

carriers of letters; and formerly they were commonly used in carrying letters from place to place in time of war, and in case of sieges, when all other means of communication were intercepted or cut off by the enemy. These birds have been known to fly seventy-two miles in two hours and a half.

The turtle dove is smaller than the common pigeon, and is distinguished by the yellow circle of the eye, and by a beautiful crimson circle that encompasses the eyelids. The note of this bird is singularly tender and plaintive. In addressing his mate, the male makes use of a variety of winning attitudes, cooing, at the same time, in the most gentle and soothing accents.

The ring-dove, or wood-pigeon, derives its appellation from a beautiful white circle round the neck. This bird builds its nest with a few dry sticks, in the boughs of trees; and is so strongly attached to its native freedom, that all attempts to domesticate it, have hitherto proved ineffectual.

There are many other varieties of this extensive family; but they are not so strongly or so peculiarly marked as to need any separate description. Wild pigeons are migratory, and are found in most parts of the world.

The dove is very much spoken of in the Bible. It was a dove which Noah sent out of the ark, to ascertain whether the waters of the flood had abated. This bird was accounted clean by the law of Moses, and was appointed in certain circumstances to be offered up in sacrifice. It formed one of the articles of merchandise, which the priests permitted to be sold in the temple to