

than in the class Birds. I must, however, endeavour from the best authorities to characterize in the first place the five families of the waders already enumerated and placed in what I regard as their natural order. First come Ardeidae, the Herons, birds of the greatest size and power which this order affords and exceeded in this respect by very few in the whole class. They often feed on fish and small Amphibians or Reptiles, or even Mammals. These they snatch with their long and usually strong beaks out of water, or in marshy spots. The whole order tends to elongation of the beak, neck, legs and wings, the lower part of the femur as well as the tibia being naked, and the food being sucked up, extracted or snatched in a manner highly characteristic. *The Ardeidae have the bill longer than the head, thick, strong, usually compressed, rarely expanded, and more or less depressed. Feet tetradactylous, with the toes joined at the base or semi-palmate.* This character is often rendered more vague by the awkward necessity for including in it the Trumpeter, (*Psophia*) and the Caraima forming a small sub-family, which I am strongly persuaded that we ought to refer to the family among the Gallinaceous birds (*Rasores*), which represents the Grallatores. Without them the character applies to a considerable number of birds varying a good deal amongst themselves, and in their differences so clearly exhibiting the prevailing tendencies in analogy with the Orders, and the families under each, that they may properly constitute sub-families.

First we place Ciconinae the Storks, which have straight conical pointed bills, stout legs and feet, the membrane connecting the front toes very manifest, the hallux, or hind toe raised so as only to touch the ground, the covering of the legs and feet reticulated scales. They are known from the next subfamily by their greater size and strength and by a peculiar habit or posture, more easily recognised than defined constituting the popular distinction between Storks and Herons. The genera of this subfamily admitted by Dr. G. Gray, and characterised chiefly by the peculiar shape and comparative size of the beak, are *Dromas*, *Ciconia*, *Leptoptilus*, *Mycteria* and *Anastomus*. These birds belong to India and Africa, a few visiting Europe in their migrations, and one being known in South America, but no example occurring in North America.

The next subfamily Ardeinae, embraces the Herons, night Herons, and Egrets, with which are commonly placed the Spoonbills, Boatbills, and *Balaeniceps*, but considering the importance of the form of the bill