

After noticing its disgusting appearance, he says: "Notwithstanding this, the inhabitants of Egypt cannot be enough thankful to Providence for this bird. All the places round Cairo are filled with the dead bodies of asses and camels; and thousands of these birds fly about and devour the carcasses, before they putrefy, and fill the air with noxious exhalations." Belon observes, which proves their prevalence there, that in Palestine they devour an infinite number of mice, which would otherwise be a great pest. The cognate tribe, the eagles, though they are widely dispersed, have their metropolis in more northern climates, and are distinguished also from the vultures, by making living animals chiefly their prey: for this they are gifted with a wonderful acuteness of sight, and indomitable strength of wing, and of legs and talons, fitting them for astonishing velocity of flight, and for resistless force, when they attack and bear off their prey. As they have no scent, their eyes are of infinite use, and enable them to discern a small bird at an almost incredible distance: and often, to get a clearer view and more extensive horizon, when they leave their mountain aeries, they ascend to a great height. M. Ramond, when he had ascended the highest peak of the Pyrenees, saw an eagle soaring above him, flying directly in the teeth of a violent south-wester, with inconceivable velocity.

Another genus of a tropical type, but not confined to the tropics, forming a striking contrast with the gigantic forms last adverted to, consists of the numerous species of the brilliant and diminutive Humming birds, which like the butterflies, whose analogues they are, suck the nectar of the flowers. This strictly American genus is in great force, also without the tropics, for they abound in Mexico, and go northward as far as Canada, and southward as far as Patagonia. There is no northern metropolis for any analogous form, to these living gems, which constitute the ornament