

thology*, "was formerly seen in the downs and heaths of various parts of our island, in flocks of forty or fifty birds; whereas it is now a circumstance of rare occurrence to meet with a single individual." Bewick also remarks, "that they were formerly more common in this island than at present; they are now found only in the open counties of the south and east—in the plains of Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, and some parts of Yorkshire."† In the few years that have elapsed since Bewick wrote, this bird has entirely disappeared from Wiltshire and Dorsetshire.

These changes, it may be observed, are derived from very imperfect memorials, and relate only to the larger and more conspicuous animals inhabiting a small spot on the globe; but they cannot fail to exalt our conception of the enormous revolutions which, in the course of several thousand years, the whole human species must have effected.

Extinction of the Dodo.—The kangaroo and the emu are retreating rapidly before the progress of colonization in Australia; and it scarcely admits of doubt, that the general cultivation of that country must lead to the extirpation of both. The most striking example of the loss, even within the last two centuries, of a remarkable species, is that of the dodo—a bird first seen by the Dutch, when they landed on the Isle of France, at that time uninhabited, immediately after the discovery of the passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope. It was of a large size, and singular form; its wings short, like those of an ostrich, and wholly incapable of sustaining its heavy body, even for a short flight. In its general appearance it differed from the ostrich, cassowary, or any known bird.‡

Many naturalists gave figures of the dodo after the commencement of the seventeenth century; and there is a painting of it in the British Museum, which is said to have been taken from a living individual. Beneath the painting is a leg, in a fine state of preservation, which ornithologists are agreed cannot belong to any other known bird. In the museum at Oxford, also, there is a foot and a head, in an imperfect state.

In spite of the most active search, during the last century, no information respecting the dodo was obtained, and some authors have gone so far as to pretend that it never existed; but a great mass of satisfactory evidence in favour of its recent existence has now been collected by Mr. Broderip§, and by Mr. Strickland and Dr. Melville. Mr. Strickland, agreeing with Professor Reinhardt, of Copen-

* Vol. iii. London, 1821.

† Land Birds, vol. i. p. 316. ed. 1821.

‡ Some have complained that inscriptions on tomb-stones convey no general information, except that individuals were born and died, accidents which must happen alike to all men. But the death of a species is so remarkable an event in natural history that it deserves commemoration, and it is with no small interest that we learn, from the archives of the

University of Oxford, the exact day and year when the remains of the last specimen of the dodo, which had been permitted to rot in the Ashmolean Museum, were cast away. The relics, we are told, were "a musæo subducta, annuente vice-cancellario aliisque curatoribus, ad ea lustranda convocatis, die Januarii 8vo, A.D. 1755." Zool. Journ. No. 12. p. 559. 1828.

§ Penny Cyclopædia, "Dodo." 1837.