

attributes a head similar to that of the cormorant, that is to say, apparently bald, with red beak and feet;(1) but as he makes no mention of the ibis in his journey,(2) I suspect that it was only in France that he made this relation of the two, and by comparison with the ibis mummies. It is certain that the curlew with red beak and feet was unknown in Egypt,(3) but that the green curlew of Europe (*Scolopax falcinellus* of Linnæus is commonly seen there, and is even more plentiful than the white numenius;(4) and as it resembles it in form and size, and that at a distance its plumage may appear black, we can hardly doubt but that this was the real black ibis of the ancients. M. Savigny had a painting made of it in Egypt,(5) but only from a young individual. The figure of Buffon is from a full-grown bird, but the colours are too bright.

The mistake which at present prevails respecting the ibis, originated with Perrault, who was the first naturalist who made known the tantalus ibis of the present day. This error, adopted by Brisson and Buffon, has passed into the twelfth edition of Linnæus, where it is mixed with that of Hasselquist, which had been inserted in the tenth, forming together a most monstrous compound.

It was founded upon the idea that the ibis was essentially a bird inimical to serpents, and in this very natural conclusion, that a sharp beak was necessary to devour serpents, and more or less analogous to that of the stork or heron. This idea is

(1) Belon. Nat. des Oiseaux, pp. 199 and 200; and Portraits d'Oiseaux, fol. v. 44.

(2) Observations de plusieurs singularités, &c.

(3) Savigny, Mem. sur l'Ibis, p. 37.

(4) Idem ibid.

(5) See the great work on Egypt. Hist. Nat. des Oiseaux, pl. 7, fig. 2.