

TOM TRIP'S MUSEUM:

OR,

A PEEP

AT

THE FEATHERED CREATION.

PART I.



LONDON:

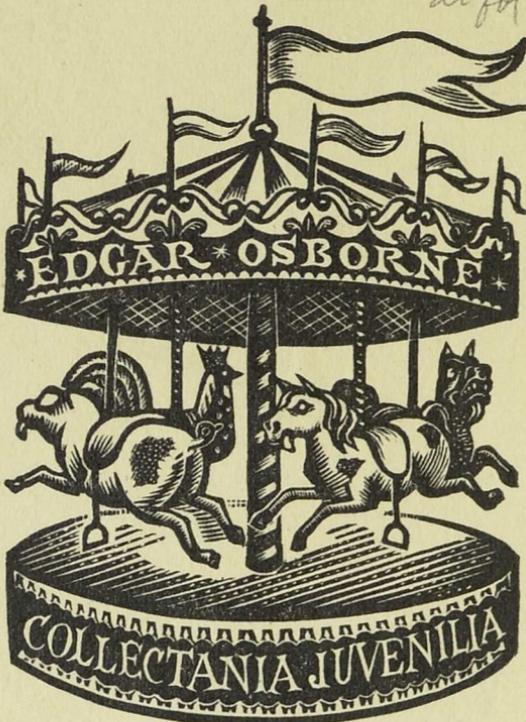
JOHN HARRIS, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

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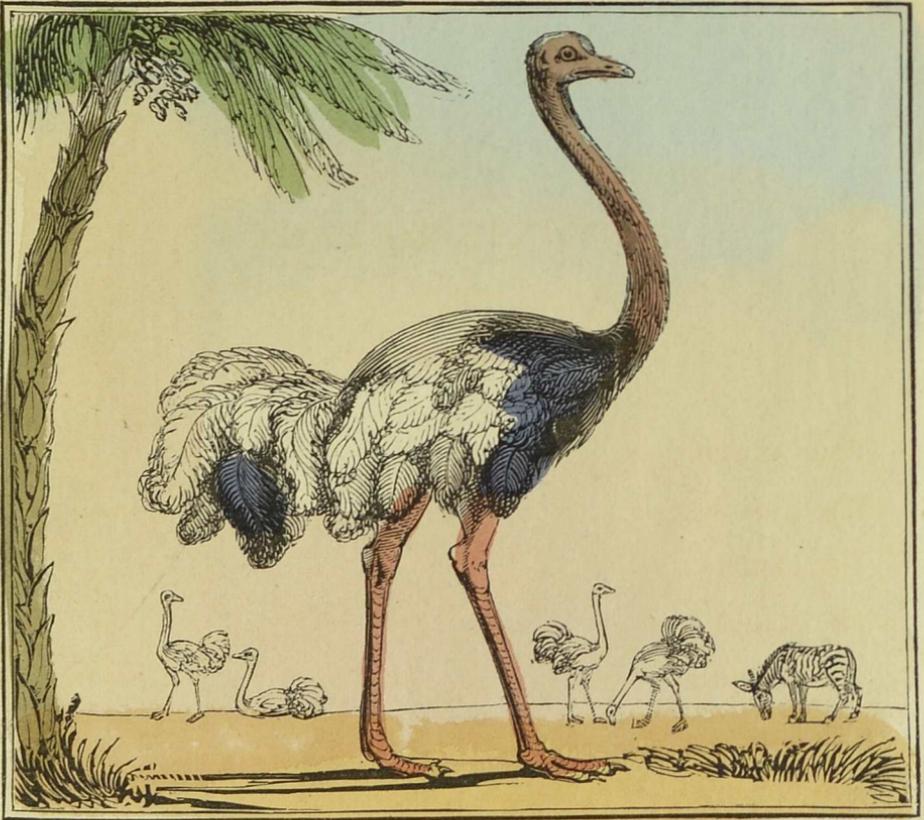
JOHN HARRIS, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1832.



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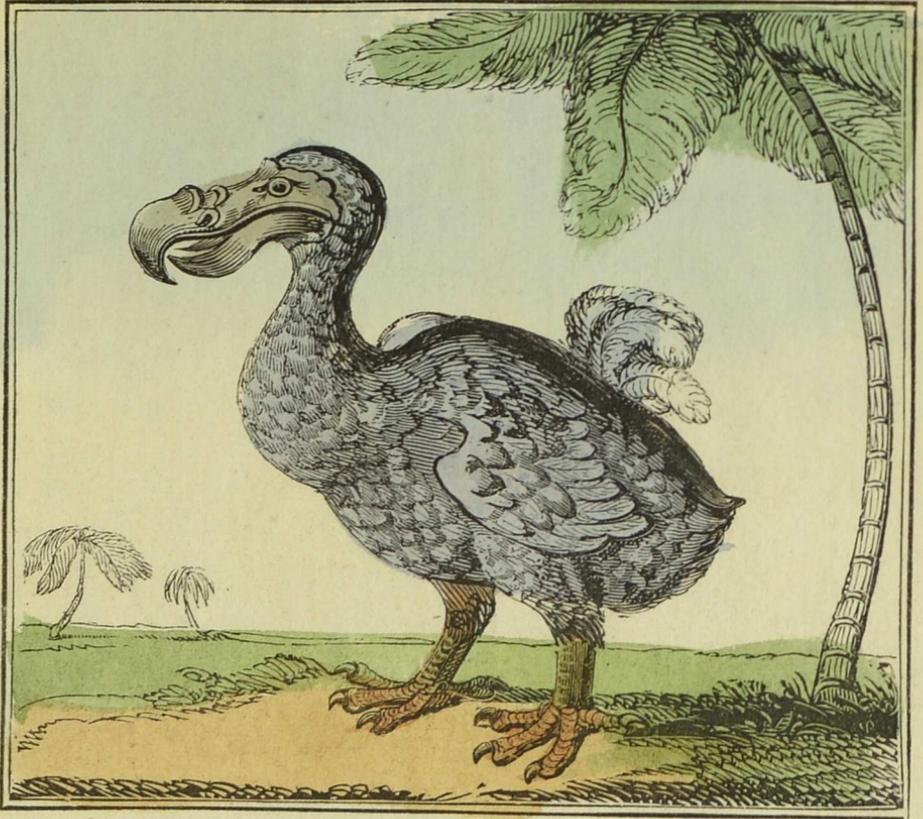
THE OSTRICH.

THE OSTRICH, when standing erect, measures from seven to nine feet, from the top of the head to the ground; from the back, however, it seldom exceeds three or four feet, the rest of its height being made up by its extremely long neck, on which, as well as on the head, a few scattered hairs appear. The feathers on the body are black and loose; but those of the wings and tail are waved and long, of a snowy whiteness, with here and there a tip of black. The thighs and flanks are naked, and the feet, which are remarkably strong, are of a grey brown colour. These birds inhabit the sandy and burning deserts of Africa and Asia, where they are sometimes seen in very numerous flocks.



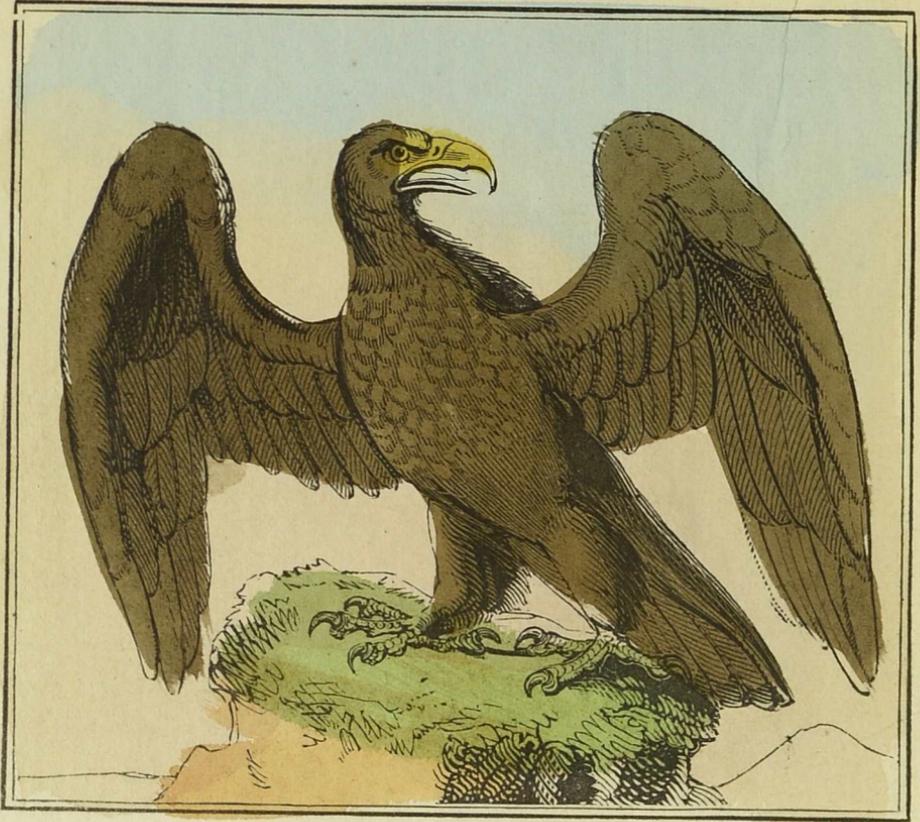
THE CASSOWARY.

THE CASSOWARY is said to possess the head of a warrior, the eye of a lion, the defence of a porcupine, and the swiftness of a courser. Its head is armed with a horny substance, like a helmet, black before and yellow behind; its eye is of a bright yellow colour, and, being about an inch and a half in diameter, has an air of peculiar fierceness. The ends of its wings are bordered with strong prickly quills, some of which are eleven inches in length; and in running, the creature bounds forward with a velocity which no race-horse can overtake. It is a native of the hottest part of the East-Indies.



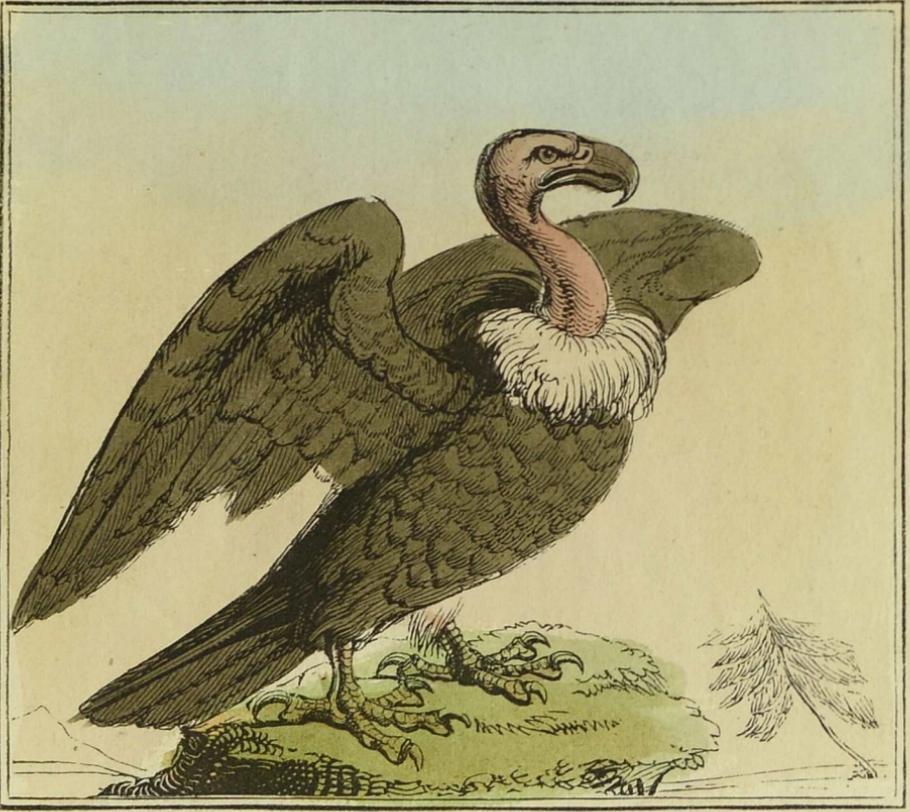
THE DODO.

THE body of this unwieldy bird is almost round, and covered with a grey plumage; it is but just supported upon two short thick legs; and its head consists almost entirely of an enormous beak, which seems to resemble two pointed spoons laid together; and this deformity is increased by a border of feathers round the root of the bill, which terminates on the forehead and envelopes the face, so as to exhibit the appearance of a cowl or hood. In a word, the aspect of this bird denotes the most complete stupidity and voracity; and the Dutch, by whom it was first discovered in the Isle of France, called it, in their language, the “nauseous bird,” both on account of its disgusting figure, and the bad taste of its flesh. Some writers, however, assert that its flesh is wholesome and tolerably palatable.



THE EAGLE.

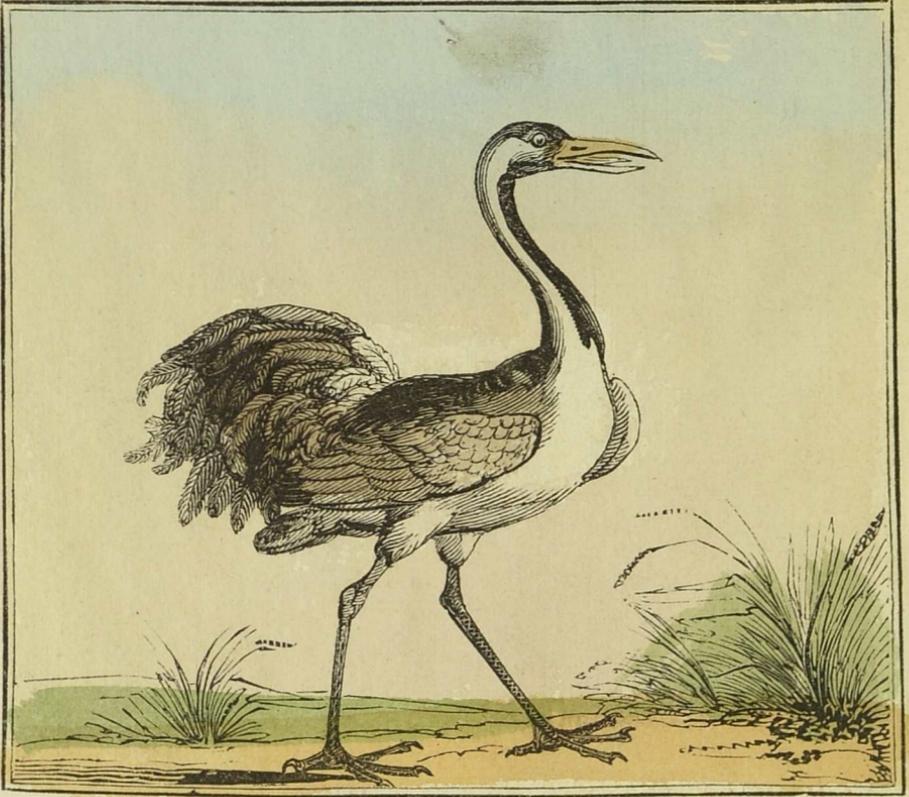
THE largest species of EAGLE is said to measure three feet from the bill to the insertion of the tail; and the wings, when extended, are nearly seven feet from point to point. The beak is remarkably strong and hooked; the head and neck are of a dark brown, bordered with tawny; the hind part of the head is of a bright rust colour, and the rest of the plumage brown, except on the tail, where it is sometimes diversified with ash colour. The legs are yellow, and feathered to the toes, and the claws are extremely large. The female lays two or three eggs, which are hatched in thirty days, and she feeds her young with the carcasses of such small animals as fall in her way.



THE VULTURE.

THE VULTURE inhabits many of the warmer parts of Europe and America, as well as Asia, but is never found in England. It is about four feet and a half in length, and the general colour of its plumage is dusky, mixed with green and purple; the head is small, and covered with a red skin beset with a few black bristles, which gives it some resemblance to a turkey. The legs are of a dirty flesh colour, and the claws are black.

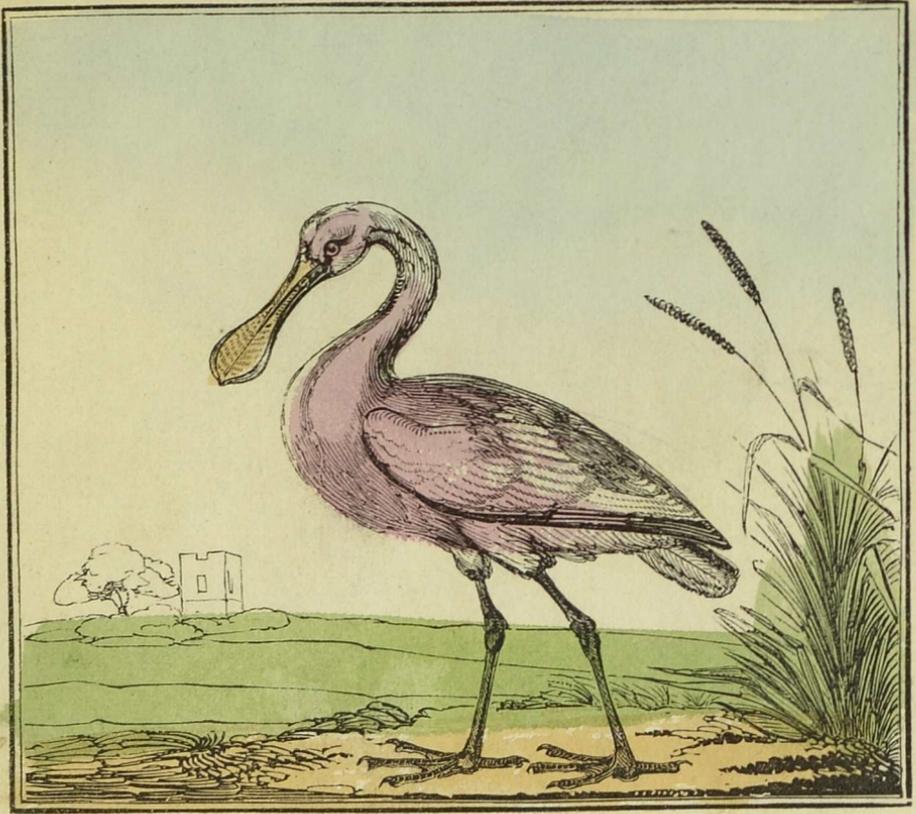
Carrion, and filth of almost every kind, seem to constitute the favourite food of these birds, and their sense of smelling is so acute, that they can distinguish their prey at an incredible distance. The females build their nests on inaccessible cliffs, or in places so remote that they are seldom discovered.



THE CRANE.

THIS bird generally measures five feet in length, exclusive of the bill, which is about four inches. The principal part of the feathers are ash-coloured ; but on the sides of the head, behind the eyes, and on the hinder part of the neck, they are white, and those on the forehead are black. The end of each wing is adorned with an elegant tuft of loose curled feathers, which may be erected at pleasure, but which commonly hang over and cover the tail.

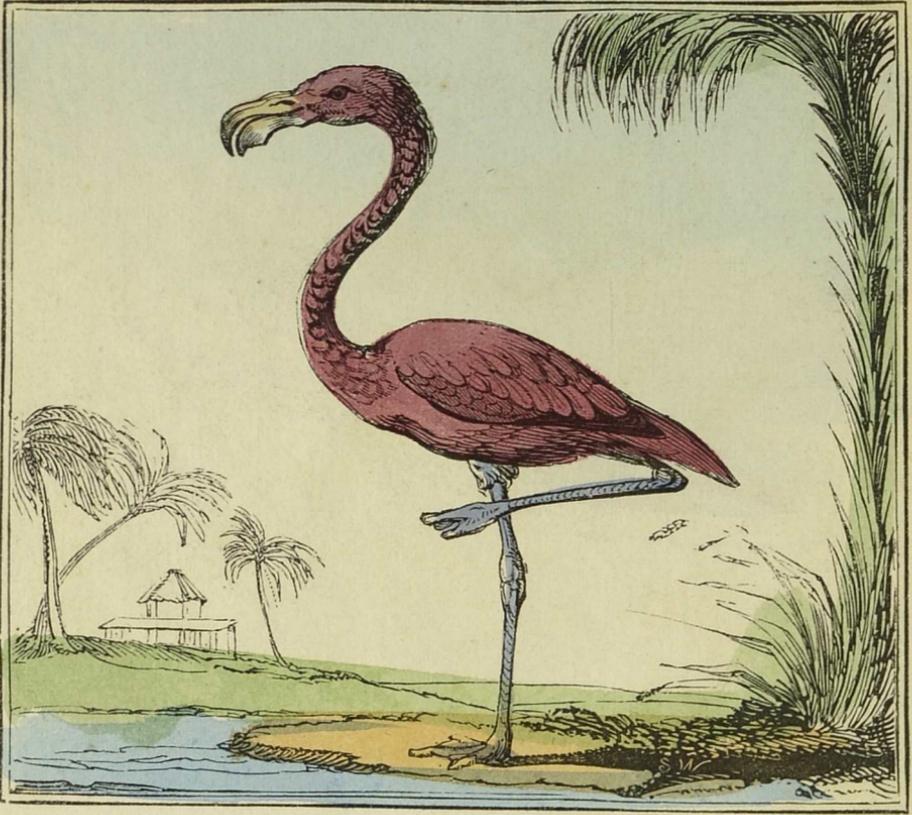
When flocks of these birds are feeding in the fields or marshes, it is said that some of their number are placed as sentinels : these stand on one leg, and, at intervals, stretch out their necks as if to ascertain whether all be safe ; and, on the approach of danger, immediately give notice to the rest.



THE SPOONBILL.

THE SPOONBILL is about the bulk of a crane, but its body is nearly a foot higher. In Europe its plumage is generally of a dirty white, but in America it is of a beautiful rose colour. The most brilliant tints, however, seem almost bestowed in vain on a creature, whose figure is sufficient to destroy the effects of its colouring; for its beak is so oddly formed, and its eyes are so stupidly staring, that its fine feathers only serve to add splendor to deformity.

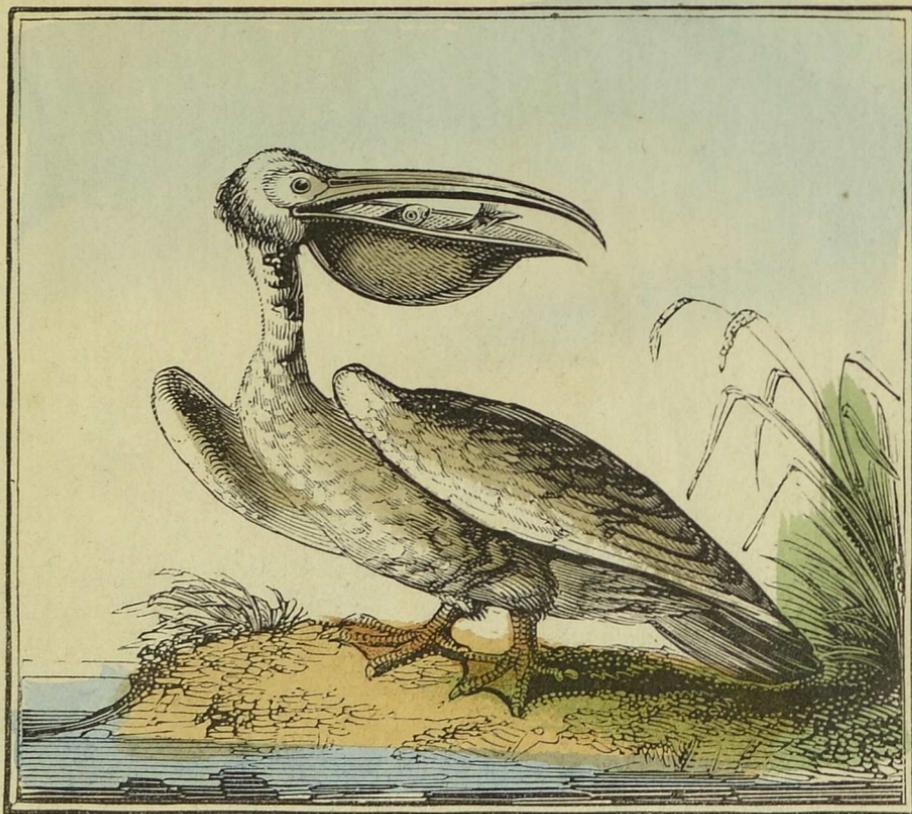
These birds breed in Europe in company with the heron, and in a nest formed of the same materials. They lay from three to five eggs, which are sprinkled with a few red spots.



THE FLAMINGO.

THIS bird is the most remarkable of all the crane kind, being not only the tallest, but the most bulky and handsome. The body, which is covered with a rich scarlet plumage, is not larger than that of a swan; but its legs and neck are so long, that, when standing erect, it is upwards of six feet high. The head is round and small, with a large bill seven inches long, and crooked like a bow. The legs and thighs, which are extremely slender, are about two feet eight inches high, and the wings when extended, measure five feet and a half from tip to tip.

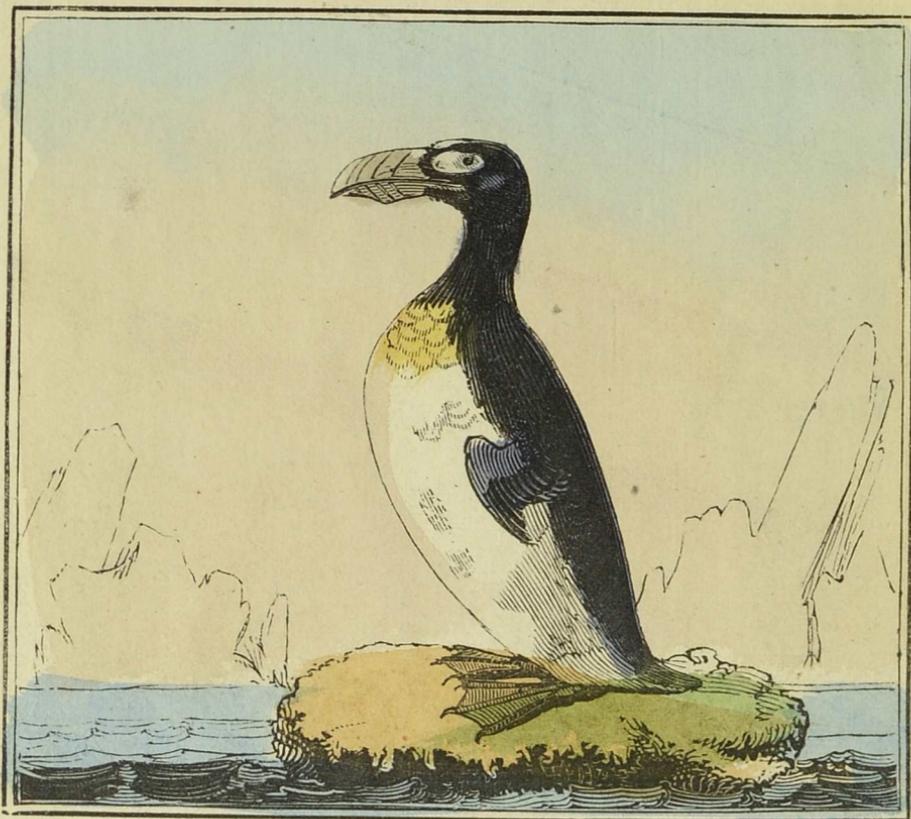
These birds were formerly very numerous on the coasts of Europe, but they are now seen only in the retired parts of America.



THE PELICAN.

THE PELICAN is rather larger in the body than a swan, and is covered with thick plumage of an ash colour. The eyes are very small when compared with the size of the head; and the countenance seems marked by melancholy. The bill is about sixteen inches long, and the bag attached to it is capable of being distended to such a degree, that it is said a man has thrust his whole leg, boot and all, into one of these pouches; and it is known that, in fishing, these birds will thus conceal some dozens of large fish.

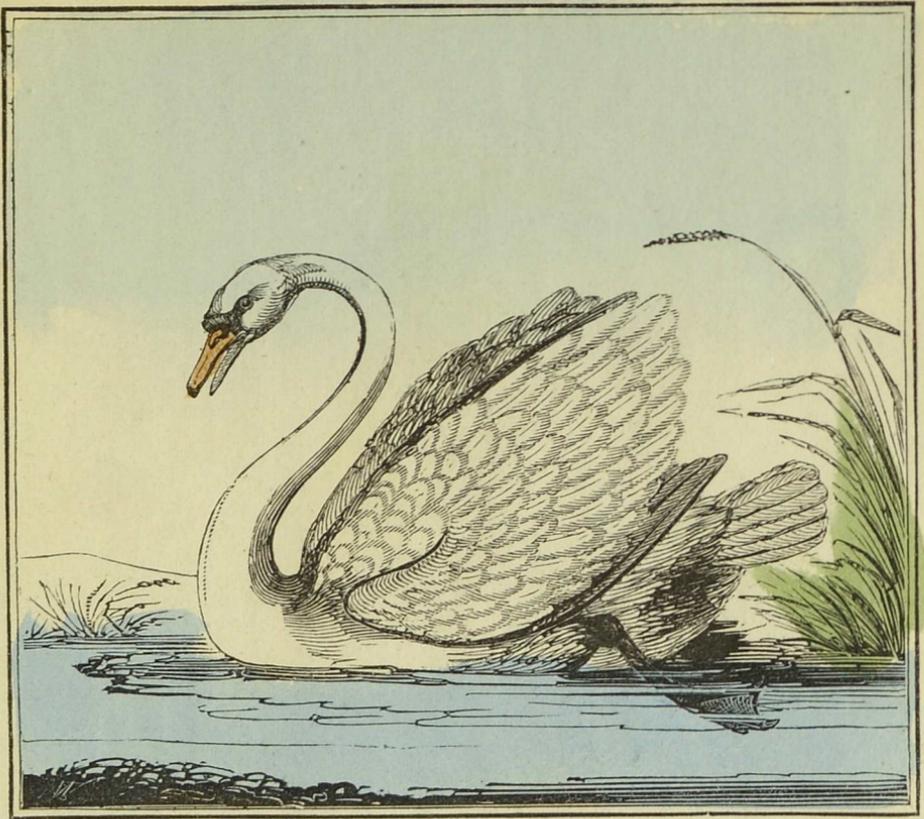
The female builds no nest, but lays her eggs, to the number of five or six, on the bare ground, and there sits till her young ones are hatched.



THE PENGUIN.

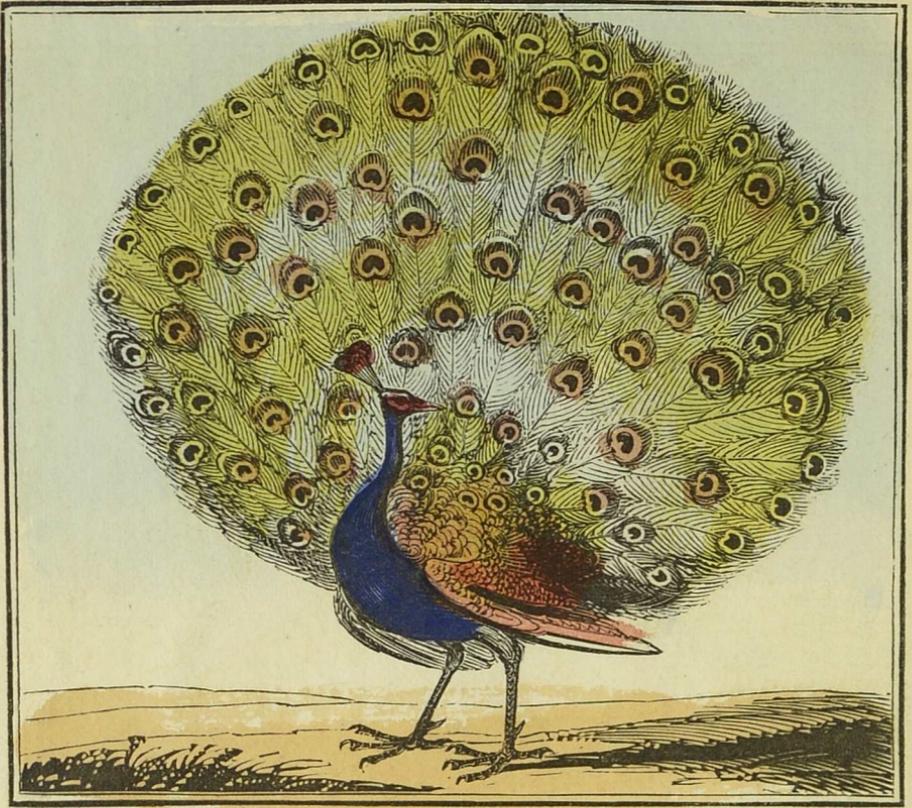
THE body of the PENGUIN is clothed with short thick feathers placed as compactly as scales; and the wings are small, and not unlike fins: the legs are short and thick, and situated at the lower end of the body, upon which the bird seems to be awkwardly supported; and the toes are all webbed, excepting the interior ones, which are loose. The bill is strong, furrowed, and bent towards the point, and the tongue is covered with strong spines.

As these creatures never visit the land, except for the purpose of laying and hatching their eggs, their feathers seem to take a colour from their situation. That part which has been continually bathed in the water is perfectly white; whilst the backs and wings are of various hues, according to the different species.



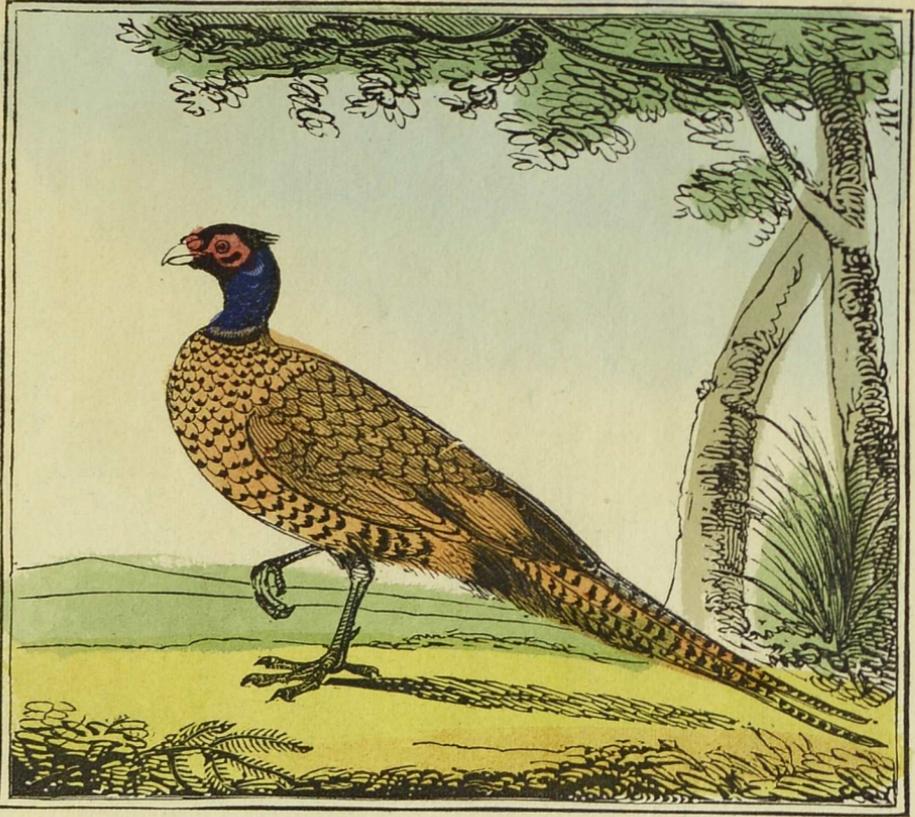
THE SWAN.

THIS beautiful bird has long been rendered domestic ; and, when seen smoothly sailing along its favourite element, exhibiting a thousand graceful attitudes, and moving at pleasure without the least apparent effort, it is a truly interesting object ; but when it comes upon land its motions are very awkward, and its neck is stretched forward with an air of stupidity. The colour of the plumage is entirely white ; and the SWAN is as delicate in its appetite as elegant in its appearance ; its chief food consisting of corn, bread, herbs growing in the water, or roots and seeds growing near the margin. The female lays seven or eight eggs, and sits nearly two months before her young leave the shell.



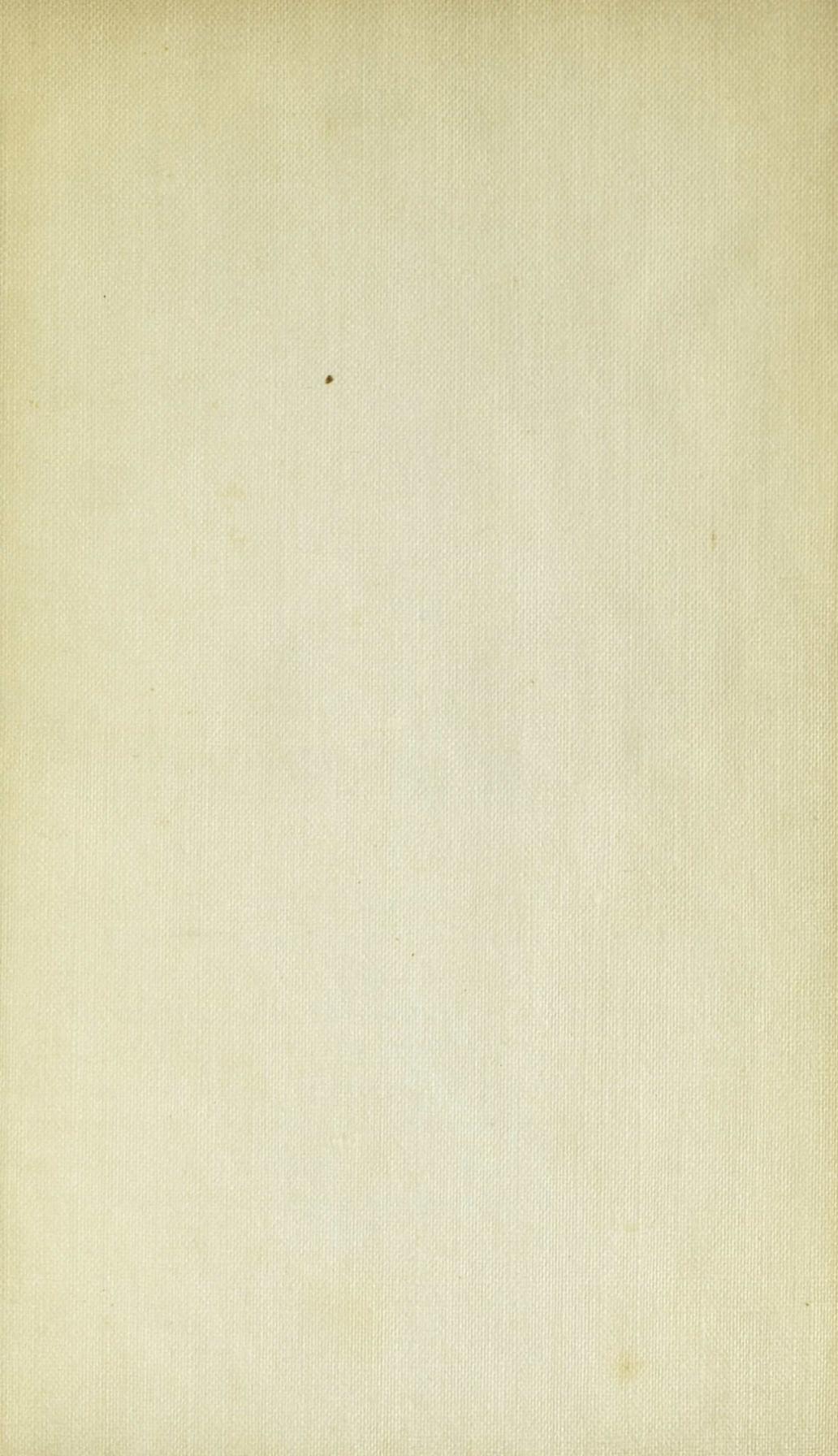
THE PEACOCK.

THIS masterpiece of the feathered creation unites with a tall majestic figure a brilliant plumage, in which are united all the colours of the rainbow. The usual length of this bird is three feet eight inches, from the end of the tail to the extremity of the beak. The tail is about eighteen inches long; and the wings, when extended, are about five inches shorter. But that which particularly distinguishes the PEACOCK is the great length of the feathers which cover the tail, and form a kind of train: these feathers are ornamented round the tops with long fringes, and expand into circles, marked in the middle with large spots, all of which are elegantly variegated.



THE PHEASANT.

WHEN Cræsus, King of Lydia, was seated upon his throne, adorned with all the pomp of Eastern splendour, he asked Solon if he had ever beheld any thing so fine? But the philosopher coolly replied, that he had seen the beautiful plumage of the PHEASANT, and therefore could not be astonished at any other finery. And certainly nothing can exceed the variety and richness of colouring observable in this elegant bird. The female, however, possesses not the beauty of the male, being generally of a light brown intermixed with black. She forms her nest on the ground, and lays from twelve to fifteen eggs, which are smaller than those of the domestic hen.





CONCLUDING PLATE.

As we are now to take leave of the larger class of birds, the artist has kindly relieved our attention by exhibiting a FLYING SQUIRREL, which seems to form a sort of connecting link between birds and beasts. A GUINEA PIG and a HEDGEHOG are also introduced, as if asking each other what they think of creatures which delight to pass through the air, instead of running continually upon the ground; and the common SQUIRREL, comfortably seated on the trunk of a tree, and regaling himself with fruit, reminds our young readers that dinner may by this time be on the table.

