

*seesy*, or ox-bird, which Gmelin very improperly makes to correspond with the tantalus ibis, is the size of the curlew, white bodied and with red beak and feet. It is found in the fields near cattle; its flesh is not well flavoured; and soon decays.(1) It is easy to perceive that it is not the tantalus, and still less the ibis of the ancients.

Hasselquist neither knew the white ibis, nor the black ibis; his *ardea ibis* is a small heron with a straight beak. Linnæus (tenth edition,) has correctly placed it amongst the heron tribe; but he was in error, as I have already remarked, in afterwards removing it as synonymous with the *tantalus* genus.

De Maillet (Descrip. de l'Egypte, part 2, p. 23,) conjectures that the ibis may be a bird peculiar to Egypt, and which is there called Pharaoh's fowl (*Chapon de Pharaoh*,) and at Aleppo, *Saphan-bacha*. It devours serpents. There are a black and white species, and it follows for more than a hundred leagues, the caravans going from Cairo to Mecca, to feed on the carcasses of the animals which are killed on the journey, whilst at any other season not one of them is to be seen on this route. But the author does not consider this as certain; he even says that we must give up the idea of understanding the ancients when they speak so as to seem unwilling to be understood. He concludes that the ancients have perhaps indiscriminately comprised under the name of ibis, all those birds which were serviceable to Egypt in clearing it of the dangerous reptiles which the climate abundantly produced; such as the vulture, falcon, stork, sparrow, hawk, &c.

He was right in not considering his Pharaoh's fowl as the ibis; for, though the description is very

(1) See Shaw's French translation, vol. i. p. 330.