

If we examine the books of the ancients and their monuments, and compare what they have said concerning the ibis, or the figures they have left of it, with the bird we have just described, we shall find all our difficulties vanish, and all testimonies agree with the best of all, that is, the body of the bird itself preserved in its mummy state.

Herodotus says (in his *Euterpe*, No. 76,) "the most common ibises have the head and front of the neck denuded, the plumage white, except on the head, on the nape of the neck, the ends of the wings and the rump, which are black. (1) Their beak and feet resemble those of the other ibises," and he had said of these "they are of the size of a crow, of an entirely black colour, and have feet like those of the crane with a crooked beak."

How does it occur that the travellers of modern days do not give us descriptions of birds as accurate as that which Herodotus has made of the ibis?

How can this description be applied to a bird which has only the face denuded, and of a red colour, to a bird which has the rump white, and not covered as ours by the black feathers of its wings?

And yet the last characteristic was essential to the ibis. Plutarch says (*de Iside et Osiride*,) that the form of a lunar crescent was to be found in the manner in which the white was cut by the black in the plumage of this bird. It was, in fact, by the union of the black of these latter wing-feathers with that of the two extremities of the wings, that there is formed in the white a large semicircular indention which gives to the white the appearance of a crescent.

(1) ψιλη την κεφαλην, και την δειρην πασαν, λευκη πτεροισι, πλην κεφαλης, και αυχενος και ακρων των πτερυγων, και πυγαιου ακρου. The late Larcher, in his translation of Herodotus, v. ii. p. 327, has properly defined the difference of these words αυχην the nape, and δειρη or δειη the throat.