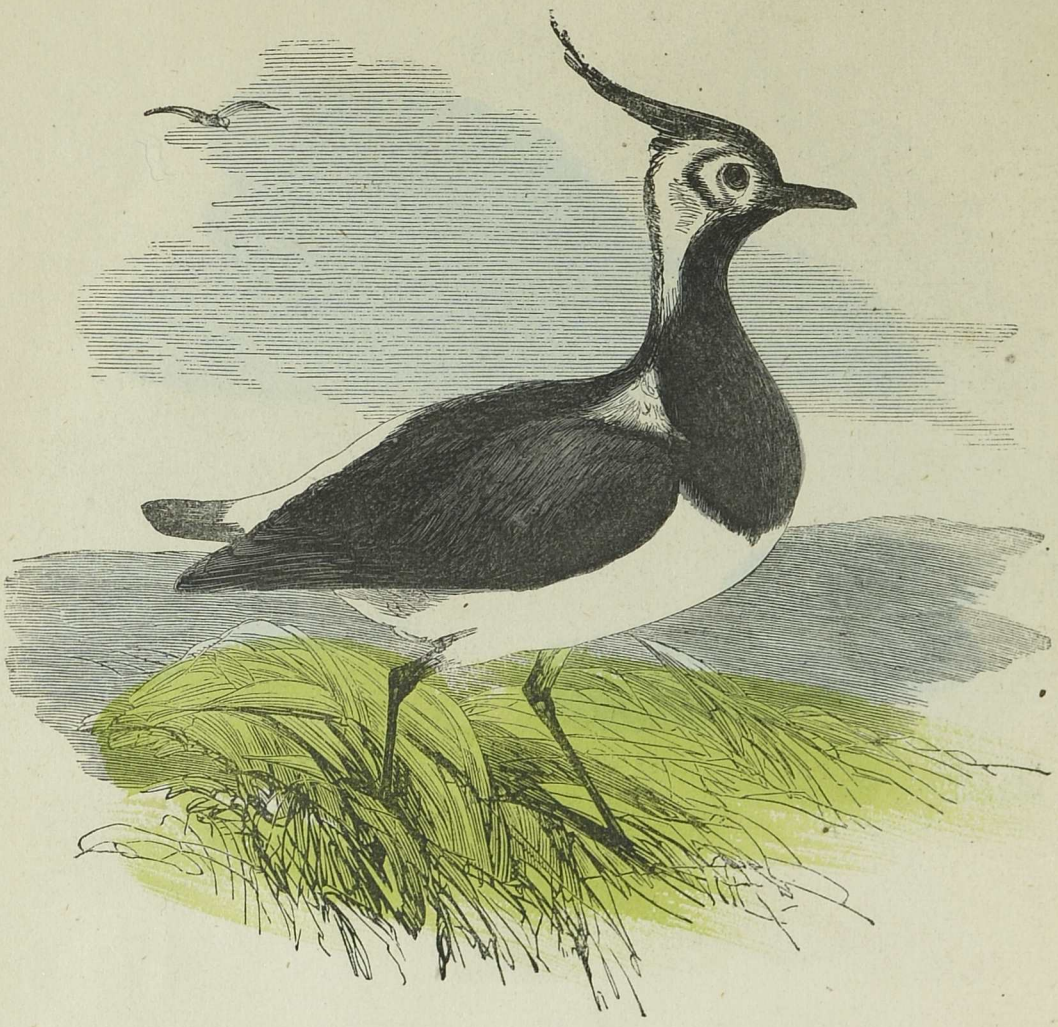
J, for the Jay, bird of beautiful hue,

And fonder of chattering even than you;

Some say it flies hence when the summer is o'er,

To spend the cold season on some milder shore.

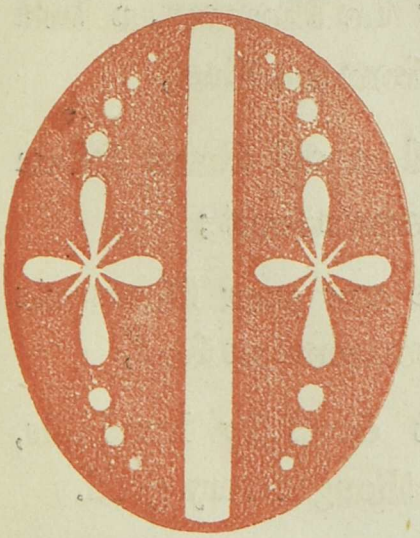
K, for the Kestrel or Hawk; you will find
Tho' handsome his plumage, ferocious his mind;
He hunts for live birds, mice, or chickens all day,
Being one of the kind that we call birds of prey.



L, for the Lapwing; this bird, when distress'd
By fear lest a stranger should plunder her nest,
Will lure him aside by a low hovering flight,
Then rise on a sudden and soar out of sight.

M, for the Magpie, O dear,
what a chatter,
The very rooks wonder what
can be the matter;
'Tis nothing at all but the
Magpie's delight
To say all he can between
morning and night.

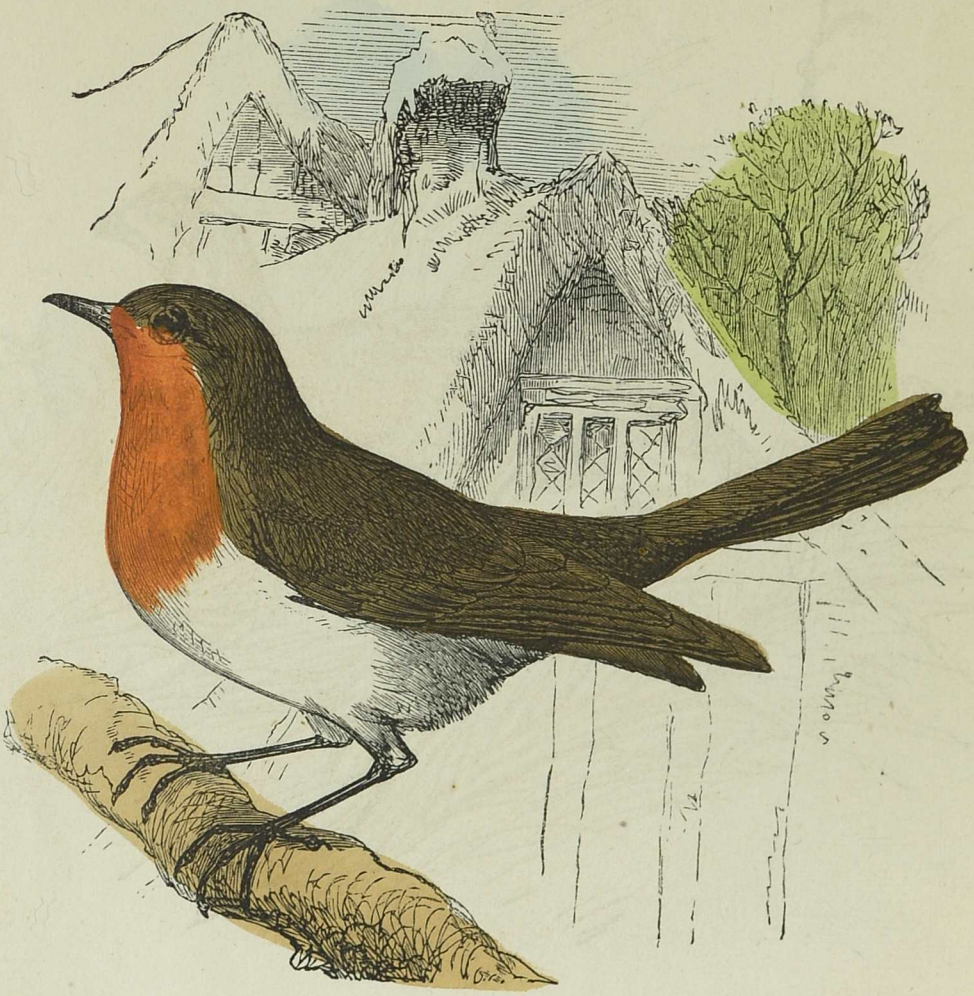
N, for the Nightingale,
minstrel of night;
All other birds' music dies off
with the light,
But Nightingales, sweeter than
any in song,
Delight to sit warbling the
summer night long.



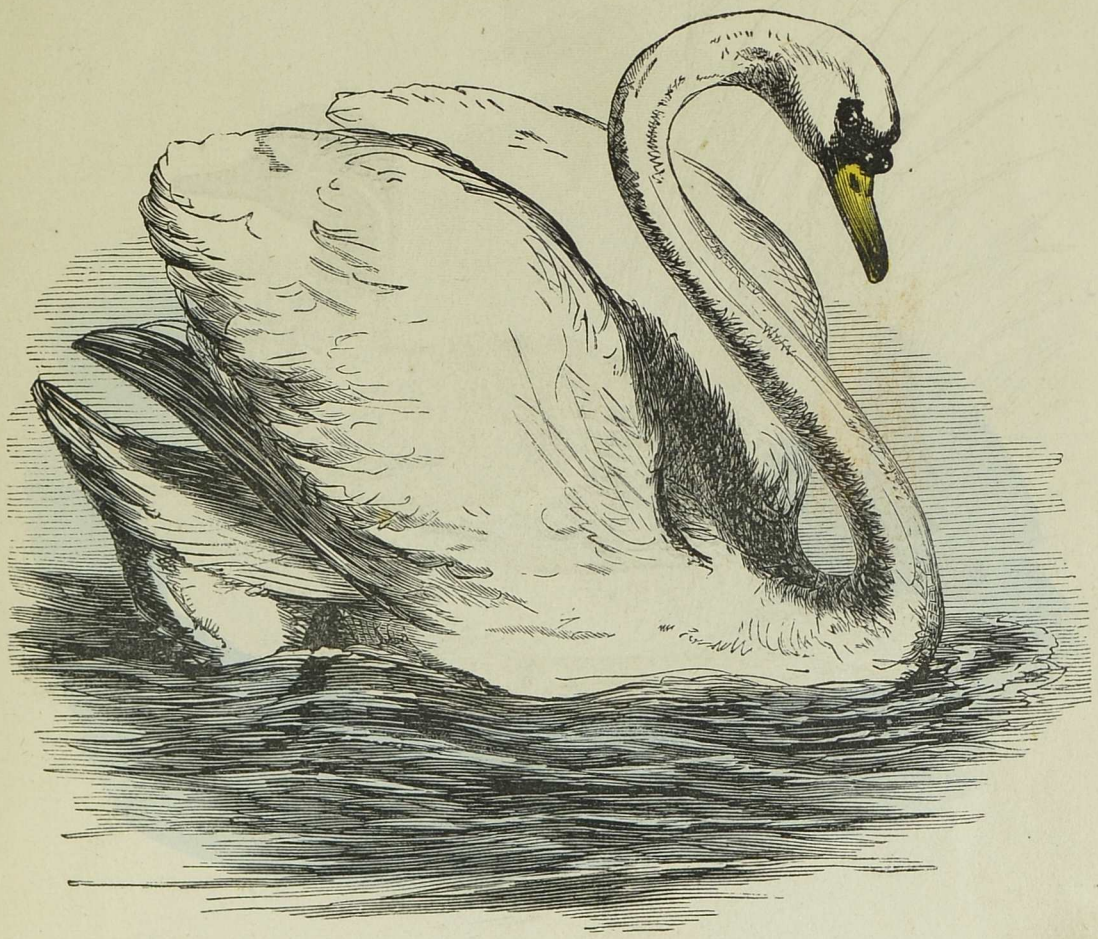
O, for the Owl; though his eyes are so bright,
They cannot endure the broad glare of day light;
But when twilight deepens, oh then, very soon
He spreads his white pinions and hoots to the moon.

P, for the Pheasant, a bird
from the East,
Only used in old Rome for an
emperor's feast;
But here our poor Pheasants
are common as food,
Are shot down by hundreds,
and thought very good.

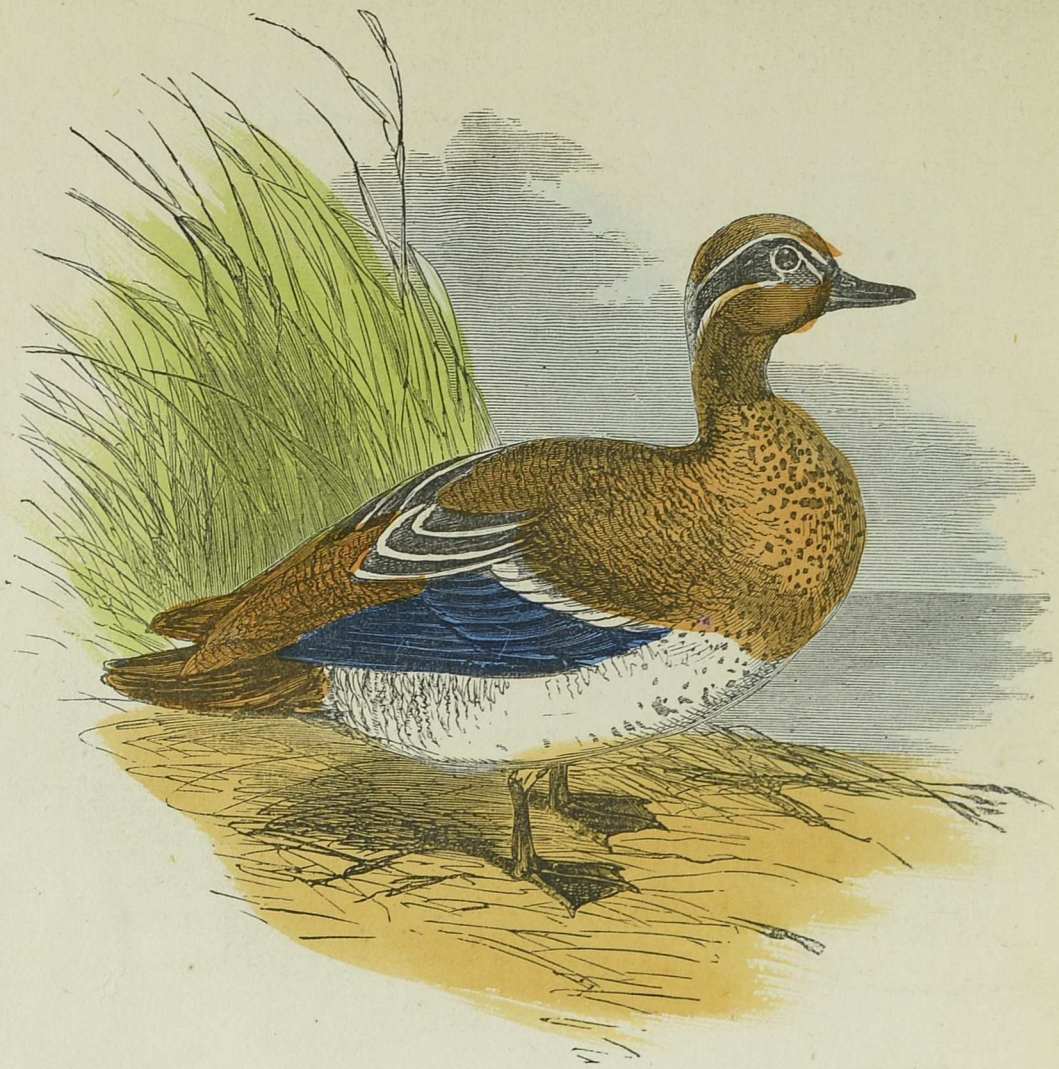
Q, for the Quail; I've no doubt you have heard
How the children of Israel were fed on this bird;
Even now, in the East, Quails are caught as they fly,
And spread round about in the hot sands to dry.



R, Robin Redbreast, all
good children's friend,
I could tell you nice stories of
him, without end;
Don't fail in the winter to
scatter him food,
For Robins spread leaves o'er
the babes in the wood.



S, for the Swan; like a queen
does she float,
And arch o'er the waters her
long slender throat;
Her silver-white plumage with
snow may compare,
But birds are not vain, be they
ever so fair.



T, for the Teal, who so
builds on the brink
Of the waves that her nest may
with them rise or sink.

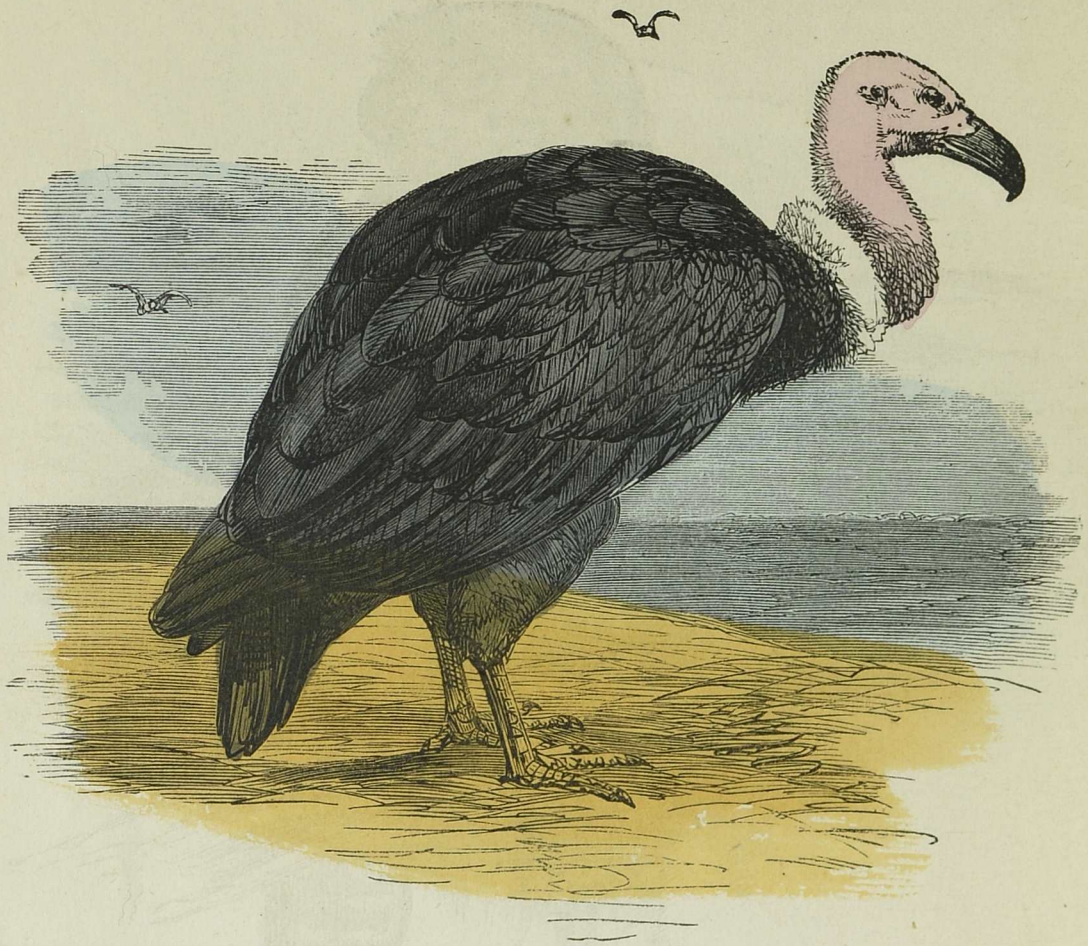
Tho' the smallest wild duck, yet
the Teal is much sought,
And numbers in winter for the
table are caught.

U, Ulula or Hawk-owl, a fierce-looking bird,

By day seldom seen, but at night often heard;

He sometimes looks wise with that solemn round eye,

But pecks every hand—you had better not try.



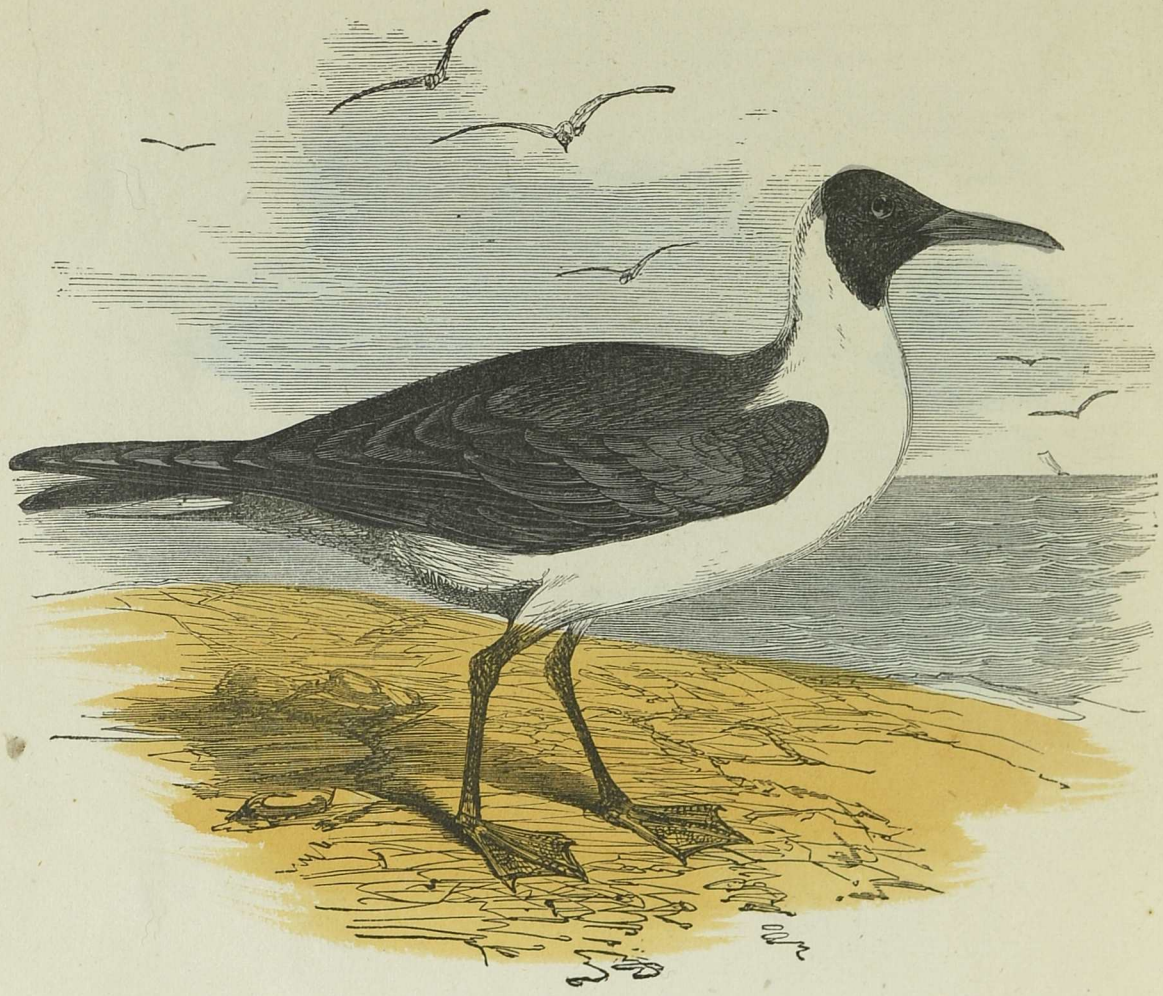
V, for the Vulture, a fierce
bird of prey,
Of use in the East to bear
carrion away;
For he scents from a distance
the foul food he eats,
And there are no orderlies
sweeping those streets.

W, the Wren, is the least
English bird,

With a song sweet and shrill
oft in winter time heard;

Its nest, half the size of a
lemon may be,

With eighteen white eggs, each
as big as a pea.



X, Xema-ridibundus, or the Laughing Gull;

Of noise and of merriment this bird is full;

Its eggs on an island in Norfolk it lays,

And thousands are gathered there in a few days.

Y, Yellow - hammer, so pretty and gay,
He chirrups and flutters all through the long day;
"A little bit of bread and no cheese," is his cry,
Then shakes his bright feathers and off he doth fly.

Z, Zulu, our pet Cockatoo
you may see,
Who laughs and who gossips
as gay as can be;
He pines not for kindred, he
frets not for home,
But makes friends all round
him where'er he may roam.

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