

it is well calculated, and thus capture small fishes, shell-fish, reptiles, and other aquatic and amphibious animals, which the tubercles within it are also calculated to retain and crush. But the latter, the pelican, has the most remarkable organ for taking its food, and is a bird known and celebrated from the earliest ages. The lower mandible is fitted with a kind of sac, formed of the dilated skin of the throat, which Vieillot says can be so expanded as to contain between two and three gallons of water.* When fishing, these birds sometimes rise to a prodigious height, at others they skim the surface of the water, or hover, at a moderate elevation, that they may more readily precipitate themselves upon their prey. The sudden fall of so powerful an animal, the whirling round, the boiling which the great extent of its wings occasions in the water, so astounds and stuns the fishes, that few escape: then rising again, and again descending, it continues this manœuvre till it has filled its pouch. When this is accomplished it retires to some rocky eminence, where it devours what it has caught, which sometimes, Vieillot says, will amount to as many fishes as would satisfy six men.† It presses its pouch against its breast when it feeds its young, in order to disgorge the fishes, whence probably arose the fable of its feeding them with its own blood.

But the beak is not only used by birds in collecting their food, some also it assists in *climbing*; parrots are remarkable for this, and also employ their *tail* for the same purpose.

Truly, when we examine and compare all these organs of prehension as well as manducation, and the infinite modifications of them, to suit the peculiar kind of food and circumstances of every tribe, we cannot help exclaiming—God is here, we behold the evident footsteps of infinite

* N. D. D'Hist. Nat. xxv. 139.

† Ubi supr. 138.