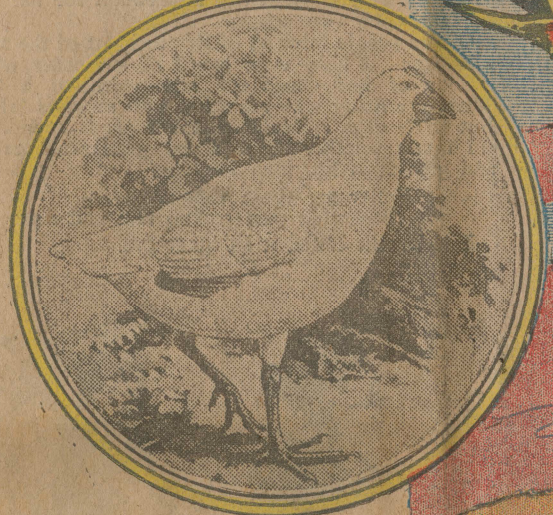


Birds that Have Passed Away With the Dodo



Oreo Parrot of Mauritius.



Notornis Alba of Norfolk Island.



Emu of Kangaroo Island.



The Great Auk.



Giant Ralline of Mauritius.



Pigeon of Mauritius.

ONE of the famous family of Rothschilds, prominent now in art and science as in finance, has sprung a new surprise upon the wondering world.

Remarkable Natural History Reproductions Made By a Millionaire

This time it is a volume picturing the birds that have become extinct—a far cry, on the part of the Hon. Walter Rothschild, M. P., from the collection of rare coins which enabled the first Rothschild, of the Judengasse, in Frankfort, Germany, to make his entrance into society in the role of a numismatist.

All the birds of the world, of which tangible remains are procurable; all the birds of which even a single trace of description has been preserved, so only that they are positively known to be now extinct, are portrayed in the most brilliant colors in the new nature volume which the English millionaire has given to posterity as a labor of love.

THESE are the birds that have joined the fabled dodo in the obscure myths of ornithology's traditions. There is nothing of their kind in existence today; there has been nothing like some of them in existence for hundreds of years.

Yet they do not belong to those orders of bird creation that perished before humanity began to have its history; they are not mere geological resurrections, so far antecedent to our times as to be of interest to the scientist alone. The memory of man carries recollection of some of them, and his forefathers' descriptions apply to others.

Walter Rothschild, in making his notable contribution to this previously neglected department of science, has adhered to the precedents of his famous family, which has required of every generation some important contribution to polite learning.

Even as a very young man his taste declared itself for the rarer specimens of the animal world to an extent so remarkable that he not only maintains a number of unusual living animals on his property at Tring Park, England, and nearly a hundred equally rare specimens in London's Zoo, but he owns the greatest private collection of mounted beasts, birds, reptiles and insects that exists anywhere on earth.

TRUE TO THE LIFE

In that wonderful museum, from which he issues every year a volume of the utmost interest to scientists, he has such a collection of butterflies that even the British Museum regards it with envy, while rarities like the Cape Colony quagga, now extinct everywhere, the giant tortoise, already doomed to speedy elimination, and the great auk, with its eggs, a bird now totally wiped off the face of the world, are preserved precisely as they existed in life. The collection of birds alone numbers 160,000 specimens.

Nor are these collections all. In the South Indian ocean Mr. Rothschild owns, on lease from the British colonial government, the island of Aldabra, in whose congenial climate he has undertaken to preserve some of the bird species now on the road to complete extinction in their native wilds.

The book he has compiled carries forty-five

colored plates, embracing sixty-three subjects. While the pictures of a few among them rest upon a single description found among the writings of some traveler long since dead, others, as in the case of the great auk, come directly from Mr. Rothschild's own museum, where the bird stands as he did in life, with his environment adapted to the country from which he came.

There is the giant ralline, for example, furnished by the island of Mauritius, a bird of imposing height, almost pure white in color except for the feathers tipping the wings. But for its comparative slenderness and its length of neck, it would be suggestive of a hugely overgrown white Wyandotte. A dark-hued bill, of the length and shape of a poniard, and long, powerful legs, made it a bird a man would have hesitated to tackle with bare hands.

The great auk, on the contrary, big as it is of body and mighty of bill, had more than the clumsiness of the duck on land; it was almost as awkward as the penguin, for even its wings were mere rudimentary affairs at best, and its short legs and wide, webbed feet proclaimed it for the water fowl it was. But, launched, it was as graceful as a submarine, and nearly as mighty in its speed and strength.

A WELL-BUILT BIRD

In brilliant contrast with the ungainly auk was the trim, well-built bluebird of Bourbon or Reunion island. It was one of the compactly made land birds, peculiarly fitted for insect eating by its solid, heavy, yet elegantly shaped bill, as strong, in proportion to size, as the parrot's.

No more astounding contrasts are apparent in any bird family than those existing between the dodos, one of Reunion, called the solitaire, and the other of Mauritius. The solitaire, when he lived, was a giant of excellent proportions, white as to neck, body and delicate ostrich-tip tail feathers, the only touch of color being at the lower tip of the wing and between the base of the bill and the eye. A neck long enough to afford quick wielding of the head, and legs high and sturdy in their tendons, gave the bird the air of instant readiness in emergency, well borne out by his bold and ample stride.

The Mauritius dodo, on the other hand, fairly presented the opposite aspect of the solitaire. Low set, like a goose, with a back as humped as a camel's, he carried an enormous beak, whose horny armor extended half way back in the head and actually included the eyes. The color included the whole bird except for the wing tips and tail feathers, which were white. A full brother to the dodo of Mauritius existed side by side with the solitaire on Reunion island, but with this difference: while the Mauritius bird was richly tinted on neck and body, the Reunion dodo was almost a pure albino.

From New Zealand comes the giant moa, beside which the largest ostrich would look like a chicken. It stood from ten to fourteen feet high, with a body as huge as that of a small elephant, shoulder blades as big as those of a horse, legs nearly as thick as a mule's and a neck comically tiny in comparison. A kick from an ostrich can kill a man; a kick from the moa would have left him in gory shreds and patches.

The solitaire of Rodriguez island, in most details, except of color, resembles strongly the

solitaire of Reunion, although there is a curve to the back somewhat more pronounced and the tail feathers are quite inconspicuous.

Mauritius furnished, in its day, a parrot of truly exceptional grip of claw, equal to that of the great horned owl, and a beak calculated to inspire with respect the most daring of the aborigines who hunted him. It is known as Owen's parrot, and is one of the unique things in ornithology, even though it exists now only in portraiture.

Kangaroo island gave to the world the last specimen of the emu, a land bird of unusual size, in form suggestive of the American turkey, on the one hand, and the peacock of the Orient, on the other. Its long, powerful body was upborne on strong, active legs, while a magnificent neck curved outward and upward in a massive beauty rarely seen even in the birds living now.

Mauritius contributes, too, a spike-billed, round-bodied bird known prosaically as the Mauritius hen. It has a less obvious resemblance to the faithful American hen than the handsome and elegant notornis alba, or white notornis, of Norfolk island, which, with its downy white plumage and its trim alertness, looks the young chick just growing into pullethood.

The short and practically useless wings of the Rodriguez island rail give obvious evidence that it is flightless, and the characteristic has been tacked on to its scientific name for its permanent identification.

WOULD TEMPT CONNOISSEURS

It stands in helpless contrast with the pigeon of Mauritius, a bird whose very pinions and rudder-like tail tell of its destiny for the air. Were the Mauritius pigeon living today, its beautiful crest, harmonizing with its rich throat plumage, would make it the subject of fabulous bidding among pigeon fanciers, more, probably, than would compete for possession of a pair of shy New Zealand quail, which, already gone from the thickets of those islands, is preserved by Mr. Rothschild in the pages of the book with the other more impressive birds that ornithology misses.

Thousands of people, more or less keenly interested in science, will study this comprehensive work which has been done by Mr. Rothschild in the world's libraries, for which it will probably be deemed an indispensable asset. Thousands more—over 30,000 a year—study the



The Moa of New Zealand.



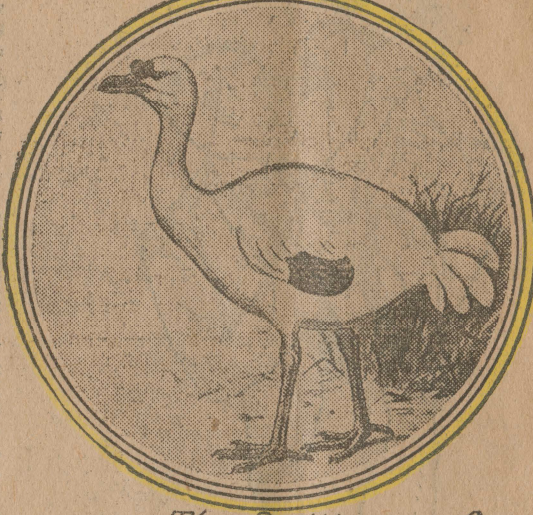
Mauritius Hen.



Flightless Rail of Rodriguez Island.



The Dodo of Mauritius.



The Solitaire of Bourbon.



Bluebird of Bourbon Island.

countless specimens he has preserved in his great museum at Tring Park, and millions gaze in wonder upon the scores of strange animals his generosity maintains, living, in London's Zoo.