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GRALLATORES : WADERS OR STILTED BIRDS.

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The group of birds to which our attention is now directed has always been distinguished by naturalists and has been as little uncertain as to its limits as almost any leading division. It was marked out by Belon in the first attempt at a natural ornithological system produced in 1555, and has in some form been retained by all his successors. In truth, the birds of prey, the game and poultry birds, the waders, and the swimmers with the perching birds have almost always been recognized as orders, and the only question respecting the climbers has been whether they constituted a distinct order or ought to be accounted a suborder of perching birds. Other leading divisions occasionally proposed by writers of eminence are either founded on somewhat insulated families, or are artificially defined and founded on intermediate forms which there is no real difficulty in reducing under one or other of the orders above enumerated. One of the systems most copious in its divisions is that of the celebrated Temminck who gives no less than 16 orders of birds, but no less than half of these are but divisions of perching birds, three of these con-