

However he came to be the clever fellow that he is, the shy rock-clamberer, with his sprightly manners and clear, ringing trill, is sure to be a favorite with every one that makes his acquaintance.

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## PELICANS OF TAMPA BAY.

BY JOHN W. DANIEL, JR.

BROWN PELICANS (*Pelecanus fuscus*) are still to be found in fair numbers along the coast of Florida, in spite of the decimating influences with which they have to cope. Although awkward, ungainly birds, one observing them for the first time in their native haunts, is likely to become interested at once in their characteristically peculiar manoeuvres while fishing, diving and soaring. Most of the time their movements are heavy and clumsy, though often extremely graceful, and at times ludicrous.

During December, 1898, while on my way to Cuba, I stopped for a couple of days at Port Tampa, Florida. I had very good opportunities for studying the pelicans, which were abundant in the bay. The first pelicans seen were noticed about dawn, the morning of my arrival, perched upon a series of posts, the remains of an old pier which extended parallel with the shore, about seventy-five yards out from the water line. Upon each post sat a pelican, dimly outlined in the early light. They had probably spent the night perched upon these posts. Later, as the light became stronger, the birds began flying about the bay. Other pelicans joined them, arriving from north and south, until there were at least a hundred individuals present in the neighborhood. Nearly all were intent upon fishing. They flew over the bay in all directions, at the height of from ten to forty feet, scanning the surface for fish. Their flight while fish-

ing appeared heavy and labored; and the act of catching a fish, by dropping down upon it from above, is so very awkward and heavy that one would expect to see grief come to the bird rather than to the fish. Flying above the water, say at thirty feet, a pelican seeing a fish on the surface below, literally falls, with dangling wings, down upon its prey below, not after the manner of a tern or gull, but with sheer abandon and main force, frequently turning a complete somersault in the effort. Such a heavy fall would doubtless result in broken bones were it not for the fact that the birds invariably strike the water upon their breasts, which, being provided with a heavy padding of cellular tissue, afford the necessary protection. Apparently the pelicans seldom failed to secure fish when making these "falls," the resulting thuds of which could be heard at the distance of several hundred yards, the water being struck with such force that it seems probable, in some cases, that the fish are stunned thereby, rendering capture easy. Upon reaching the water, the diving pelican at once begins scooping about with its capacious pouch for the fish. A muscular lunge forward of the neck seems to extend the sides of the lower mandible, the skin of the pouch being stretched to its fullest capacity to form a natural scoop net. When a pelican secures a fish in its pouch or between its mandibles, the head of the bird is thrown backward, the bill pointing upward, and with a struggling, twisting movement of the neck, as if with great effort, the fish is swallowed. The water which is scooped up along with the fish apparently remains in the pouch, and does not stream out at the corners of the bird's mouth, as stated by some writers. It flows out at the point of the bill when the head is inclined downward again, after the fish is swallowed. When searching for fish, the pelicans did not hover above the water, but flew slowly and awkwardly about, executing the tumbling dive or "fall" when the fish were sighted below them.

At the Port Tampa Hotel the water line comes up to the kitchen, which is raised above the water by posts, upon a

sort of platform. The cooks throw scraps of fish and other refuse out upon the water, and the pelicans gather in flocks about the kitchen to secure this food. They had become so tame that while feeding upon the scraps they would allow one to approach within ten or fifteen feet. It was an odd sight to see this flock of wild pelicans, at such close quarters, scrambling and tussling over the food. There was much competition among them, and the younger and quicker birds seemed to get most of the scraps, while the heavier and older birds took whatever they could secure in the hurry and bustle which occurred when a fresh can of scraps was thrown in the water. Having finished the scraps, the pelicans would fly far out in the bay, there to rest upon the water and bathe. Some, apparently for pleasure only, would rise high in the air, setting their wings and coming down in smooth, graceful circles. Late in the afternoon, the greater part of the Pelicans left the bay and disappeared up the coast line, though a number of individuals were seen, at dusk, perched upon the posts along the bay front, where they probably lodged for the night.

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## FOOD HABITS OF THE WILSON SNIPE.

BY BENJ. T. GAULT.

ARE the feeding habits of the common "Jack," or Wilson Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*), so very well known?

Elisha J. Lewis in "American Sportsman," p. 197, in speaking of the food and habits of this bird, remarks that "their nourishment consists principally of worms and larvæ, which, like woodcock, they extract from rich loamy soil by boring into it with their long and slender bills." "It was formerly very generally believed by sportsmen, and others who pretended to a knowledge of such matters, that snipe