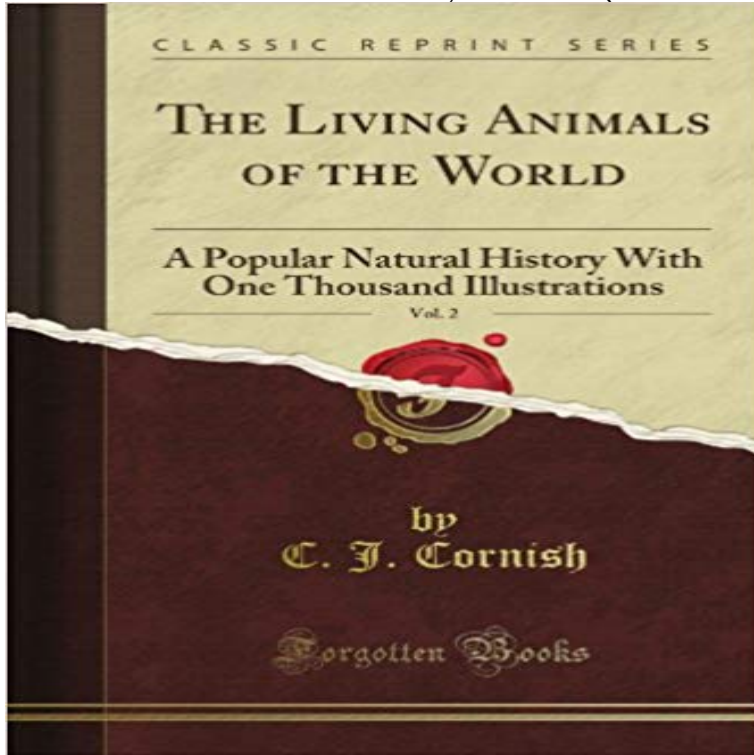


The Living Animals of the World: A Popular Natural History With One Thousand Illustrations, Vol. 2 (Classic Reprint)



The Living Animals of the IV orld BOOK II. BIRDS BY W. P. PYCRAFT, A.L.S., F.Z.S. CHAPTER I THE OSTRICH AND ITS KINDRED THEO striches are a very ancient group of birds, and, judging from what we know of their anatomy, they must be regarded as representing the most primitive of Hving birds. With the exception of a single group, to be discussed presently, all have lost the power of flight. In some, in consequence, the wing has become reduced to a mere vestige. It organ, such as a wing or a leg or a tail, Photo by H. NotU, T.: ., RHEA AND YOUNG Although the tvings of the rhea are large they fit closely to the body as to be inuisible ivhen closed 49 Photo by U. P. Dando, F.Z.S. RUFIOUS TINAMOU, BRAZIL Te tail-feathers of these birds are so small as to appear to he zuanting is a rule inN ature, we may remark, that whenever an ceases to be useful, it undergoes forthwith a slow process of reduction or degeneration, growing smaller and smaller in each successive generation, till at last it may even disappear altogether. The loss of flight has been accompanied by a degeneration in the quality of the feathers that is to say, their serviceability as aids to flight has been entirely lost. The size of the members of this group xaries much. The largest of all is the African Ostrich; the smallest, of the flightless forms, theN ew Zealand A pteryx. The ostrich-like birds which have retained the power of flight are known as Tinamous, and are natives of South A merica. All these are smaller than the flightless A pteryx. Tinamous The Tinamous should perhaps be regarded as standing at the head of theO strich Tribe, since they have reached a higher degree of development than any other of its members. They have also preserved the power of flight. In their general appearance they bear a singular resemblance to partridges, though a little careful observation will reveal many points

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