

India; the Goose, Duck, and Pigeon of Europe; the Turkey of America; and the Pintado or Guinea-Hen of Africa, are the principal: to which may also be added, as less useful, or more recently naturalized, the Peacock of India; the Pheasant of the same country; the Chinese and Canada Goose; the Muscovy Duck; and the European Swan.

Carnivorous birds, by many striking traits, evince the destiny for which they have been created; they are provided with wings of great length, supported by powerful muscles, which enable them to fly with energy, and soar with ease at the loftiest elevations in which they are visible. They are armed with strong and hooked bills; and with the sharp and formidable claws of the tiger; they are also further distinguished by their large heads, short necks, strong muscular thighs in aid of their retractile talons, and a sight so piercing, as to enable them, while soaring at the greatest height, to perceive their prey, upon which they sometimes descend, like an arrow, with undeviating aim. In these birds the stomach is smaller than in the granivorous kinds, and their intestines are shorter. Like beasts of prey, they are of a fierce and unsociable nature; and so far from herding together like the inoffensive tribes, they drive even their offspring from the eyry, and seek habitually the shelter of desert rocks, neglected ruins, or the solitude of the darkest forest, from whence they utter loud, terrific, or piercing cries, in accordance with the gloomy rage and inquietude of their insatiable desires.

Besides these grand divisions of the winged nations, there are others, which, in their habits and manners, might be compared to the amphibious animals, as they live chiefly on the water, and feed on its productions. To enable them to swim and dive in quest of their aquatic food, their toes are connected by broad membranes or webs, with which, like oars, they strike the water, and are impelled with force. In this way even the seas, lakes, and rivers, abounding with fish, insects, and seeds, swarm with birds of various kinds, which all obtain an abundant supply. There are other aquatic birds, frequenting marshes and the margins of lakes, rivers, and the sea, which seem to partake of an intermediate nature between the land and water tribes. Some of these feed on fishes and reptiles; others, with long and sensible bills and extended necks, seek their food in wet and muddy marshes. These birds are not made for swimming; but, familiar with water, they wade, and many follow the edge of the retiring waves of the sea, gleaning their insect prey at the recession of the tides: for this kind of life nature has provided