

as birds fold their wings. It might, it is true, use its small anterior fingers to suspend itself from the branches of trees; but when at rest it must have been generally on its hind feet, like the birds again, and like them it must have carried its neck half-erect and curved backwards, so that its enormous head should not disturb its equilibrium." This diversity of opinion need not very much surprise us after all, for, with the body and tail of an ordinary mammal, it had the form of a bird in its head and the length of its neck, of the bat in the structure and proportion of its wings, and of a reptile in the smallness of its head and in its beak, armed with at least sixty equal sharp-pointed teeth, differing little in form and size.

Dr. Buckland describes eight distinct species, varying in size from a snipe to a cormorant. Of these, *P. crassirostris* (Fig. 105) and *P. brevirostris* (Fig. 106), were both discovered in the Lias of Solenhofen. *P. macronyx* belongs to the Lias of Lyme Regis.

The Pterodactyle was, then, a reptile provided with wings somewhat resembling those of Bats, and formed, as in that Mammal, of a membrane which connected the body with the excessively elongated phalanges of the fourth finger, which served to expand the membrane that answered the purposes of a wing. The Pterodactyle of the Liassic period was, as we have seen, an animal of small size; the largest species in the older Lias beds did not exceed ten or twelve inches in length, or the size of a raven, while the later forms found fossil in the Greensand and Wealden beds must have measured more than sixteen feet between the tips of the expanded wings. On the other hand, its head was of enormous dimensions compared with the rest of the body. We cannot admit, therefore, that this animal could really fly, and, like a bird, beat the air. The membranous appendage which connected its long finger with its body was rather a parachute than a wing. It served to moderate the velocity of its descent when it dropped on its prey from a height. Essentially a climber, it could only raise itself by climbing up tall trees or rocks, after the manner of lizards, and throw itself thence to the ground, or upon the lower branches, by making use of its natural parachute.

The ordinary position of the Pterodactyle was probably upon its two hind feet, the lower extremities being adapted for standing and moving on the ground, after the manner of birds. Habitually, perhaps, it perched on trees; it could creep, or climb along rocks and cliffs, or suspend itself from trees, with the assistance of its claws and feet, after the manner of existing Bats. It is even probable, Dr. Buckland thought, that it had the power of swimming and diving, so