of other birds have the webs broader on one side than the other, but thoſe of the oſtrich have their ſhaft exactly in the middle. The upper part of the head and neck are covered with a very fine clear white hair, that ſhines like the briſtles of a hog ; and in ſome places there are ſmall tufts of it, conſiſting of about 12 hairs, which grow from a single ſhaft about the thickneſs of a pin.

At the end of each wing there is a kind of ſpur almoſt like the quill of a porcupine. It is an inch long, being hol­low and of an horny ſubſtance. There are two of theſe on each wing ; the largest of which is at the extremity of the bone of the wing, and the other a foot lower. The neck seems to be more slender in proportion to that of other birds, from its not being furniſhed with feathers. The ſkirt in this part is of a livid fleſh-colour, which ſome, improperly, would have to be blue. The bill is ſhort and pointed, and two inches and an half at the beginning. The external form of the eye is like that of a man, the upper eye-lid be­ing adorned with eye-lashes which are longer than thole on the lid below. The tongue is ſmall, very ſhort, and compoſed of cartilages, ligaments, and membranes, intermixed with fleſhy fibres. In some it is about an inch long, and very thick at the bottom ; in others it is but half an inch, being a little forked at the end.

The thighs are very fleſhy and large, being covered with a white ſkin inclining to redneſs, and wrinkled in the man­ner of a net, whoſe meſhes will admit the end of the finger. Some have very ſmall feathers here and there on the thighs; and others again have neither feathers nor wrinkles. What are called the legs of birds, in this are covered before with large ſcales. The end of the foot is cloven, and has two very large toes, which, like the leg, are covered with ſcales.Theſe toes are of unequal ſizes The largeſt, which is on the inside, is ſeven inches long, including the claw, which is near three-fourths of an inch in length, and almoſt as broad. The other toe is but four inches long, and is with­out a claw.

The internal parts of this animal are formed with no leſs ſurpriſing peculiarity. At the top of the breaſt, under the skin, the fat is two inches thick ; and on the fore-part of the belly it is as hard as ſuet, and about two inches and an half thick in ſome places. It has two diſtinct ſtomachs. The firſt, which is lowermoſt, in its natural ſituation ſomewhat reſembles the crop in other birds; but it is conſiderably larger than the other ſtomach, and is furniſhed with, strong muſcular fibres, as well circular as longitudinal. The ſecond ſtomach or gizzard has outwardly the ſhape of the ſtomach of a man ; and upon opening is always found filled with a variety of diſcordant ſubſtances ; hay, graſs, barley, beans, bones, and ſtones, ſome of which exceed in ſize a pullet’s egg. The kidneys are eight inches long and two broad, and differ from those of other birds in not being di­vided into lobes. The heart and lungs are ſeparated by a midriff as in quadrupeds ; and the parts of generation alſo bear a very ſtrong reſemblance and analogy.

The oſtrich is a native only of the torrid regions of Africa, and has long been celebrated by thoſe who have had occaſion to mention the animals of that region. Its fleſh is proſcribed in Scripture as unfit to be eaten ; and moſt of the an­cient writers deſcribe it as well known in their times. Like the race of the elephant, it is tranſmitted down without mixture ; and has never been known to breed out of that country which ſirſt produced it. It ſeems formed to live among the ſandy and burning deſerts of the torrid zone ; and, as in ſome meaſure it owes its birth to their genial influence, ſo it ſeldom migrates into tracts more mild er more fertile. The Arabians affert that the oſtrich never drinks ; and the place of its habitation ſeems to confirm the aſſertion. In theſe formidable regions oſtriches are ſeen in large flocks, which to the diſtant ſpectator appear like a regiment of cavalry, and have often alarmed a whole cara­van. There is no deſert, how barren ſoever, but what is capable of ſupplying theſe animals with proviſion ; they eat almoſt every thing ; and theſe barren tracts are thus doubly grateful, as they afford both food and ſecurity. The oſtrich is of all other animals the moſt voracious. It will devour leather, graſs, hair, iron, ſtones, or any thing that is given. Thoſe ſubſtances which the coats of the ſtomach cannot ſoften, paſs whole ; ſo that glaſs, ſtones, or iron, are exclu­ded in the form in which they were devoured. In an oſtrich dissected by Ranby, there appeared ſuch a quantity of he­terogeneous ſubſtances, that it was wonderful how any ani­mal could digeſt ſuch an overcharge of nouriſhment. Valiſnieri alſo found the firſt ſtomach filled with a quantity of incongruous ſubſtances ; graſs, nuts, cords, ſtones, glaſs, braſs, copper, iron, tin, lead, and wood ; a piece of ſtone was found among the rest that weighed more than a pound. He ſaw one of theſe animals that was killed by devouring a quantity of quicklime. It would seem that the oſtrich is obliged to fill up the great capacity of its ſtomach in order to be at eaſe ; but that nutritious ſubſtances not occurring, it pours in whatever offers to ſupply the void.

In their native deſerts, however, it is probable they live chiefly upon vegetables, where they lead an inoffenſive and ſocial life ; the male, as Thevenot aſſures us, aſſorting with the female with connubial fidelity. They are ſaid to be very much inclined to venery ; and the make of the parts in both ſexes ſeems to confirm the report. It is probable alſo they copulate like other birds, by compreſſion. They lay very large eggs, ſome of them being above five inches in dia­meter, and weighing above fifteen pounds. Theſe eggs have a very hard ſhell, ſomewhat reſembling thoſe of the crocodile, except that thoſe of the latter are leſs and round­er.

The ſeaſon for laying depends on the climate where the animal is bred. In the northern parts of Africa, this ſea­ſon is about the beginning of July; in the ſouth, it is about the latter end of December. Theſe birds are very prolific, and lay generally from 40 to 50 eggs at one clutch, which are as big as a child’s head. It has been commonly report­ed, that the female depoſits them in the sand, and covering them up, leaves them to be hatched by the heat of the cli­mate, and then permits the young to ſhift for themſelves. Very little of this, however, is true : no bird has a ſtronger affection for her young than the oſtrich, nor none watches her eggs with greater aſſiduity. It happens, indeed, in thoſe hot climates, that there is leſs neceſſity for the continual incubation of the female ; and ſhe more frequently leaves her eggs, which are in no danger of being chilled by the weather ; but though ſhe ſometimes forſakes them by day, ſhe always carefully broods over them by night ; and Kol­ben, who has ſeen great numbers of them at the Cape of Good Hope, affirms, that they sit on their eggs like other birds, and that the male and the female take this office by turns, as he had frequent opportunities of obſerving. Nor is it more true what is ſaid of their forſaking their young after they are excluded the ſhell. On the contrary, the young ones are not even able to walk for ſeveral days after they are hatched. During this time the old ones are very aſſiduous in ſupplying them with graſs, and very careful to defend them from danger ; nay, they encounter every dan­ger in their defence. The young, when brought forth, are of an aſh-colour the firſt year, and are covered with feathers all over. But in time theſe feathers drop ; and thoſe parts